

ELECTIONS 2014

Marching for victory!

Massive show of strength as SACP and Cosatu call on workers to march for an overwhelming ANC election triumph on 7 May!

At least 120 000 people participated in an SACP-Cosatu march in eThekweni on 26 April to express the support of workers for an overwhelming ANC victory in the 7 May elections. It was one of the biggest marches organised by the SACP and Cosatu in many years.

KwaZulu-Natal Cosatu Provincial Secretary Cde Zet Luzipho, said that the aim of the march was to “defend the ANC and deal with distortions of what has been achieved in the past 20 years”.

And after the march SACP Provincial Secretary Cde Themba Mthembu said: “The march exceeded our expectations. It was huge, huge!”

Addressing the crowd, SACP General Secretary Cde Blade Nzimande, said that the opposition parties’ campaigns were limited to reports by the Public Protector. “They have turned the Nkandla issue into an electioneering slogan because they have run out of ideas to campaign. They don’t have any concrete policies on how to govern.”

Cosatu President Cde S’dumo Dlamini said the ANC’s aim to unite workers in the union federation was not interference, but an attempt to empower them. Cde Dlamini said the ANC came with a clear message on why workers needed to unite. He stressed: “We are an organisation that is willing to travel with a party determined to work with us in order to achieve the workers’ objectives. We know where we are going and we need a party that knows where it is going. We com-



Leading the march to victory: The SACP’s Cde Blade Nzimande and Cosatu’s Cde S’dumo Dlamini lead the massive Durban march

mend the ANC’s role for working with us in rooting out oppressive laws under which our workers languish.”

Cde Dlamini said Cosatu’s 19 affiliates “belong to members and not leaders. Members contribute subscriptions so they can continue to be the custodians of their unions and Cosatu will continue to work with the vanguard party and the liberation party. No-one should come late and claim to have a miracle to give workers what they want.”

2nd Deputy General Secretary Cde Solly Mapaila said: “This march confirms that whatever some union leaders might say, workers are going to vote for the ANC in large numbers.”

He said the SACP was “now focusing our attention in communities, industrial areas and wherever voters are, through voter contact activities, including door to door.”

“The campaign for decisive ANC victory is now 24 hours every day.” ●



Above: A sea of Red SACP and Cosatu T-shirts floods Pixley KaSeme Street, dotted with masses of gold ANC skippers.

Left: ANC regional Chairperson Cde S'bongiseni Dlhomo at the head of thousands of Alliance marchers

MAY DAY: SACP MESSAGE

Close ranks: advance to a radical 2nd phase of our democratic revolution!

Let us defeat all anti-working class forces! Let us roll back monopoly capital! Let us deal decisively with corruption!

We mark May Day 2014 at a critical moment in our country's history. We have just celebrated 20 years since our 1994 democratic breakthrough. On 7 May we will be going to the polls to elect national and provincial legislatures to usher in the fifth ANC-led administration.

This is not a time for working class complacency.

This is not a time for distracting divisions among ourselves. The organised working class must be active and present on all of the key battle-fields of the day.

This May Day, 2014, the SACP is calling on the South African working class to close ranks to:

- Unite to defend working class gains and the unity of Cosatu;
- Ensure an overwhelming ANC-alliance election victory on 7 May; and
- Take forward the struggle for a radical second phase of the national democratic revolution.

These three tasks are interconnected:

● Unless we embark on a radical second phase of our revolution, crisis levels of unemployment, poverty and inequality will continue. They will place impossible strains on the trade union movement, threatening all the gains that we have made.

● An ANC and Alliance that is weakened electorally will lack the confidence and unity to drive forward with a radical second phase. Without a united, militant and independent Cosatu within the Alliance, the ability of a new ANC-led



Now and after the ANC's election victory, the working class must remain active and vigilant

government to press ahead with radical transformation will be compromised.

● But likewise a union movement that stands aloof from the political battlefields will simply abandon that space to its bourgeois class enemies.

That is why, as the SACP we say that the order of the day is: **close ranks!**

Let us close ranks to celebrate collectively our 20-year track record

As we mark 20-years of democracy in SA, let us remember the important working class victories we have collectively achieved over these two decades.

Amongst other things, we have entrenched within our constitution critical labour and socio-economic rights, and we

have passed many progressive pro-worker laws. There have been major gains in social grants, housing, electrification, and much more. These things didn't just descend from heaven. They didn't just happen. They were only possible in part because of the powerful role that the trade union movement played not just **after** 1994 – but also long **before**.

These advances have been made, consolidated and defended by the ongoing unity in action of our Alliance, and by the organised working class under the umbrella of Cosatu.

But these advances are under constant threat from the capitalist system, and from opposition parties like the DA which nowadays suddenly and oppor-



Cde Siphso Madonsela keeps the Red Flag flying at the Union Buildings Freedom Day celebrations

tunistically praise the administrations of former presidents, Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki – as if the DA ever voted for those governments!

Let us also close ranks to celebrate together our achievements over these past five years

- Working with the ANC-led government we have rescued the auto sector in SA through public investment of R22-billion in 183 projects, preserving 46 000 jobs and adding 9 850 more jobs in the midst of the worst global capitalist crisis since the 1930s.

- Working with the ANC-led government we have had important interventions in other industrial sectors including clothing and textiles, imposing a 75 % local procurement requirement on the public sector.

- In the past 5 years, we have driven an economic and social infrastructure programme, committing R1-trillion of public spending as a key counter-cyclical intervention in the midst of the global economic crisis.

- Together, through government and as a result of our campaigns, we have ensured the removal of adverse credit information, which came into effect a month ago, impacting on 10 million South Africans suffocated by mashonisas and high bank charges.

- Together, in the face of DA opposition, we have re-opened the lodgement of

land claims, to address the plight of millions of the landless and land hungry.

- Together, over the past five years, we have ensured work opportunities for 4,5-million unemployed South Africans through the Expanded Public Works and Community Work programmes.

- We have opened the doors of higher learning to hundreds of thousands more children of the working class with a trebling of the National Students Financial Scheme from R3,1-billion in 2009 to the current R9,6-billion.

But these were not gains achieved on auto-pilot. They are not gains won by working class absenteeism, or by spoil ballots, or by narrow anti-government oppositionism.

Vote ANC, but don't vote blank cheque!

The SACP will never call on the working class to vote once every few years, and then relax, leaving it to government. The reason is simple – the state is a contested reality. It's a CLASS contested reality. All of the above gains were won and need to be defended both from within and from outside of the state.

Without a united left, without a strong and united labour movement these advances will be pushed back. Without the left contesting inside of the state, advances will not be made – we will simply leave the space open to others, and especially to a bourgeoisie that never sleeps in its attempts to hijack our

democracy, to infiltrate, seduce, corrupt and roll-back the state.

The working class must remain active and vigilant. Those we send into Parliament and into government must be held to their mandate. They must report back to their constituencies and to the working class. This is not a way to weaken these comrades, it's to strengthen their hand in their responsibilities in legislatures, in parliament, in government itself.

Let us close ranks to take forward the struggle for a radical second phase of the NDR

Let us close ranks to ensure an intensified struggle to address the triple crisis of poverty, unemployment and inequality. Despite important advances since 1994, our economy remains based primarily on the export of minerals, and the domination of the mining and banking sectors.

- Unemployment was already at an outrageous level before the ongoing global capitalist crisis that began in 2007. Today unemployment stands at a massive 35%.

- Extreme poverty persists, afflicting millions of unemployed and even employed workers in an intrinsically low-wage economy. Poverty leads to hunger -10 million South Africans do not have adequate access to food.

- Inequality remains deep-seated. 50% of the population live on 8% of national income in SA, while the top 5% of earners earn 30 times more than the bottom 5%. The share of workers in national income declined from 55% in 2000 to below 50% at present. This is "reverse redistribution from the poor to the rich".

Why do we have these problems? The DA and the commercial media blame the ANC-led government and trade unions. They are, of course, wrong. It's the unchanged, persisting semi-colonial character of monopoly capital in SA that underpins the reproduction of crisis levels of unemployment, poverty and inequality.

This is the context in which we must close ranks, unite and take forward the struggle for a radical second phase of the democratic transformation of our society. By this we mean, amongst other things, a fundamental transformation of the structure of the economy, moving it away from its domination by the mining/finance/energy complex to re-industrialisation, building a strong manufacturing sector in South Africa and across our continent.

As part of the struggle to ensure radi-

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cal transformation, the SACP stands fully behind Cosatu in the struggle for:

- A new income and wage policy focused on addressing poverty and inequalities;
- A comprehensive social security system and a rejection of piecemeal approaches;
- The aligning of the mandate of Treasury and the Reserve Bank to the agenda of a radical economic transformation;
- Measures to ensure beneficiation of our natural resources;
- The channelling of retirement funds towards investment including building infrastructure where workers live; and
- Comprehensive land reform to reverse the legacy of rural and urban racialised spaces.

Let us close ranks to fight the scourge of corruption

Our ANC-Alliance electoral manifesto advances important interventions to fight corruption. Let us pledge to ensure that we do indeed stick to these manifesto commitments that include:

- Action against companies involved in bid rigging;
- The prohibition on public servants and public representatives from doing business with the state;
- A centralised process to adjudicate major state tenders;
- All corrupt officials to be made individually liable for losses incurred to the state as a result of their corrupt actions;
- The strengthening of corruption-fighting agencies.

But let us not fall into an opposition trap

To oppose corruption without fear or favour is not to be oppositionist – it is the best form of supporting the ANC government.

To speak up against police brutality, where it occurs, is not to oppose the ANC-led government or the police service – it's the best way of ensuring that we help to transform the state in line with ANC Alliance policies.

To mobilise against incompetence, delivery failures and neglect of working class communities and to seek actively to correct these problems – does not have to be oppositionist. In fact it's an act of solidarity with and defence of the core principles of our ANC-led movement.

The difference between us and the opposition is that we oppose corruption, incompetence and failures in order to correct them – in order to deepen our democracy, to defend and consolidate a

strong developmental state.

The opposition raises these things not to correct them, but to score cheap political points, and above all, to sow demoralisation about the public sector, to roll back the state. They want to displace the role of the public sector with their own dog-eats-dog private capitalist market.

The capitalist bosses can afford private health care – so they don't need public health-care or an NHI. They can afford private security – so they don't need an effective police service in their communities. They can afford private schools – so they don't need public education. They can afford private gyms – so they don't need community halls and sports fields. They can afford housing mortgages on several, multimillion rand luxury properties – so they don't need state funded private houses. They can save millions of Rands for their retirement – so they happily evade taxation, and disinvest their ill-gotten profits out of our country.

Yes, we must root out corruption in the state – but have you noticed how silent the opposition is about the multi-billion rand theft of public resources by the big private construction companies? Have you noticed how quickly they have forgotten the role of the bread cartel in literally stealing bread out of the mouths of the poor? Have you heard them campaigning against tax evasion and the illegal export of capital out of our country.

Their campaign against corruption is not directed AT corruption – it is directed against the very idea of a developmental public sector.

On May 7 – let us teach this DA, the arrogant party of monopoly capital and minority privilege, a powerful lesson

We call on the working class to deliver a decisive electoral defeat on the DA:

- A party that opposed farm workers minimum wage being raised from R65 a day;
- A party that supports labour brokers;
- A party that wants to roll back hard-won labour market legislation in favour of a “flexible labour market;”
- A party that portrays Cosatu as the enemy, and marches on its head-office;
- A party of hypocrisy that speaks out of two sides of its mouth on black economic empowerment and on land reform, a party that fudges its silent approval of the Zionist apartheid wall in Palestine’
- A party that is seeking to disguise its conservative minority white electoral

machine and its neoliberal agenda behind parachuted black faces and a newly discovered support for ANC presidents of the past.

We call on the working class -Come out in your large numbers to deliver a massive electoral blow to this party of big capital and white privilege. Electoral abstenteeism simply plays into the hands of this retrograde anti-worker party.

On May 7 – let us also deal a decisive electoral blow against the EFF, the party led by the most corrupt tenderpreneurs

Workers are not fooled by these loud-mouthed demagogues, these tenderpreneurs in red berets. They have never done an honest day's work, so where do they get their fancy cars, their Breitling watches? Where do they get their campaign funding? Africa and the world have seen this kind of clowning before. But it is a mistake to just laugh it off – the Hitlers and Mussolinis rose to prominence demagogically sprouting “socialism”, and then butchering the working class when in power.

The EFF practices the same kind of demagoguery that we are seeing playing itself out on the platinum belt at present. The EFF, like Amcu, hijacks real grievances but for entirely self-serving leadership purposes. Wild promises are made for which there is no capacity to deliver leading inevitably to the crushing defeat of gullible followers. A second slow bleeding Marikana tragedy is now playing itself out on the platinum belt.

For all these reasons, we urge workers to come out in their overwhelming numbers to defeat anti-worker right-wing formations – whether they are cloaked in blue or red guises.

Without a strong and independent SACP, without a militant and independent Cosatu, and without a revolutionary working class SACP-Cosatu axis, electoral promises can be rolled back and nullified by the unceasing class war waged by the capitalist class. Without vigilance and strong organisation our own formations can be hijacked.

There is much more to be done!
Let us close ranks!
Let us roll back monopoly capital!
Let us deal decisively with corruption!

Let us defeat anti-working class forces!

Forward to an overwhelming ANC-Alliance electoral victory! Forward to a radical second phase of the democratic revolution! ●

MAY DAY: COSATU MESSAGE

Cosatu's programme for economic transformation

Congress declarations & government White Papers are not enough – we must mobilise the masses to start turning our words into deeds

We can issue congress declarations and conference resolutions, government white papers and election manifestos with good alternative policies. But unless we mobilise the masses on the streets and work with government to start putting their words into deeds, we will change nothing and the neoliberal hegemony will continue to rule over us.

May Day this year falls between two other very important dates. On 27 April, we celebrated the destruction of apartheid and the completion of 20 years of democracy. On 7 May, we shall have the opportunity to exercise the most important right we won for the majority of South Africans – to vote in a free and fair election. This year's May Day will accordingly focus on workers and the 20 years of democracy as well as the need to ensure a decisive ANC victory on 7 May.

Origins of May Day

The tradition of celebrating May Day comes from the struggle for the eight-hour day in 1886 in the United States and Canada. On 1 May 1886, during national strikes for an eight-hour day, Chicago police attacked striking workers, killing six. The next day a bomb exploded at a demonstration against police brutality, killing eight policemen. They arrested eight trade unionists and put them on trial. Whether they were guilty or innocent was irrelevant. They were labelled agitators, fomenting revolution and stirring up the working class, found guilty and executed.



In Paris in 1889, to commemorate these murdered workers, the International Working Men's Association declared May 1 an international working class. The red flag symbolises their blood in the battle for workers' rights.

2014 is the 125th time workers all over the world have been observing May Day. In our country this year is also the year we celebrate 20 years of democracy, and must always remember the significance of 1994, and never forget just how evil was the system of colonialism and apartheid we destroyed.

Triumph over apartheid

Colonialism robbed us of our country's natural riches, ruthlessly exploited the cheap labour of migrant workers, and condemned the majority of our people

to virtual slavery in order to amass super profits for the British ruling class.

Apartheid denied the majority of South Africans all basic human and democratic rights. It forced them to live and work where the government ordered and barred them from all the better paying jobs.

Now, thanks to the struggles of working class, led by tripartite Alliance under the leadership of the ANC, we have a democratic constitution and laws, which guarantee freedoms and human rights. We can vote, join any party and protest against the government. We are protected from arbitrary arrest and imprisonment, and from discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, disability, religion or sexual orientation.

Workers, after decades of virtual slavery under apartheid, have won important constitutional guarantees, including the right to fair labour practices, the right to form and join trade unions, strike and picket, and the right to collective bargaining.

Our lives have begun to improve!

- People receiving social grants have increased from 3-million to 16-million.
- Over 3,3-million houses have been built, for more than 16-million people;
- About 12-million households have electricity, 7-million more than in 1994;
- Around 92% of South Africans have access to potable water, compared to 60% in 1996;
- More than 2-million people are receiving antiretroviral medication.

But we know from experience that ensuring the implementation of a progressive mandate requires both ongoing

support and at times critical engagement by the labour movement. Without a strong Cosatu, electoral promises can be rolled back by the unceasing class war waged by the capitalist class.

We still have a long way to go to make our freedom complete!

May Day gives us an opportunity not only to look at victories and progress we have registered but also the setbacks and the remaining challenges.

The Cosatu 11th National Congress held in September 2012, as well as the Collective Bargaining Organising and Campaigns Conference held on 15 March 2013, spelt out what should be the key programme we should follow to achieve our total emancipation as the workers.

As the Cosatu Collective Bargaining, Organising and Campaigns Conference Declared: "While we have made important advances in the areas of democracy, human rights and social benefits, for which we give full credit to the efforts of our Alliance, and the ANC government, socioeconomically, workers' lives have not been fundamentally transformed.

"The shocking levels of unemployment, poverty and inequality lie at the heart of the increasingly violent protests we are seeing in both workplaces and communities. It is creating what we have been calling 'ticking time bombs', which are now starting to explode."

These protests tell us why we have to ensure that in the third democratic decade we achieve a fundamental transformation in our economy, and build a democratic, united, non-racial, nonsexist and prosperous South Africa. This was summed up in the Final Declaration of Cosatu's 11th National Congress in 2012: "Workers are demanding that the people shall share in the country's wealth (as promised by our Freedom Charter). Our members are speaking through our structures, demonstrating their lack of patience through wildcat strikes and service delivery protests."

The crisis was made far worse by the world economic crisis of 2008, but even before then, South Africa was already in deep trouble as a result of its apartheid and colonial past, and its underlying structural problems and high unemployment.

Unemployment remains a number one concern of workers. Today, by the more realistic expanded definition,



which includes discouraged work-seekers, unemployment stands at a massive 34,1%, a huge waste of workers' potential to create wealth for both themselves and their families and to generate economic growth by increasing consumption.

The second arm of the crisis – poverty – is equally frightening. The 2011 National Census revealed that 41,4% live below the poverty line, which they define as R3 864 per head per year (R10,50 a day) at 2000 prices. This only just pays for a loaf of brown bread, which currently costs R9,47. So 41,4% of workers in South Africa are working for a loaf of bread a day. It is still intrinsically a low-wage colonial economy.

Poverty inevitably leads to hunger. After nearly 20 years we cannot produce enough food to adequately feed all our people. The 2011 General Household Survey estimated that 21% of households have inadequate access to food.

The third part of the crisis – inequality – is summed up in the statistic that the Gini coefficient, which measures inequality, stood at 0,64 in 1995 but increased to 0,68 in 2008, which made us the most unequal society in the world.

While most of the poorest South Africans are less poor than before 1994, the richest South Africans are far better off, which has massively widened the wealth gap. And inequality is still very much defined along racial lines. The South African Race Relations Institute, analysing Statistics South Africa figures, shows

that the median salary for Africans in 2011 was R2 380, while Coloureds earned R3 030, Indians earned R6 800 and whites earned R10 000. "The Sunday Times' Rich List" provides irrefutable evidence to support Cosatu's call for a legislated national minimum wage to address poverty and inequalities.

Faced with this ongoing crisis, the struggle for a radical economic transformation of our economy cannot be suspended or delayed. Our demands are very clear.

At the level of the economy, we spell out what could constitute the "radical economic shift" which would change the trajectory in terms of distribution of income, employment, access to assets etc.

We demand:

- An end to apartheid wage policies and the introduction of a new incomes and wage policy;
- A change of the macroeconomic policy;
- A change on the mandate of Treasury and Reserve Bank so that they are aligned to the radical economic transformation;
- A coherent package of economic policies which ensure that macro-economic policies, industrial policy, labour market policies, and social protection, are all driven by one agenda, unlike the current situation, where policies contradict each other, and are held hostage by key centres of economic power, particularly the Treasury and the SA Reserve Bank, which needs a new mandate;
- A strategic set of interventions to harness the power of the state to redirect the economy. Failure to do these things would mean that we continue to pay lip service to economic shifts, while in reality the market, and power centres aligned to finance capital, or the new elite, continue to drive the agenda;
- Overhaul the NDP and align it with the concept of a radical economic transformation;
- A comprehensive social security system;
- A total ban of the labour brokering system
- An end to corruption in both private and public sector but more importantly within our own unions;
- An agreement on an Alliance platform that will ensure that the alliance does not just function closer to the elections.
- Mobilisation of the civil society be-

hind this programme.

This programme requires a united, not a divided Cosatu

The key problem with all these demands is implementation. We can issue congress declarations and conference resolutions, government white papers and election manifestos with good alternative policies. But unless we mobilise the masses on the streets and work with government to start putting their words into deeds, we will change nothing and the neoliberal hegemony will continue to rule over us.

Tragically, however, just when we need to be at our strongest to meet these challenges, Cosatu is experiencing the worst forms of divisions in its entire history, which have weakened it politically and organisationally. The forces of change have been hamstrung, with potentially disastrous consequences unless we re-forge unity.

This May Day we must all commit ourselves to rebuilding a strong, united trade union movement, independently controlled by the workers, and led by dedicated servants of the working class, who never put their personal interests ahead of those of the workers who elected them.

It will make no sense however to recruit workers to join our unions unless we provide them with the services they need. Let us not forget that the most important reason workers give for joining a Cosatu union is protection against unfair dismissal and unfair discipline (38% of our members), followed by improving wages, benefits and working conditions (33% of our members). This is where we have to put our efforts first and foremost, and pull up our socks in all areas of service.

It is with this in mind that we have welcomed the intervention led by the ANC Task Team. We pledge to work with the Task Team in order to leave no stone unturned in our search for the unity of the federation. We know workers desperately need a united federation capable of leading and engineering a radical economic transformation.

We pledge to work with the ANC Task Team to achieve the strategic goal of worker unity. We remain committed to achieve our long-term goal for the creation of a single federation in our country and a single union in every industry or sector of the economy.



Vote ANC on 7 May!

We urge all workers to exercise their hard won right to vote on the 7 May. We call on the employers, in particular in the agriculture, retail, wholesale sectors, including shops and restaurants not to deny workers this basic human right to choose a government of their choice.

We remain resolute with our demand that May Day, 27 April and 7 May, which will be a voting day, and all other struggle related holidays such as 16 June and 9 August be declared non-trading public holidays. By this we mean no employer should be allowed to open their doors on these days unless they doing essential services such as in hospitals, police and the army.

Successive Cosatu congresses have reaffirmed our support for our long-standing ally, the ANC, the only party that has the interests of workers and the poor at heart and has fought, in the face of hard opposition in parliament, for the advancement and protection of workers' rights.

Despite all the problems we still face, the ANC government have made tangible gains for workers and the 2014 manifesto commits the ANC government to do more, including:

- Strengthen the Employment Equity Act to force employers to report unequal incomes in all wage levels and submit plans to reduce inequalities.
- Ensure that collective bargaining is strengthened in all sectors.

- Progress is being made to provide accessible, reliable and affordable public transport.

- Over 3-million houses have been built as part of efforts to ensure all South Africans have housing.

- Steps have been taken to improve access to quality education, towards the goal of free education.

- Under the National Health Insurance system to ensure that no one is denied healthcare for lack of money.

We will have to fight to ensure that these promises are kept. All the improvements we have today were won through struggles, waged both inside the state by ANC cadres and in the streets by Cosatu activists. For us, elections constitute another site of struggle which must be won under the banner of an ANC-led Alliance.

Electoral boycotting, or ill-conceived campaigns and manoeuvres to spoil ballot papers, play straight into the hands of anti-worker, anti-union opposition parties, notably the DA, and cannot be said to be progressive or revolutionary.

Only the ANC has a track record of being a reliable ally of workers since its inception in 1912, and its 2014 manifesto commits to do more. We are therefore, in line with the successive resolutions, calling on the South African working class to unite, close ranks, and ensure an overwhelming electoral victory for our alliance partner, the ANC, and at the same time to build and strengthen Cosatu structures for the tasks, which lie ahead!

International solidarity

As on every May Day, we must step up our campaigns of international solidarity of support for:

- The Palestine people's justified struggle for national sovereignty and the withdrawal of the apartheid Israeli regime from illegally occupied Palestinian territories,

- The workers of Swaziland in their struggle against the corrupt monarchist dictatorship and for democracy and human rights.

- The battle of the people of Western Sahara for independence from Morocco,

- Solidarity with the people of Cuba and for the end of The US economic boycott.

This is an edited version of Cosatu's May Day message

WORKERS' DEMOCRACY DIVIDEND

20 years on – real gains, but the struggle continues

Significant efforts to de-racialise the economy – but advances could be lost to capital's relentless bid to maintain its dominance & hegemony

BY RENEVA FOURIE



Historically, struggles of progressive worker organisations in South Africa extended beyond issues of the workplace. Worker struggles were an integral part of the struggles against the system of apartheid-colonialism, which had its tentacles destructively ingrained in all social, economic and political aspects of the South African society. The power relations between white and black workers in general were that of master and servant, and class stratified job reservation based on race was the norm.

The interconnectivity between national and class struggles once again gained prominence in the 1980s. As workers were organised on the shop-floor, they also formed part of 'locals' within communities and were active participants in broader community-based bread-and-butter and resistance campaigns. Reciprocally, community-based organisations had an appreciation of the relationship between race and capital. Workplace struggles were not viewed in isolation and communities rallied in support of workers during efforts to champion the transformation of the workplace.

In the first democratic election (and subsequent general and local government elections), Cosatu put tremendous resources and energy into the campaign. The attainment of democracy in 1994 thus had a significant impact on the nature of labour reform, as well as the role that worker organisations were expected to play in building the new, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic South Africa.

The incorporation and prioritisation of the interests and needs of the black working class, which had always been identified as the primary motive force within the liberation movement, in the policies and programmes of the democratic state was therefore regarded as essential. Workers are part of a historic bloc that underpins the state and its developmental orientation. This underpinning is manifested at a political level through the existence of the tri-partite alliance between the ANC, SACP and Cosatu; structured platforms of engagement within the alliance to allow for commentary on organisational policies; and the incorporation of members of all three structures in the representatives to Parliament and the Executive across the three spheres of government.



The organised working class – recognised as the primary motive force of the national democratic revolution

An appreciation of this context and intent is necessary when discussing labour reform by the democratic government, specifically workplace incorporation into state policy, legislation and institutions, for it could so easily be lost within the ongoing war of position, in an environment where capital dominates and relentlessly

contests to maintain its hegemony both domestically and globally.

Workplace incorporation into state policy, legislation and institutions

Interventions by the democratic government to transform the workplace over the past two decades could be streamlined into three broad areas namely the work environment, opportunity creation and capacity development. Various legislative and institutional mechanisms were put in place to address the three areas; and such mechanisms were subjected to regular review. These interventions occurred within the context of government's overall developmental objectives and economic and social imperatives, and thus support for the unemployed, in addition to the general expansion of the economy, were also taken into account. The interventions were also products of and subjected to ongoing social dialogue between government, labour and business, facilitated by an institution specifically created for this purpose, namely the National Eco-

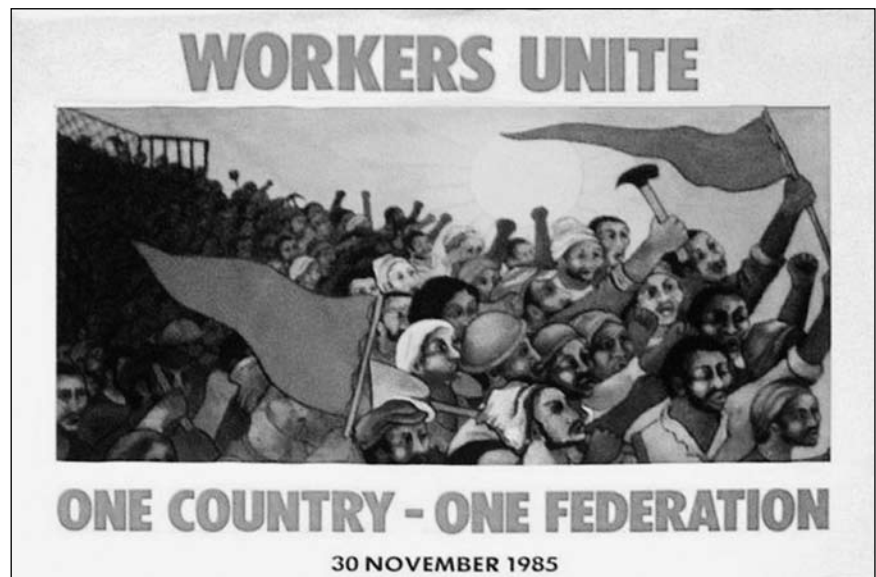
conomic Development and Labour Council (Nedlac).

The Labour Relations Act (LRA) as amended in 1998 and the Basic Conditions of Employment Act of 1998 (BCEA) were directed at restoring dignity within the workplace and improving the work environment. The LRA addresses the workplace environment in general by advancing economic development, social justice, labour peace and democracy in the workplace. The BCEA provides policy certainty through the setting of employment conditions such as working hours, leave, employment contracts and terminations. These legislative frameworks allow for the organisation of workers, negotiation forums and bargaining councils, as well as a dispute resolution mechanism in the form of the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA). Of significance too are the sectoral determinations to protect vulnerable workers, particularly domestic and farm workers; as well as general efforts to improve occupational health and safety.

Access to job opportunities was severely curtailed under apartheid. In addressing the fundamental ills of the past, the Employment Equity Act of 1998 was introduced to protect workers against unfair discrimination in employment. Furthermore, it introduced specific measures to provide opportunities for blacks, women and people with disabilities to ensure equitable representation aligned to the national and regional demographics of the country. Progress in relation to employment equity is monitored through the collection and reporting of company statistics.

In recognition of the power of knowledge in building the future, deliberate efforts were made to unlock human potential in the workplace. The National Skills Development Strategy provides a framework for facilitating that skills required for economic development and social security are met. A number of institutions, including the Sector Education and Training Authorities (Setas) and National Skills Authority, serve to enhance the skills and capacity of workers.

To enforce and monitor compliance with labour legislation, the Department of Labour's 800-plus inspectors conduct regular workplace inspections. Labour inspection services contribute to enhanced productivity, respect for national laws, promotion of transformation, and the protection of workers' rights. Key to monitoring compliance too, is accessibility. To ensure that the remotest areas of South



Africa, including rural areas, have access to its services, the Department of Labour has spread its footprint through its provincial offices, more than 100 labour centres, more than 500 satellite offices and its mobile office units.

The Unemployment Insurance Act of 2001 together with the Unemployment Contributions Act of 2002 changed the Unemployment Insurance Fund into a vibrant organisation capable of providing a better social safety net for qualifying unemployed workers. Domestic workers are also now included under its umbrella. While a safety net is important, it is not sustainable. Initiatives to integrate the unemployed into the job market include the training of unemployed persons through the Social Development Funding Window and the National Skills Fund, registration of work seekers on an electronic database,

career guidance, facilitating the placement of trainees where possible and the hosting of job fairs and summits.

Other worker gains

The provision of basic services, social grants and infrastructure has also benefited workers. Over 3,3-million houses have been built and electricity, water, sanitation and other services provided.

The democratic state has over the past two decades made significant efforts to deconstruct the racial nature of the economy and broaden participation within it, through among others, championing the restoration of the dignity of workers, enforcing decent working conditions, driving equitable transformation, and expanding the skills and capacity of workers, despite ongoing class contestations to influence its governance philosophy. It monitors compliance with legislation and the effectiveness of institutions and has effected amendments when required, through consultative processes, in response to changing global conditions in which labour is becoming increasingly portable and casualised. The initiatives of the state however do not negate the importance of continued dialogue at a political level, and particularly the need for strong, united trade unions to ensure that the interests of workers are protected. Furthermore, consciousness of the dialectical relationship between national and class struggles remain important. The historical objectives that underpinned the formation of the Alliance remain relevant today and the Alliance needs to be strengthened to achieve those objectives faster. ●

Cde Fourie is an SACP activist

ELECTIONS 2014

Huge achievements in our education

Free schooling at 75% of schools, daily school meals for 8-million – UN Millennium development goals achieved

As part of the Gauteng SACP election campaign, SACP General Secretary Blade Nzimande, addressed a People's Forum on education in Mamelodi, Tshwane.

"The government is committed to free education for the poor, not just in policy, but in practice," said Cde Nzimande. "Look at what has been achieved in these past five years. We have now reached about 95% attendance of children in schools, so we have realised the target for the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals.

"About 75% of our schools are now no-fee schools. Also significant is that the children of domestic workers and other poor people are exempt from fees in fee-paying schools. About 8-million of the 12-million children going to school receive a free meal. These are huge achievements."

Cde Nzimande also pointed out that bursaries for students in higher education had increased from R3,1-billion in 2009 to the current R9,6-billion.

"There has been a 135% growth in the number of students in further education and training institutions between 2010 and now."

During question time, people welcomed the progress but said that government was not communicating this well. People raised concerns about the way the Tripartite Alliance was functioning in the area. They also said that the report of Cde Nkosasana Dlamini-Zuma on irregularities in the way councillors had been chosen for the 2011 local government elections had not been acted



Cde Nzimande: Real education transformation

on in the region. They asked that ANC Secretary General Cde Gwede Mantashe be informed about this. Others raised concerns about the lack of bursaries for people with disabilities to further their education.

Cde Nzimande said there should be more schools for the disabled and agreed more needs to be done to encourage peo-

ple with disabilities to study in higher education institutions. He pointed out that R78-million had been made available for bursaries for higher education for people with disabilities, but there had not been enough applications for this money to be used.

After the meeting, Cde Nzimande said: "Once again, it comes across very clearly that a huge majority of the people are going to vote ANC. It was a very good People's Forum. We have a very strong SACP District in the area."

Cde Nzimande also spoke at a meeting of human resource practitioners in Hilton, Msunduzi, focusing on skills development and its importance to transformation. Some of the professionals at the meeting said that government is wrong to expect white-owned businesses to assist in developing the skills of black-owned businesses. Others said that a weakness of BBEEE (broad-based black economic empowerment) was that it focussed too much on black shareholding and not on skills development.

They felt that without a significant improvement in the skills of black professionals and emerging businesses, BBEEE would not realise its potential. Cde Nzimande said he found their inputs very interesting and would follow up on them. "The Department of Trade and Industry needs to look more into how the BBEEE score cards should provide for more points for skills development. We need to constantly look at ways of ensuring that BBEEE contributes to effective transformation of our economy and society." ●