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April 2012

Voice of the South African Communist Party

Unsebenzi

**ANC
THE
FIRST
100
YEARS!**



**BUILDING
A STRONGER
ALLIANCE
AND A
RADICAL NDR!**

ANC ANNIVERSARY

Our Party's message to the ANC

The SACP message delivered by Cde Blade Nzimande at the ANC's 100th anniversary celebrations in Mangaung on 8 January 2012

The South African Communist Party greets its leading Alliance partner on this memorable occasion – the ANC's centenary celebration.

There are very few political formations in the world today that have achieved a centenary, and none that can speak of such a history of perseverance in the face of prolonged persecution, of mass-based struggles against one of the most tenacious colonial regimes of the 20th century, and of ultimate, if still relative and partial, victory

As the Communist Party, now in our own 90th year of unbroken struggle, we take special pride in the fact that for over 80 years, communists have served in the ranks of the ANC. Shoulder to shoulder with other patriotic revolutionaries, communists have helped to build and sustain the ANC. But also, through their activism within the ANC, communist cadres have carried over into the SACP a deeper appreciation of the centrality of the national question within our struggle, and of the power vested in a majority's sense of collective national grievance and of mass-based, national capacity. Our shared history is a history of continuous cross-fertilisation.

As we mark this centenary, we remember, to begin with, the early founders of the ANC. They were a new stratum of African teachers, journalists, preachers and lawyers, together with progressive



traditional leaders. They came together from across the whole of Southern Africa, in the context of the final defeat of centuries of heroic primary resistance. However modest its founding conference might have been, the launching of the ANC was a major milestone, a necessary and qualitative step forward in the struggle against colonialism and minority rule. From the outset, the founders understood the imperative of forging a new African identity, uniting those divided by narrower, traditional, ethnic identities. The foundational impulse of the ANC was the building of “unity in diversity” and it is the theme that is being taken

up again today to celebrate the centenary.

The ANC was launched in the final years of the previous last great accelerated wave of capitalist driven globalisation that occurred between 1870 and 1914. It was a period of dramatic global expansion and breath-taking technological advances – railway lines, ocean steamers, and telegraph cables that now girdled the earth. There were large joint stock companies and banking houses that pumped massive investments into pre-industrial locations. Cities sprang up in the raw veldt – not least here in South Africa with the opening up of the diamond and gold fields.

The ANC was launched also in the aftermath of the Anglo-Boer War which was itself connected to this wave of capital expansion. Owing to its immense technical superiority, the dominant imperialist power of the day had finally defeated the semi-feudal Boer republics. All of this would have reinforced the belief in the “positive”, and, if not positive, then at least “irresistible” power of modernising, Westernising “progress”. Reflecting much of the mood of the times, a young Pixley Ka Isaka Seme (soon to become the first secretary general of the ANC) delivered a prize-winning “African regeneration” speech in 1906, which confidently predicted a continental renaissance spurred by the new global technologies that promised to unite humankind as never before.



ANC President Cde Jacob Zuma greets thousands of supporters at the Mangaung centenary rally



Cde Zuma, Secretary-General Gwede Mantashe (left) and Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe cut the ANC's 100th birthday cake

However, the 1909 Act of Union and consequent 1910 formation of the Union of South Africa effectively excluded the majority of South Africans from citizenship. This was the immediate catalyst for the 1912 formation of the ANC. From within the ideological frame of a (simultaneously westernising and Africanist) modernisation perspective, this exclusion tended to be thought of as essentially an “anomaly”, a local “distortion”. In short, at its foundation it was not easy for the ANC to grasp the dialectical, contradictory nature of imperialist-driven global accumulation – modernisation and barbarism wrapped up together; development and simultaneous debilitating under-development. Nor was it easy to grasp the key motive forces needed to be mobilised in order to wage an active struggle to overcome national oppression. Instead, there was a progressive, but limited, moral rights-based critique of the intensifying oppression exerted on the majority. It was a politics of protest. It was, initially, a politics not to defeat the emerging state of white minority rule, but rather a struggle for inclusion of all those unjustly excluded from citizenship within the framework of the new Union of South Africa.

But, whatever the inevitable historical and social limitations of the founders of the ANC, from the beginning they

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introduced the seeds of three potentially radical positions:

First, through their journalism, speeches, and sermons they recorded and gave voice to the deepening racial oppression of South Africa's majority – the Land Act, pass laws, the colour bar. In this way they began to provide a framework to connect tens of thousands of disparate daily experiences of humiliation into a collectively shared sense of national grievance.

Secondly, from the very beginning they critiqued narrow tribalism, and launched an organisation to forge in struggle a new African identity. They were advancing a revolutionary understanding of identity – not something fixed biologically at birth, not something cast in stone by language, or religion, or culture – but rather a complex process of becoming, shaped by social interaction and active organisation. This radical approach to identity also lies at the heart of the ANC's longstanding and, given South Africa's history, remarkable espousal of non-racialism. This inclusive and open-ended approach to national identity is one of the great, world-historical contributions of the ANC and of the struggle it has led. There are many parts of the world today, both developed and undeveloped, that could benefit from this foundational principle of the ANC.

There is a **third** and absolutely relevant legacy bestowed on the present that has its roots in the very early foundation years of the ANC. The Christian liberalism that informed the founders of the ANC was in effect the appropriation of a discourse of universal human rights in a semi-colonial context. It was a context that was bound, sooner or later, to expose the limits of Western liberalism itself and force an increasing radicalisation of any rights-based discourse. That radicalisation can be traced through the ANC's 1943 "Africans' Claims" and its Bill of Rights, through the 1955 Freedom Charter, down to the fundamentally progressive South African Constitution and Bill of Rights of 1996.

To appreciate the value of this legacy for the present, it is important to recall the generally problematic record in government of both communist parties and former national liberation movements through much of the 20th century. There are many reasons why formerly heroic fighting formations, both communist parties and national liberation movements, once in power, often declined into bureaucratism, stagnation and cor-



The ANC's founding executive: President John Dube (centre), Secretary Sol Plaatje (right), Reverend Walter Rubusana, Thomas Mapikela and Saul Msane



ANC Nobel laureates: Cde Nelson Mandela (left) and Cde Albert Luthuli

rosive corruption – if not worse.

The unending aggressive destabilisation of popular advances by imperialism and allied reactionary forces was obviously the major factor. The emergence of new class dynamics within ruling formations has been another. But the neglect, suspension, or deliberate distortion of

key constitutional and democratic safeguards that are key to buttressing sustained popular democracy have surely been another important factor.

It is one of many ironies of our contemporary South African reality that the ANC's struggle for far-reaching human and social rights within a progressive, law-based constitution is a legacy that is now being claimed (and dumbed down) by anti-majoritarian neo-liberals. The idea that the South African Constitution is essentially "liberal" is gravely mistaken, even the most moderately-inclined of clauses in the Bill of Rights, the so-called property clause, expressly allows for expropriation on terms other than market-value. One of the tasks of the Alliance in our current reality is to actively espouse the Constitution and advance it for what

**Shoulder-to-shoulder
with other revolutionaries
communists have
sustained the ANC**

it is – a clarion call for ongoing radical transformation in the finest traditions of the ANC’s longstanding and principled struggle.

But this means that we must continue to invest the key principles of our Constitution with their radically progressive significance. The principle of the separation of powers must be upheld to ensure that never again is the state machinery used for corrupt ends, and that never again are ordinary citizens of South Africa subjected to arbitrary arrest, or invasion of their homes by an authoritarian state bureaucracy. The principle of freedom of speech must be upheld to ensure that, above all, community organisations, trade unions, social movements, and local radio stations and publications have both the right and the actual resources to voice their collective aspirations and concerns. The right to vote for all adult South Africans must also be the right for the outcome of that vote to have a real impact on the ongoing transformation of our country. It is for this reason that we must at all times defend that fundamental principle contained in the Freedom Charter, that “The People Shall Govern”!

In short, we need to oppose those who were never in the trenches of the struggle, but who, today, pose as the great defenders of our Constitution. They pay lip-service to our hard-won universal franchise, while they seek to erode any effective power vested in the outcome of a majority vote. For them, media freedom means the freedom of four media oligopolies to perpetuate a message of Afro-pessimism, disinformation and of the impossibility of any real change. For them, the separation of powers is all about divide-and-rule. They attempt to play one arm of government against another, in order to undermine any determined transformational programme, the better to protect their ill-gotten minority powers and privileges.

Our response to this neo-liberal dumbing-down of our hard-won rights must not now become ambivalence about our Constitution and Bill of Rights. In the name of one hundred years of struggle, we must vigorously claim our victories, including our constitutional victories, and invest them with real substance, buttressed by mass power.

As we celebrate this centenary, it is important that we honour the real heroes and heroines of our struggle – the millions of ordinary South Africans who day in and day out resisted oppression



Cheek-to-cheek: a young supporter colourfully declares her allegiance at Mangaung

and struggled for lives of dignity. They were joined in solidarity by millions of others in our region and throughout the world who supported this just struggle. In 1912, the ANC did not just emerge out of thin air. It picked up the fallen spear of the early resisters of colonial dispossession, the San and Khoi peoples who were subjected to genocidal oppression. The ANC built on the heroic armed resistance of our people, who fought over two and half centuries of invasion. Our struggle over the past century has also been infused with the popular traditions of slave revolts in the Cape and the struggles of indentured labourers in KZN.

The struggle is bigger than any one of our organisations. There have been times when ordinary South Africans have been in advance of our own formations – like the women in the Free State in 1913 who pioneered anti-pass struggles. In its first several decades, the ANC was not a mass formation, but popular struggles were fought by the trade union movement,

Few political formations in the world have achieved a centenary – and none that can speak of such a history of perseverance

by the Communist Party, by peasants and shack-dwellers. The ANC-led Defiance Campaign of 1952, for the first time placed the ANC onto a substantial active mass-campaigning footing. The campaign had been directly inspired by the earlier Passive Resistance Campaign led by the Natal and Transvaal Indian Congresses between 1946 and 1948, as well as by the Great Mineworkers Strike of 1946. There were times when, as a result of severe persecution, our own formal structures were badly disrupted – but popular resistance continued, often with borrowed ideas and eclectic ideologies. The great achievement of the ANC, particularly from the 1950s onwards was always, through the ups and downs of struggle, to recover its balance, to learn from and instruct popular militancy, to build the shield of a progressive unity, and to provide the spear-point of a clear strategic line of march. The SACP is proud to have been a principled and active participant in all the major turns in our national liberation struggle, culminating in the dislodging of the apartheid in 1994!

Those attributes are now as necessary as they ever were. The 1994 democratic breakthrough and nearly eighteen years of ruling party incumbency have brought new possibilities and fresh challenges for the ANC, for the Alliance, and for the people of South Africa as a whole. One hundred years ago, as the ANC was being launched, the last major wave of capitalist-driven global expansion, which had seemed destined to continue in its upward trajectory, was fast approaching the crisis of 1914, and the outbreak of World War I. It was a crisis that was to persist through three decades, down to 1945.

In the early 1990s, as the ANC came to power, the second great wave of capitalist-driven globalisation and its gospel of neo-liberalism seemed to be both invincible and the only imaginable alternative. In 2012 we now know, if we did not know before, much better. The leading centres of capital accumulation in the developed North are now deeply enmeshed in an interrelated and multi-dimensional crisis, marked by financial turmoil, declining economic vigour, rising levels of unemployment and indebtedness, a shifting global hegemony, and, particularly in the case of the US, a manifest political incapacity to rise to the challenges confronting the whole of humanity, including climate change and natural resource depletion.

In these circumstances, the relevance of consolidating a radical national demo-



Celebrating the centenary: SACP Umtentweni branch activists march through Port Shepstone to acknowledge the ANC centennial

cratic revolutionary path here in our own country has become all the more relevant and pressing. This means placing our economy onto a new development path that prioritises the resolution of the key persisting crises of our society – unemployment, poverty, and inequality. It means breaking away from the neo-liberal, trickle-down, self-serving argument that capitalist growth and increased profits for a minority will somehow, on their own, resolve our social challenges. 14 years of growth locally from 1994 to 2008 have decisively disproved that claim. To place our society onto a new development path means breaking out of the role into which South Africa was condemned back in the late 19th century – namely to be a semi-peripheral exporter of mineral resources within the global division of labour.

To consolidate a new developmental path requires using democratic state power with the utmost determination and strategic discipline. And this is why the struggle against corruption is so critical. This struggle is not just a moral imperative, but an absolutely critical strategic imperative – if we lose strategic capacity within the state as a result of parasitic behavior, factionalism, tender-

preneurship and the personal diversion of public resources, we will betray one hundred years of struggle.

A democratic, developmental state needs to support and be supported by active popular mobilisation. Placing ourselves upon a different developmental trajectory also requires that we build a different, developmental relationship with our region and continent, and that we forge firmer South-South ties.

The challenges of our times are multiple and complex, but, drawing on the legacy of 100 years of unbroken struggle, learning from our successes and mistakes, and, above all, building on the ANC's central legacy of forging a militant unity out of diversity, we can and we shall prevail.

**Drawing on the legacy
of 100 years of unbroken
struggle, we shall prevail**

On this day, South African communists once more pledge our continued commitment to the strengthening of our Alliance, pursuing a radical national democratic transformation programme, as the only vehicle to consolidate and build on our gains. We shall leave no stone unturned in fighting the twin enemies of a conservative (white) liberal offensive against the majoritarian character of our democracy **and** tenderpreneurship.

The SACP shall be a dependable ally in the struggle to realise the developmental goals and priorities of our movement, including job creation, access to health and education for all, and rural development. To achieve these requires maximum unity of our movement. For that reason, as we fight for the realisation of these goals we will spare no effort in the fight against all tendencies that threaten the unity of our movement, including all forms of factionalism, populism, ill-discipline, corruption and misguided militancy.

In doing all this we shall place the interests of our people at the forefront of all that we do. This is the true meaning of the ANC's centenary! ●

Cde Nzimande is the SACP General Secretary

ANC ANNIVERSARY

The ANC, the SACP and the youth

The YCL celebrates the dialectical relationship between communists and the ANC. Mfanafuthi Tsela reports

As part of the ongoing celebrations of the ANC's centenary, the Young Communist League hosted a lecture at the University of Witwatersrand. The event was addressed by the ANC's Secretary General and SACP Chairperson, Cde Gwede Mantashe and the YCL's National Secretary Cde Buti Manamela. The theme of the lecture was the SACP's alliance with ANC.

Cde Mantashe said that the formation of the ANC was not the beginning of the struggle against racial oppression but a "culmination of 247 of years of resistance against dispossession. The first wars of resistance were fought by the Khoi and the San which resulted in genocide by the Dutch colonisers. Flowing from this desire to wipe out a whole people, their identity is now hidden in the so-called coloured people. These indigenous inhabitants of this country are mischievously defined outside the identity of being African and relegated to a minority group. The wars of dispossession continued up to the last war of resistance fought by Bambatha in 1906".

Cde Mantashe said that from its inception the ANC appreciated working with other organisations. The formation of the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union in 1919 and the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) in 1921 were the first attempts to build a mass working class movement. Cde Mantashe pointed to the 1928 joint visit to the USSR by the fourth president of the ANC, Cde Josiah Gumede – who said afterwards he had "seen the new Jerusalem" – and the

CPSA's Cde Alex La Guma. It was not a mere coincidence that in the same year the Comintern took the resolution on the Black Republic Thesis. Cde Gumede "will always be celebrated as a president who introduced progressive politics in the movement". Cde Mantashe said that the SACP believed that communists should immerse themselves in the ANC as an integral part of attaining socialism. The experience of the SACP in underground work after its 1950 banning was an advantage to the ANC when it was banned in 1960. Cde Mantashe called upon all



ANC Secretary General and SACP Chairperson Cde Gwede Mantashe and YCL National Secretary Buti Manamela

structures of the Alliance to confront the negative tendencies that have infested the movement.

Cde Manamela said the SACP could not be what it is today without the ANC – or the ANC without the SACP. While the Alliance is broader, its foundation was the relationship between ANC and the Communist Party. Individuals who

attempted to cause divisions were expelled from these organisations. These elements include the founders of the PAC, the "Gang of Eight" and the "Marxist Workers' Tendency". The support the ANC and SACP have given each other was not based on individual relationships but on a principled struggle to overthrow the apartheid colonial regime and realise socialism. The two formations have shaped each other in the course of the struggle to become the most important tools of the struggle.

He emphasised the role of the militant youth who were consistent in championing the struggle for liberation. King Shaka had a regiment that was called uFasimba, made up of young people who were the core of his military strategies. Youthful Inkosi Bambatha led resistance against the poll tax introduced by the British to force Africans into slavery and cheap labour.

Through its president, Cde Josiah Gumede, the ANC forged its alliance with the Communist Party. This alliance, and the CPSA's exposure to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, bought about changes to how the Communist Party operated.

The formation of the Young Communist League and the ANC Youth League introduced new energy into the ANC. Participation of young people was crucial after the formation of the MK where young volunteers such as Cde Eric Stalin Mtshali took up arms to advance the struggle for liberation. The militancy of youth was crucial in 1970s and 1980s. ●

Cde Tsela is an SACP activist

ANC CENTENERARY

Communists in the African National Congress

For more than 80 years, communists have played a key role in the ANC – we highlight just five

“I am happy to say that there are communists in South Africa.... the Communist Party is the only Party that stands behind us and from which we can expect something” – ANC President Cde Josiah Gumede, to the League against Imperialism, Brussels, 1927

BY MFANAFUTHI TSELA



Communists are justly proud of their contribution to the ANC's 100 years history.

The role of communists in the liberation

struggle has sometimes been the subject of controversy. At one extreme, there are those who say communist influence was profound; at the other, the communist contribution is negligible. Communists such as Cdes Albert Nzula, Edwin Mofutsanyane, Moses Kotane, JB Marks, Johannes Nkosi, Yusuf Dadoo, Joe Slovo, Govan Mbeki, Dorah Tamana and many more played a significant role in the ANC's hundred years.

Below are just five prominent comrades who played a key role in the ANC's history. They are partly a subjective choice, and, hopefully, future issues of *Umsebenzi* will focus on others.



MOSES MABHIDA

Cde Moses Mabhida was introduced to politics by his school teacher, communist stalwart Cde Harry Gwala, who conducted political classes for a select group of pupils, teaching them the relationship between class struggle and the fight for national liberation. On weekends, Cde Gwala would take young Mabhida to Pietermaritzburg where they would meet trade unionists. Unfortunately, Cde Mabhida could not continue with his schooling because his family could not afford it and had to stop after passing standard seven. At 19, Cde Mabhida joined the Party.

In the early 1950s many communists active in the trade union movement were banned by the apartheid government using the Suppression of Communism Act, among them Cde Gwala. As a result, Cde Mabhida gave up his job and started working fulltime for the trade union movement. Soon his political work spread from the Pietermaritzburg area to Durban and other parts of Natal. He became one of the main driving forces in organising the unorganised workers in Natal.

During preparations for the Congress

of the People, he visited many areas in Natal, organising meetings and collecting demands for inclusion in the Freedom Charter eventually adopted at Kliptown. In 1955, Cde Mabhida was elected one of the four vice presidents of the South African Congress of Trade Unions (Sactu) and helped launch the General Workers' Union in Durban which catered for workers from all industries. In the late 1950s he became Chairperson of the ANC Working Committee in Natal and Chairperson of the Durban District Committee. He and Cde Moses Kotane became close confidants of the ANC President-General Chief Albert Luthuli. Cde Mabhida drew Cde Luthuli closer to the trade union movement.

After the Sharpeville massacre, he was instructed by the national executive of Sactu to leave the country. He was briefly based at the World Federation of Trade Unions, before Cde OR Tambo instructed him to devote himself to the work of MK. He served as Secretary to the Revolutionary Council, and one of the Chairpersons of the Politico-Military Council. Following the death of Cde Moses Kotane, he was elected General Secretary of the SACP.

He was loved and respected throughout the movement for his steadfastness and determination. Speaking at his funeral Cde Tambo said: “[the] combination of functions sometimes surprised and puzzled our friends who wondered why Comrade Mabhida had to serve in so many senior positions in different organisations ... this combination of functions in one leader of our people upset our adversaries because it reflected the permanence and

acceptability among our people of the idea and the practice of the unity of the revolutionary democratic, the socialist and the trade union movements in the South African struggle for national liberation”.

In 2002, President Mbeki posthumously awarded Moses Mabhida the Order of the Baobab.



YUSUF DADOO

Cde Yusuf Mohamed Dadoo - popularly known as “Mota” or “Doc” - was born in Krugersdorp in 1909. He came from a middle-class Gujarati Muslim family. His parents were among the first Indian immigrants who came to South Africa in the 1880s. Cde Dadoo attended a “coloured” school in the West Rand until state law compelled him to a distant “Indian” school.

In 1929 he left to study in the UK, where he became involved with the campaign against British rule in India and the anti-fascist movement and was introduced to Marxist ideas. He met numerous activists, including the Indian-born British Communist and one-time MP, Shapurji Saklatvala. Once he had qualified as a doctor, Cde Dadoo returned to South Africa, where his medical practice brought him face to face with acute poverty. He began organising against anti-Indian laws and for the unity of oppressed black South Africans, joining the National Liberation League and the Transvaal Non-European United Front in 1938 and the Communist Party in 1939.

Cde Dadoo’s political approach was influenced by both Gandhi’s non-violent struggle and Pandit Nehru’s ideas about unity. In 1938, together with other communists, such as Cdes J B Marks, Edwin Mofutsanyana, Josie Mpama, G Carr and Alpheus Maliba founded the Non-European United Front (Neuf). Cde Dadoo was charged for printing and distributing a leaflet published by the Neuf against the Second World War in 1940. He refused to pay his fine of £25, but was saved from imprisonment by a supporter who paid his fine because he could not bear to see “this wonderful person” going to prison. The following year he was arrested for alleg-

edly inciting African workers in Benoni.

Cde Dadoo was instrumental in organising the Indian Passive Resistance Campaign in 1946. This was despite the fact that at that time he was holding various positions such as being a member of the Central Committee of the CPSA, vice-chairman of the National Anti-Pass Council and President of the TIC, chairman of the Transvaal.

The historic Xuma-Naicker-Dadoo pact popularly known as the “Doctors’ Pact” that was signed in 1948, marked a significant move in the co-operation between the African and Indian peoples. It called for the removal of all discriminatory and oppressive legislation and full franchise for non-white South Africans. This laid the ground for the Defiance Campaign of the 1950s and the Congress Alliance.

In 1950, Cde Dadoo was elected President of the South African Indian Congress. Soon the SAIC was to join with the ANC to organise a Defiance Campaign against unjust laws in a bid to raise the struggle of the oppressed to new and higher levels.

When the ANC was banned, Cde Dadoo went into exile in the UK. He quit his medical practice and dedicated his life to the Party and the broad liberation movement. The 1969 Mogorogoro Conference of the ANC replaced the MK’s High Command with the Revolutionary Council. Cde Oliver Tambo was elected its chair and Cde Dadoo its deputy. In 1972 Cde Dadoo was unanimously elected SACP Chairperson by the Central Committee following Cde JB Marks’s Death. Cde Dadoo died in 1983.



MOSES KOTANE

Cde Moses Kotane joined the ANC and the African Bakers Union, an affiliate of the new Federation of Non-European Trade Unions then being built by the Communist Party in 1928. A year later he joined the Communist Party and soon became a member of the party’s Politburo. In 1931, he became a full time functionary of the Party and worked on *Umsebenzi*.

His approach earned him respect from both communists and non-communist.

Cde Kotane was also a leading member of the ANC at the same time as the SACP. From 1956 to 1961, Cde Kotane was among the leaders of the Congress movement who were defendants in the Treason Trial.

Cde Kotane served as Treasurer General of the ANC from 1963 to 1973. Cde Kotane suffered a stroke in 1968. Following the stroke, he went for treatment to the Soviet Union, where he died on 19 May 1978. In 1975, the ANC bestowed its highest honour *Isitwalandwe* on Cde Kotane for his outstanding contribution to the struggle for liberation.

CHRIS HANI



Cde Chris Hani joined the African National Congress at 14 in 1956. The following year he joined the ANC Youth League. While at the Fort Fare University, he was exposed to Marxist ideas and joined the then underground Communist Party in 1961, after realising the struggle against racial oppression would not bring about total emancipation without the transformations of the economic system. He was influenced by communists such as Cdes Govan Mbeki, Bram Fischer, JB Marks, Moses Kotane and Ray Alexander. In 1962, Cde Hani joined Umkhonto Wesizwe. He rose through its ranks, and in 1967 he was appointed Commissar of a Joint MK-Zipra forces in the famous Wankie Campaign in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). After a number of clashes within the Rhodesian Army, the group retreated to Botswana where they were arrested and jailed for being in that country illegally.

In 1970 Cde Hani became a member of the Central Committee and two years later was appointed the assistant General Secretary of the Party.

In 1974 Cde Hani entered South Africa to set up underground structures before moving to Lesotho, which was to become an infiltration point for MK cadres. He survived three assassination attempts by apartheid hit squads. In the ANC’s Elective Conference in Kabwe, Cde Hani was elected to the ANC’s NEC and also be-

came the MK's deputy commander and commissar

Cde Chris Hani was loved and respected by the rank and file cadres of the MK. Cde Hani was despatched by the leadership of the ANC to stop a mutiny by disgruntled MK soldiers in Angola. He came to the meeting unarmed and was able to persuade them to surrender.

RAY ALEXANDER



Cde Ray Alexander was born in the Baltic state of Latvia and came to South Africa as a 16-year-old in 1929. Five days after arriving in South

Africa, she joined the Communist Party of South Africa. She started organising workers in 1930 and was arrested for her role in a tram and bus workers' strike. She was sentenced to one month's hard labour, suspended for two years. She helped organise workers in many different trades, and was a founder member of the militant and non-racial Food and Canning Workers' Union (FCWU) that was organising the fruit canning industry and coast among fishing communities in the Cape. In the 1950s it played a leading role in the South African Congress of Trade Unions. Cde Alexander wrote a regular column in *The Guardian*.

In 1953 the apartheid government forced her to resign as FCWU general secretary. In 1953, together with Cdes Helen Joseph, Lilian Ngoyi, Amina Cachalia and Florence Mkhize, she helped found the Federation of South African Women (Fedsaw), which fought for women's rights. Bringing together over 230 000 women

from all over South Africa, the founding conference of the Federation pledged its support for the general campaigns of the Congress Alliance. She helped organise the 1956 Women's March to the Union Buildings, but her FCWU banning precluded her joining the march. Another banning order, later in 1954, forced her to resign from Fedsaw.

Cde Alexander and her husband Cde Jack Simons were the first white members to join the ANC, following the lifting of the restriction on non-Africans being members in 1969. In 1978, she joined MK as part of the Women's Battalion. The Food and Allied Workers' Union elected her its life president in 1986.

In 2004 the ANC's National Executive Committee bestowed the ANC its highest honour, *Isithwalandwe*, on this liberation movement stalwart. She is the third woman to receive this award. ●

Cde Tsela is an SACP activist



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SACP & COSATU

The socialist axis bilateral

This is an edited version of the joint statement issued by the Party and the Congress of South African Trade Unions after their 2 April meeting

The Congress of South African Trade Unions and the South African Communist Party held a bilateral meeting on 2 April. They discussed the very many issues on which the two allies are in full agreement and agreed to hold more regular bilateral meetings to continue discussions on other matters.

The meeting agreed that we are living through a major crisis in the global capitalist system, not just an episodic, but systemic capitalist crisis, which confronts the world with the prospect either of deepening human misery and conflict in a capitalist world, or of unprecedented progress and hope in a socialist world.

In South Africa the global capitalist crisis in super-imposing itself on the persisting systemic crisis on the neo-colonial (of a special type) crisis manifested in the chronic levels of unemployment, poverty and racialised inequality, where an estimated 81% of Africans earns less than R6 000 while 56% of whites earns more than R6 000.

The current rates of unemployment, poverty and inequality, in particular as they affect women and youth constitute a ticking time bomb, and require the mobilisation of all progressive forces, with the working class as the leading motive force, with a combined use of state power and resources to address this challenge. We need to build on the many advances made by our revolution in order to address these challenges.

The two allies were in total support for Cosatu's campaign against the rapid casualisation of labour, the burgeoning of labour brokering and the intensified exploitation of workers and noted the



bold, militant worker resistance.

The two partners agreed to jointly take up the campaigns of a living and social wage, including support for an NHI, transforming apartheid human settlements, affordable public transport and access to education.

In addition the parties agreed to take forward the struggle for the transformation of the financial sector campaign, so that resources in this sector are used to

provide for a social wage for the working class and investment into infrastructure to create jobs and sustainable livelihoods.

The bilateral identified a key challenge of the 'new tendency' in our movement, the next generation of the '1996 class project', the neoliberal/neo-colonial faction that achieved a level of unstable hegemony within our movement and the state until 2007.

The new tendency is a new wave of tenderpreneurs and rent-seekers, more desperate and more reckless than the more established BEE beneficiaries, and constitutes a serious threat to the consolidation of the national democratic revolution.

The meeting supported the campaign against the commodification of public services. It was agreed that Gauteng Freeway Improvement Project and e-tolling were a serious misallocation of resources on a project which is not pro-poor and working class and which now leaves Gauteng commuters with a huge toll burden for this inappropriate project.

The outcry against the e-tolls needs to be broadened into a wider campaign for public transport infrastructure, better allocated houses for the poor and the general deracialisation of our towns and cities. Both parties condemned the massive extent of corruption, in both the private and public sectors, and the theft and waste of public funds, which is bleeding the country dry.

The bilateral reaffirmed the commitment of both organisations to support the implementation of the progressive policies adopted by the ANC 2007 Polokwane Conference and contained in the 2009 ANC elections manifesto, and support for the leadership collective elected at Polokwane.

The two allies resolved to stand shoulder-to-shoulder, together with the ANC, in the struggle to deepen our national democratic revolution, to end the national oppression of the majority, the super-exploitation of workers by white monopoly capitalism and the triple oppression faced by women, in order to create a new non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous South Africa.

The meeting agreed that we must at all times remember that we are the socialist axis of our alliance and that the national democratic revolution is both necessary in itself and the shortest route to the socialist world which we all strive for. ●

CHRIS HANI

Let us take forward Cde Chris's struggle!

This is the message delivered to 'communists in every terrain and front of struggle' on the 19th anniversary of the assassination of Cde Chris Hani

April 10, 2012, marked the 19th anniversary of the assassination of one of the most outstanding militants of our revolutionary struggle – former SACP General Secretary and people's hero, Cde Chris Hani.

How should we best honour the memory of Cde Chris in this year of celebrating the centenary of the ANC, the liberation movement in which Cde Chris served with diligence and discipline?

We know from his own example how Cde Chris would have answered. He would have said, as he did many times in his own lifetime, that Communists must:

- Learn from the past;
- Analyse the present; and
- Act strategically to change the future.

Cde Chris also said many times that it is impossible to learn from the past, or to analyse the present, or to advance a programme of concrete leadership by sitting in an ivory tower, or by being an isolated sect. Serious communists need to be immersed in the struggles of the working class and popular masses. Communists must be in all sites of class struggle – and they must not stand aloof, with “clean hands”, from the broad mass movement of the people. They must not shun taking collective responsibility for the difficult challenges of any revolution.

Cde Chris Hani was a living testimony to the necessity of communists to be in all terrains and fronts of struggle. He was a leader of both the ANC and the SACP, commander of MK, and used to move in and out of the country as part

of the underground, and after 1990 was also part of the multitude of trade union and workers struggles, as well as in community struggles both in urban and rural areas. Cde Chris did all this because he understood that the revolution had to be advanced not just in one single corner or single organisational corner, but it had to be fought in all terrains of struggle. He understood that there was absolutely no contradiction in serving in the various terrains or organs of the movement as the revolution was everywhere.

Therefore as communists we must emphatically reject any attempts to be pigeon-hole us into narrow activism or small corners of the revolutionary struggle, and BE like Cde Chris!

Learning from Cde Chris's revolutionary example

As we commemorate Cde Chris's life, what can we learn from his own outstanding example?

Everyone knows that Cde Chris was a fearless soldier and a revolutionary militant; that he escaped many assassination attempts by the apartheid regime; that he led soldiers into battle in the Wankie campaign in 1967; that he slipped clandestinely in and out of South Africa at the height of apartheid's repressive years.

But for Cde Chris, courage was never just about blind heroism. For Cde Chris radical militancy was not about empty sloganeering. It was not about populist and demagogic mobilization of working class or people's grievances to advance one's own personal popularity. Cde Chris was a radical militant, yes. He was immensely popular, yes. But his militancy

was always connected to a clear-headed national democratic and socialist strategic agenda. His enduring popularity, even 19 years after his cruel death, was earned not with self-serving press statements and empty slogans – but by serving loyally within the collective ranks of the SACP, the ANC, and MK.

But loyalty to our formations doesn't mean silence or timidity in the face of internal abuses or mistakes. It doesn't mean loyalty to this or that faction. In 1969 Cde Chris and seven other comrades in exile wrote a famous memorandum to the senior collective leadership of the ANC. They expressed concern that not all of the exile leadership was sufficiently dedicated to the tasks of deploying MK and political cadres back to the home front. This memorandum was not well received by some of Cde Chris's immediate superiors and his membership of the ANC was suspended. The suspension was overturned when the senior leadership of the movement acknowledged the merits of the issues raised and sought to address them. Note many important things about this episode. Cde Chris and his colleagues didn't run to the media with leaked disinformation. They didn't address mass meetings in MK camps in order to fight a factional battle. They didn't insult the leadership. They raised their concerns boldly, but within the organization, and with the aim of strengthening the ANC and MK, and not of advancing personal or factional interests.

After all, as Karl Marx said, **history repeats itself, first as a tragedy, but the second time as a farce!** The movement itself realized at the time the tragedy

that would have followed the expulsion of someone like Chris for the seriousness and discipline with which he raised them. Those who try to repeat such, for opportunistic reasons, such a repeat will only end up as a farce!

Many times during his life, Cde Chris was presented with opportunities to take populist, self-serving shortcuts. In the mid-1980s, for instance, a number of genuine objective and subjective problems in MK camps in Angola were exploited by apartheid infiltrators. There were armed mutinies in some cases. Some of the misled rank-and-file mutineers turned to Chris Hani hoping that he would side with them against others in the MK command structures. Although Cde Chris did not agree with the conduct of some of these other leaders, he declined to take one of two wrong options.

In the first place, he didn't take the "safe option" by staying away from where the mutinies were occurring, even though he wasn't the target of discontent. And, while he recognized that there were many genuine grievances, he did not condone organizational ill-discipline. This was all because Cde Chris was not an opportunist. In remembering Cde Chris, especially in this centenary year of the ANC we must keep focused on the priorities of the movement and condemn all forms of opportunism, self-seeking behaviour and populism. The most important lesson here is that genuine revolutionaries must not chase newspaper headlines, but must seek to preserve the unity our movement. The ANC and our Alliance is all our people have to fight for a better life for themselves!

Analysing the present

Cde Chris well understood that any ef-



Cde Chris Hani: In his memory, Let every communist join the workers in the trenches to intensify the struggle for a decent social wage

fective communist practice had to be rooted in a concrete analysis of the concrete situation. With the beginning of the negotiations process in the early 1990s, the ANC took the principled strategic decision to suspend the armed struggle. This was not a universally popular decision, especially amongst many militant youth who had been in the forefront of bitter struggles. Some turned to Hani, hoping he would defy the collective decision of the ANC, and that he would lend his own revolutionary military credentials to such defiance. But Hani was both a disciplined cadre and a clear strategist who refused to mobilize factions against our movement and in a self-serving way, even at the most difficult of times.

In 1991 he wrote publicly: "Our struggle [has] brought about the present crisis

of the apartheid regime. The racist regime has reluctantly recognized the legitimacy of our struggle by agreeing to sit down and discuss how to begin the negotiations process. In the current political situation, the decision by our organization to suspend armed action is correct and is an important contribution in maintaining the momentum of negotiations."

As this example underlines, Cde Chris understood well that the correct revolutionary approach is not necessarily the one that appears to be most militant or that shouts the loudest – the correct strategy has to be based on the correct analysis of the present situation.

So what, then, are the key features of our own present situation?

We are living through a major global crisis of capitalism. It is a crisis full of dangers, but also possibilities for a profoundly different, anti-capitalist agenda. Here in South Africa, the crisis is worsening our own triple crises of mass unemployment, persisting racialised inequality, and widespread poverty.

Our job as the SACP is to analyse the reasons for both the global crisis and its impact on our own society. We have said clearly that this is a systemic crisis – that means that it is not a just temporary crisis. It will not be resolved by some hoped-for capitalist return to growth or by revolutionary sounding rhetoric, but by seeking to collectively take responsibility for all the revolutionary challenges before us. The capitalist system itself has to be transformed globally and locally if we are to find a sustainable way out of the suffering of billions of workers and

the poor. On the basis of this analysis, it is possible and necessary to address the future with a concrete programme of collective action.

Forward with a concrete programme of action

In the present there are many, often factional, attempts at mobilizing around popular discontent and grievance. Sometimes this mobilization assumes an anti-state character – the state is blamed for “non-delivery”, or the state is presented as thoroughly and irredeemably corrupt. Of course, there are many weaknesses in the state, including serious challenges of corruption and tenderpreneurship. The SACP has been the first to be critical of these problems. But the danger of exaggerating these challenges is that we abandon the struggle to transform the state from both outside and from **within**. The danger is that we become content to be critics from a safe distance.

The danger is that we simply mobilize popular grievances without taking any responsibility for offering solutions. In this way we can easily and unwittingly fall into a neo-liberal, anti-state agenda. Ever since 1994, having reluctantly conceded one-person one-vote, the neo-liberal agenda in our country has been to devalue the power of the vote by devaluing the power of the state.

This is why the SACP says: Let us build working class and popular power where we work and study, in our communities, in the media, **and** in the state itself. Let us combine democratic state power and worker power to advance our national democratic and socialist agenda.

In this 100th year of the ANC, it is the duty of all Communists to follow the example of Cde Chris in helping to build our liberation movement, to defend its culture and its revolutionary codes of morality and discipline, and to foster unity among all revolutionary democrats – communist and non-communist.

In the face of the global and local economic and social crisis, the SACP says: let us advance unifying and militant programmes of action that transforms our neo-colonial and capitalist economy by placing it onto a new growth path that is job creating, develops skills, builds infrastructure to address geographical under-development in rural areas and that abolishes persisting apartheid spatial patterns in our towns and cities.

Let us unite the employed, the under-employed, and the unemployed masses in common struggles that address social



Cde Chris shortly before his assassination

wage issues that decommodify basic social needs:

- a national health insurance system;
- land reform for productive and sustainable livelihoods;
- quality education and skills development for all;
- human settlements that abolish the racial and wealth gaps, by addressing the housing crisis for workers who do not qualify for RDP housing, but who are rejected by the private banks; by upgrading well-located informal settlements; and by introducing mixed-use and mixed-income medium-density housing and rental stock; and
- by rolling out safe, affordable and accessible public transport.

Hani’s exemplary life is a timely reminder for us in the present that militancy and radicalism do not need to be the opposites of discipline and strategic cool-headedness; that enduring popularity is not about egotistical grandstanding, or a fashion parade - it has to be earned in consistent and collective struggle, in the midst of the oppressed and exploited.

The key challenge of all revolutionaries is to build on the many advances made by government as the basis upon which to address the challenges we face. No true revolutionary must be blinded by existing challenges and lose sight of advances made and their revolutionary potential to consolidate the revolution itself. Like Cde Chris, when we forced the apartheid regime to concede to negotiations, he did not say just because we were not yet free therefore we should turn a blind eye to the space opened up by the negotiations process. Instead he called for the seizing of that opportunity as a bridgehead towards a democratic South Africa.

Indeed a lot of advances have been made by the Zuma administration, building upon advances made by the ANC since 1994. Government is now piloting the National Health Insurance so that every

South African can have access to health care irrespective of their place in society. Government has steadily improved matric results, with 60% of our schools being no fee-paying schools. Government has also significantly expanded opportunities for higher education, with all poor students doing occupational programmes attending FET colleges for free. Government has committed to abandoning the ‘willing seller, willing buyer’ principle of land reform. We called for an industrial policy and we now have one. We called for increased investment into infrastructure and the President has announced in the 2012 State of the Nation Address a trillion-Rand infrastructure spend programme, the first on such a large scale! Revolutionaries must be on the forefront on building on these advances in order to tackle the challenges of unemployment, poverty and inequality.

Like Cde Chris did, let us expose the liberals and most of its mainstream media backers as the *ideological third force* that seek to abuse our institutions of democracy in order to undermine and discredit government’s transformation process by manufacturing distortions that we seek to undermine the very constitution we fought for!

Let every communist be in the trenches with the workers, to fight against casualisation of labour, to fight for a living wage and to intensify the struggle for a decent social wage, including safe and affordable public transport, access to health for all, access to education for the poor, and for a national health insurance scheme.

In honour of Cde Chris, we shall intensify the struggle for the transformation of the financial sector, including the current increase in reckless lending by the banks to the poor as part of undermining the National Credit Act that we fought so hard for. The SACP reiterates its call for the convening of a second financial sector summit, as part of curtailing the predatory behaviour of the financial sector. In addition, we will intensify the struggle for the mobilization of all resources in the hands of the financial sector, public and private, including the trillions of Rands of workers’ pension, provident and insurance funds, so that these are used for investment in job-creating infrastructure programmes. ●

Let every communist be in all fronts and terrains of struggle, in honour of the revolutionary sacrifices and example of Cde Chris!

CHRIS HANI

Commemoration for a fallen hero

This year's commemorations are centred on Ekurhuleni, where Cde Chris was murdered, and which has granted him the freedom of the city

BY SOLLY MAPAILA

The SACP dedicates April to commemorating and celebrating the life of late former General Secretary, Cde Chris Hani, gunned down by right-wing racists on 10 April 1993.

The highlight of the commemorations is the laying of the wreaths at the Thomas Nkobi Park in the East Rand. Provincial commemoration programmes are being run by Party structures in all provinces in collaboration with the Alliance. The National Labour and Economic Development Institute (Naledi) will also host a Memorial Lecture in honour of Cde Chris during the month of April.

This year's laying of wreaths was addressed by the General Secretary Cde Blade Nzimande, Cosatu Deputy General Secretary Cde Bheki Ntshalintshali, and the Mayor of Ekurhuleni, Cde Mondli Gungubele. Cde Blade Nzimande said Cde Chris was "a living testimony to the necessity of communists to be in all terrains and fronts of the struggle. For Cde Hani, radical militancy was not about empty sloganeering. His militancy was always connected to a clear-headed national democratic and socialistic strategic agenda".

A number of this year's activities are centred in Ekurhuleni, where Cde Chris lived at the time of his death and where he was assassinated. In 2006 the Council of Ekurhuleni adopted a resolution "to commemorate and celebrate the life and legacy of the late Chris Hani". Cde Chris



Militant mourners: part of the thousands-strong crowd at Cde Hani's funeral



Solly Mapaila

has already been made a freeman of the City of Ekurhuleni. This honour was (posthumously) conferred upon him for his outstanding political life and for his contributions to freedom and his commitment to the HHH (Health, Housing and Hunger) campaign.

As part of 19th anniversary of the assassination of Cde Chris, Ekurhuleni has organised a number of activities, among them: a photographic and poster exhibition; oral history; debates and storytelling for learners; a wreath laying ceremony; and a memorial lecture.

The photographic and poster exhibition runs from the 2 to 30 April and is being held at the Benoni Museum (weekdays from 8:30 – 16:30). The exhibition is a combination of artwork, struggle posters and photographs of Cde Chris. These art works were created in Art Development School classes, and are to be presented at art centres, community halls and library activity rooms in Ekurhuleni, as well as "Art as

Healing Programme" art classes at places of safety, special needs schools and correctional Services. All the art works carry content related to the Chris Hani Triple-H Campaign.

On 12 April Ekurhuleni hosts the Chris Hani Oral History and Debates programme at Dawn Park Primary School (9:30 – 16:00). The objectives of the programme are to educate the youth about the life and legacy of Cde Chris Hani and to groom future leaders through debating, and more broadly, to promote and celebrate South African cultural Heritage.

The City hosted a memorial lecture and gala dinner at the Birchwood Conference Centre on 10 April. The keynote speaker at this event was Cde Pallo Jordan.

These commemorative events are important not only in celebrating the revolutionary legacy of Cde Chris, but also in focusing on its relevance in the ongoing struggle for socialism. ●

Cde Mapaila is an SACP Politburo member

PROVINCIAL CONGRESS

Gauteng pledge: defend and deepen NDR

Gauteng SACP held its 10th Provincial Congress from 23-25 March 2012. Below is a shortened and edited version of its Declaration:

Representing 21 189 members from Voting District-based Branches (VDs), we were deeply inspired by the address of our most beloved General Secretary and first Minister of Higher Education in a democratic government, Dr Blade Nzimande, together with members of the Central Committee, six Provincial Secretaries, and the 30 delegates representing the YCL.

We also adopted an elaborate programme of action to guide and inform our revolutionary work for the next three years.

This resounding and most successful 10th Provincial Congress was held under the theme: *Consolidate, defend and deepen the national democratic revolution as our direct route to socialism.*

It is in this context that we declare, among many, the following resolutions of the Congress:

The world crisis of capitalism vindicates the Marxist-Leninist theory that capitalism has no solutions to the challenges facing humanity, that every solution it seeks further plunges the system in deeper crisis.

Congress appreciated the work of the SACP to build a revolutionary world communist movement.

We reaffirmed our commitment to the national democratic revolution (NDR) and the socialist perspectives as expressed in the MTV and SARS.

We therefore resolved as directed by the MTV and SARS perspective to intensify the ideological class struggle to deepen and advance the NDR and build socialism in the concrete conditions of our country.

Congress resolved to place predominantly African and black townships at the centre of key infrastructure initiatives and programmes.

Congress expressed its unwavering support to the SACP's decision at our 12th National Congress to ensure that communists are at the centre of all sites that exercises power and impact on the lives of the working class, including the state.

Congress rejected undialectical, narrow and abstract approaches to questions of the state and its relationship to other key sites of class power.

Congress further reaffirmed the document adopted by the Central Committee on deployment and accountability.

Congress noted a series of factional, unprincipled and personal attacks directed against our General Secretary, Cde Nzimande, holding him personally liable for collective decisions of the CC on the deployment of communists to state organs based on the MTV and SARS.

Congress reaffirmed its principled support of the leadership of our General Secretary as we go to the forthcoming 13th National Congress

Congress therefore mandated the new PEC to engage other provinces to reaffirm the leadership of Cde Nzimande.

Congress noted that under the leadership of the GS as part of the CC collective mass struggles have led to an increase in the membership of the SACP to more than 150 000.

Congress reaffirmed the strategic perspective of the Party to resolve the contradictions severely impacting on the living conditions of the working class in their communities.

We resolved to confront the historic patters of spatial development, the current physical structure of the predominantly African and black townships, and some of the contradictions such as warlordism, xenophobia, substance and alcohol abuse, and abuse of women and

children.

Congress noted the quantitative growth of the SACP and directed all Party structures in the province to balance this growth with an intense political education programme.

Congress adopted a proposed set of constitutional amendments for consideration by the 13th National Congress. Congress reaffirmed the need to introduce at least three positions to the Secretariat at national, two at provincial levels, and to assess such requirements at district and branch levels.

These constitutional proposals take into account the resolution of the SACP to establish VD branches.

Congress further reaffirmed the revolutionary work of the YCL since its recent re-launch in 2003, its quantitative growth and the youth's appreciation of Marxism-Leninism at this early stage of their development. We firmly believe that the SACP has a good future in the YCL.

Congress appreciated improved relations within alliance partners in the province, and believes that these relations must be strengthened.

The Congress unanimously elected to the PEC: Cde Jacob Mamabolo: Provincial Secretary; Cde Joe Mpsi: Provincial Chairperson; Cde Joseph Morallane: Provincial Treasury; Cde Mpapa Kanyane: Deputy Provincial Secretary; Cde Rosemary Thobejane-Ndoqo: Deputy Provincial Chairperson.

Additional PEC Members: Chiloane Victor, Dhlamini Molly, Maboye Mosidi, Malatsi Thulani, Matsemela Matsemela, Mhlakaza Vuyo, Mokele Nelly, Molobela Jeff, Nare Lulama, Ndwandwe Nkosinathi, Nkosi Duma, Hope Papo, Sekete Moshoe-shoe, Tweedie Dominic and Vilakazi Sonto. ●

NHI

Cde Aaron kicks off the NHI!

New health system is an unstoppable tsunami

BY BENSON KA-NGQENTSU

The activism by the Minister for Health, Dr Aaron Motsoaledi, in driving the introduction of National Health Insurance (NHI) has to be highly appreciated, particularly by the workers and the poor who will be its pre-eminent beneficiaries.

The entire Department's zeal, dedication and commitment clearly indicate that the introduction of NHI in 2012 is an unstoppable tsunami. Big business and the bourgeois media have been defeated in their bid to stop our NHI.

Unacceptable conditions in public hospitals and clinics were exploited by big business to defend and expand the private sector, its private hospitals and clinics, and pour cold water on the idea of an NHI. But the process of introducing the NHI will see us overcome long queues in public hospitals and clinics and shortages of medical staff and medication – problems confronted mainly by the workers and the poor, in rural areas and townships.

When the SACP launched its cam-

paign for universal access to public health and identified the introduction of NHI as the means to achieve this, some elements from business and the bourgeois media were very vocal in proclaiming that “this thing of Nzimande would not work”. Since then work on the proposed NHI by the Department for Health is a smack in the

face of monopoly capital that worked in cahoots with the bourgeoisie media to attempt to discredit this important campaign and programme of our ANC-led government. It is a lesson learnt: the SACP Red October Campaign always emerges victorious; elements that choose to fight against the Party's campaigns will be fighting a losing battle.

The Zuma administration is resolute in its commitment to the full implementation of our alliance's five shared priorities. These are land redistribution and rural development; the fight against crime and corruption; provision of free and quality education; universal access to health care (through the introduction of NHI); and the creation of decent jobs. While in all these five priorities areas tremendous progress is currently underway it is critical to continually mobilise our people around these priorities to support the



Benson ka-Ngqentsu



Cde Motsoaledi mobilises learners at Greenfield Primary, Durban

progress and to thwart the efforts of those who wish to derail the government's ability to fulfil the mandate of the electorate.

Cde ka Ngqentsu is SACP Brian Bunting District Secretary

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ICWP

A strategy to confront the global crisis

This input was made at the 13th Meeting of the International Communist and Workers Parties (ICWP) in Athens in December

BY CHRIS MATLHAKO

The SACP has, over the last few years, undertaken a fairly comprehensive analysis of the current global capitalist crisis – characterising it essentially as a three-pronged crisis that is:

1. Cyclical : A typical but particularly grave boom-bust cycle in which capitalist over-accumulation is resulting in the (capitalist) imperative of a massive destruction of value (factory closures, job losses, company liquidations, financial defaults and the “requirement” of government cut-backs). An important question for us is who will carry the burden, which class, and within classes which sectors (eg. finance capital or industrial capital)? Will public resources be used to bail out banks (as in the US), or as Germany and France are seeking to compel Greece, Italy, etc. or will bad lenders be punished and public resources be used to implement (at least) counter-cyclical infrastructure and social spending measures?

This is fundamentally a class struggle that is being waged across Europe and North America – with varying degrees of coherence and militancy.

2. Structural: A crisis of capitalist hegemony, in which there is a decisive shift away from the 20th century centres of capitalist accumulation. It is basically a shift of dynamic capitalist activity from

North America, Japan and Europe to South East Asia. Again, as hegemony shifts, the old core centres fight back to retain their powers and privileges, and their access to global natural resources in the face of competition from new centres of dynamic production, especially China.

Again, who will “win” and who will “lose” in this global shift? This opens up a whole series of struggles – military con-



The SACP's Cde Chris Matlhako addresses steelworkers on strike in the Greek coastal city of Piraeuf – the workers are on strike against attempts to withdraw their benefits as a result of Greece's debt crisis

flicts (Libya), trade wars, currency wars, the battle for control over the agenda of multinational institutions, etc.

In the current global reality, unlike the earlier period analysed by Lenin (in, for instance, “Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism”), the tendencies towards intra-imperialist armed conflict (the First World War) are somewhat (but not entirely) remote, because of the much greater integration of, for instance,

the Chinese economy within the accumulation process of the major transnational corporations.

In turn, there is the increasing Chinese economy's reliance on consumers in the US, Japan and the EU. The continued robustness of Chinese growth saw a relatively quick resolution of the so-called Asian contagion of 1997 – but China is now both unable (given the sheer scale of the current crisis) and unwilling to shoulder the principal burden of propping up the EU or US.

Hence major contradictions between China and the EU and US, on the one hand, and major class contradictions within China (continued cheap labour/export dependency or a greater focus on decent work, higher wages and a greater focus on its local market).

Instead, imperialist wars are increasingly being directed to weaker countries that have enormous natural resources, as is the case with the invasion of Iraq, the wars on Libya and Syria, that are supported by some of the major imperialist countries.

3. Civilisational: Capitalism relies on incessant growth, and it is systemically incapable of a “steady state” trajectory (a trajectory in which what is consumed is naturally renewable). The current growth trajectory is leading to the wholesale extinction of natural resources (water, fish-



International delegates and members of the KKE and its youth wing, KNE, close the 13th ICWP meeting with The Internationale

eries, arable land), to the destruction of small scale peasant farming in the South (and resulting mass urbanisation), and to climate change that will impact most severely on continents like Africa and low-lying island states. Capitalism is a system based on profit and not on social and environmental need is incapable of resolving the climate crisis – as is apparent from the stance of the major capitalist powers in the current COP17 process.

Broadly, the tasks of the left globally in the context of this all-round capitalist crisis, is to have an active presence in all sites of struggle (whether the Occupy Wall Street movement in the US; or the popular struggles in Europe around the deficit reduction and unemployment; or the struggle for climate justice).

The task of the left, as the Communist Manifesto eloquently put it, is to be in the midst of these struggles and to always seek to build unity and a deepening awareness of the systemic and structural character of the crises – i.e. an absolute necessity of abolishing capitalism itself.

While all the objective conditions are maturing for an assault on capitalism in one of its worst crises, the subjective forces and the motive forces for an alternative socialist struggle are indeed extremely weak.

Instead the right wing in places like Europe has turned the crisis into an offensive against the social democratic policies, and exploiting emotive issues such as immigration, as the main culprits for the current economic crisis and not the capitalist system.

Some of the lessons to be learnt dur-

ing this period is the necessity to explore a range of a combination of old and new strategies mainly involving the formation of broad alliances, mass mobilisation and mass based electoral campaigning, combined with effective use of state power where the left forces are in, or have access to, government. It is a struggle that for some time to come will have to be waged on a terrain of multi-party electoral politics. It requires new and innovative Marxist strategies.

While multi-party democratic elections have on the whole favoured elites and the rich – something that gave imperialism confidence to experiment with elite pacts and negotiated transitions away from dictatorships in the late 1980s into the 1990s in places like Latin America – there have now emerged new possibilities for the left to exploit the multi-party electoral terrain, especially if effectively combined with, and buttressed by, sustained mass mobilisation.

Another arena of struggle that the SACP, as well as the whole of the left,

needs to take up in earnest is that of ecological destruction caused by the rampant accumulation of capitalism. This is even more important in the wake of COP17 in Durban which seems to be headed for another deadlock with serious implications for our planet. In fact failure to ratify and extend the Kyoto Protocol or coming out without another alternative binding agreement in Durban has got very serious implications for our planet and the future of humanity.

The current global capitalist crisis will also require that all left forces globally seriously explore the potential to revitalise the communist and workers' parties, other left, anti-capitalist, forces, as well as the necessity to build an alternative global left bloc.

An immediate challenge for the SACP, and in the wake of COP17 and its immediate aftermath, is that of engaging our cadreship on matters relating to the environment, climate change and generally ecological issues. This will also require that we forge links with both domestic and international progressive ecological movements, also as a crucial component of internationalist working class solidarity.

Indeed in taking up these issues, we will have to navigate a contradiction facing many developing countries like ours, the simultaneous necessities to grow our economies and the destruction to the environment brought about by ecologically unsustainable growth paths.

Thus, we want to urge this 13th Meeting of ICWP to consider the proposal of the SACP and endorse the convening of climate justice international conference of communist and workers parties in South Africa in 2012, which will bring together communist and workers parties to debate and engage matters relating to the climate. ●

Cde Matlhako is SACP Politburo member for international relations

Freedom in capitalist society always remains about the same as it was in ancient Greece: Freedom for slave owners

– VI Lenin



INTERVIEW

Brazil: same struggle, different terrain

The Communist Party of Brazil (CPdoB) outlines its response to the global crisis and domestic Brazilian manifestations

Cde Ricardo Alemao Abreu, International Relations Secretary and CC member of the Communist Party of Brazil, speaks to SACP Politburo member Solly Mapaila

Mapaila: *What in your view are the key features of the global capitalist economic crisis?*

Abreu: The crisis is characterised as systematic and two-pronged. It is not only cyclical but structural. It will not suddenly collapse capitalism, but it means capitalism is not in a good era like in the 50s and the 60s. It disrupts the productive forces as it is about depression and recession. It is a crisis of over production. We are currently discussing in South America a peace zone, which is incompatible with this crisis. We also anticipate protecting our region against imperialist wars.

The second is the defence of the national economy. We need to sustain the measures to sustain the economy – better wages, especially minimum wages, as it started in 2003 with Lula. It has now doubled, and is a very important conquest of the poor. It is also good for the economy and the popular internal market. The civil construction is also an important intervention, particularly houses with low interest rates. It also stimulates consumption and combats financial speculation.

The trade union and popular movements are defending social rights and trying to gain more. The government agrees.

Mapaila: *How are you responding to the global crisis in your country?*

Abreu: The Party sees three components to the crisis: mobilise and organise the people, stimulate the political forces of the people, and unify people's power. We also participate in the parlia-

mentary and government fronts in the senate, parliament and municipalities to defend and deepen social rights. Then there is the struggle of ideas through the communication of propaganda, through the fundamental theoretical ideas of the Party to gain the confidence of the masses and express the ultimate solution of socialism.

Mapaila: *What has been the response of the working class to your approach, in particular the role of the trade unions?*

Abreu: We have traditionally strong youth and student movements. And it is an important force, though not a principal force in the trade unions. We also have a left alliance of three parties – Workers Party, Brazilian Socialist Party and Democratic Labour Party. This alliance coor-

“Ours is a socialist programme that advances and defends proletarian internationalism”

dinates within the broad coalition of the centre-left. In the elections each Party has its own list. With the mayors, governors etc we make joint alliances.

Parliament has about 18 parties in our coalition, with 13 and 5 in the opposition. Among the five we have, one left centre and one right, one Party in the opposition is a Trotskyite Party. Brazil has about 30 bourgeoisie left parties.

Mapaila: *Are you forging alliances with potentially progressive and strata outside the working class? Why, if you are, and which classes and strata?*

Abreu: Ours is a socialist programme that advances and defends proletarian internationalism. The road to socialism

is a national development programme to accumulate enough force to conquer power based on social and economic development. To combat the capitalist crisis, we promote more the rights of people and workers. The Party intensified its international activity, especially in Latin America. We think we can potentialise the current wave to orientate it towards socialism. We have to do this with all anti-imperialist forces, hence the importance of the Sao Paulo Forum. We have to unite these forces to build this consciousness and increase cooperation between these movements and their governments.

Also Africa is a priority of the Brazilian government, the Party and the Brazilian Left and the broad social political forces. Because we think the anti-imperialist struggle has to increase in Latin America and Africa, in particular, in Brazil, we have political, social, cultural and historical ties with Africa, and we are also near to Africa than, say, Asia. The Brazilian people are also made up of Africans.

Mapaila: *What are other aspects of your response?*

Abreu: The Party should have the priority to change micro economic policies. We need to have the conviction to change this. This is at the core of class struggle as the bourgeoisie gain a lot of money from this framework. We need to aggressively combat the crisis. We also need to democratise the mass media, instruments of television and radio, print etc. Currently, these are concentrated in monopolies.

We want access and to have more working class channels. Financial capital controls all the information and use the media to launch campaigns against the government and the left. We need to also have access to the people and have socialist dialogue. We prioritise the reform of the media. ●