

MOSES KOTANE & JB MARKS

Two struggle giants return



May 2015

Voice of the South African Communist Party

Unsebenzi

**FIGHTING TO RECLAIM OUR ORGANISATIONS
FROM CAPITALIST INFILTRATION**

MAY DAY



SACP MAY DAY MESSAGE

Unite to reclaim our democratic breakthrough from monopoly capital

This is a shortened version of the SACP May Day message to the South African working class

May Day 2015 is being marked in a South Africa and across a world in which the working class is under attack.

We also remember that 70 years ago on 2 May 1945 the victorious Red Army defeated fascism.

Yet today we live in a world in which capitalism's unceasing war against the proletariat is being waged with intensified aggression.

Here in South Africa the triple crisis of poverty, inequality and unemployment persists for millions.

On this May Day it is critical that South Africa's working class – and particularly its best organised sectors within Cosatu – understand with absolute clarity what the nature of the problem is, and therefore what needs to be done.

In the capitalist controlled media endless attempts are launched to confuse us, to misdirect us, to turn us against each other, to divide the working class, to fragment our organisations, to separate shop-floor struggles from community struggles.

It is important that together we open our eyes, that we close ranks, and that we advance, deepen and defend our democratic revolution.

Monopoly capital has hijacked our democratic breakthrough

This past Monday we once again marked South Africa's national Freedom Day.

Twenty-one years ago we finally abolished white minority state-rule in our

country. But we *didn't* abolish the capitalist economic system that had been incubated within that white minority rule.

Twenty-one years ago, on April 27 1994, millions of South Africans exercised one of the most fundamental democratic rights – the right to vote as equal citizens in the country of their birth. This democratic breakthrough also brought many important constitutional and legislative rights to the working class – a constitutionally entrenched right to organise and to strike, the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, the Labour Relations Act, and the Employment Equity Act.

However, the defeat of the apartheid state didn't represent the defeat of monopoly capital in our country. It didn't mean the defeat of an especially oppressive capitalist system. It left Anglo American, De Beers, Sasol, SA Breweries (now SAB Miller), Naspers (which today is threatening to take over and privatise the SABC), Old Mutual, and the big banks dominating our economy.

Twenty one years ago our struggle finally defeated white minority rule in our country. That was the moment when we should have immediately embarked on a second radical phase of the National Democratic Revolution. In 1994 we should have moved decisively to roll back the monopoly power of the white bourgeoisie.

But for several reasons there was a failure to move decisively at that point. South African monopoly capital was given a breathing space. It was given the

time to re-group.

Monopoly capital has used the ending of anti-apartheid economic and financial sanctions to run away from our country, disinvesting billions of Rands of surplus created by South African workers. Sasol was once a publicly owned South African company. It is still a company subsidised by all of us every time we buy petrol at the pump. But Sasol is now busy making its biggest investment – in Louisiana, in the United States. Most of the major South African monopolies are dual listed – Old Mutual, Investec, Anglo, De Beers, etc. This means that they pay millions of Rands every year in dividends to foreign investors. Absa bank is 68% owned by foreigners. Monopoly capital has run away from non-racial democracy in South Africa.

Over the past 21 years there has been massive capital flight – reaching some 20% of our GDP in some years. All kinds of tricks are used to maximise monopoly profits and to minimise any responsibility for developing South Africa.

But why has monopoly capital been so successful in regrouping, in recovering its balance, in hijacking so much of the promise of our 1994 breakthrough?

Part of the explanation is that monopoly capital has often succeeded in infiltrating our own organisations.

They have used narrow BEE. They have used bribes and all manner of fronting to find entry-points into government departments. They have fostered a class of vultures, the tenderpreneurs.



Cutting the May Day cake: Cosatu President S'dumo Dlamini, SACP General Secretary Blade Nzimande, ANC President Jacob Zuma and Sanco President Richard Mdakane
All May Day rally pix: Alex Mashilo

Monopoly capital – in the shape of the old apartheid, Broederbond-nurtured, media giant Naspers and its offshoot MultiChoice – has even swallowed up what was supposed to be democratic South Africa's public broadcaster, the SABC. It has done this with the connivance, of course, of its bought lackeys in Auckland Park. We say that those in senior positions in the SABC who have lied to parliament, who have lied about their qualifications, who have sold the public broadcaster's archives to MultiChoice, must be dealt with!

Trade unions control (in theory) vast retirement funds and these have been used to leverage union investment arms. In principle these union financial

resources could be used to fund useful things for the working class – like public transport, affordable housing, and improved training opportunities for your children. There are some inspiring examples of union funds being used in this way. However, all too often, these retirement funds and investment arms have been the entry-point for a capitalist agenda to strike at the very heart of the union movement itself.

This is why on this May Day 2015, as the SACP we say:

- **Defend worker democracy and worker control within our unions!**
- **Defend the unity of Cosatu. Defend the unity of the working class!**

Let us never underestimate the global

offensive that is being waged by the bosses against trade unions. Here in South Africa the bosses have smelt blood. The difficulties and divisions within Cosatu are being deliberately stirred up.

It is important that the organised working class closes ranks. We cannot allow different political agendas to fragment our unions. We can see very clearly how the bosses and the commercial media are happy to promote anyone who causes splits. They don't care if it's a right-wing vigilante union like Amcu, or pseudo-ultra-leftists like the current Numsa leadership clique. They all become overnight heroes in the commercial media.

Opportunism is everywhere. The DA



Comrades on the march: Cosatu President S'dumo Dlamini (in black shirt), Sactwu President Themba Khumalo, Sadtu KZN Provincial Secretary and SACP Provincial Treasurer Nomarashiya Caluza, SACP KZN Provincial Secretary Themba Mthembu, SACP General Secretary Blade Nzimande, Sactwu Deputy President and Cosatu Provincial Chairperson Beauty Zibula, and ANC KZN Provincial Treasurer Peggy Nkonyeni

has announced that it is in talks with Numsa's so-called United Front in Nelson Mandela Bay metro to unseat the ANC in next year's local government elections. The Numsa leadership clique is also now talking to the EFF on electoral collaboration, proving what we have long said, that this faction and the EFF are part of the same agenda against our movement.

Those who remain committed to the unity of Cosatu are portrayed as uncritical government supporters who want to turn the federation into a so-called "labour desk". So let us all be very clear, as all alliance partners have made it very clear: a "labour desk" Cosatu is no good for any of us. The ANC can set up a labour desk if it wants to. But what's the point? What our alliance needs, what the ANC-led government needs, what our country needs is a powerful, militant, independent and progressive trade union movement under the umbrella of Cosatu.

A tame, conveyor-belt Cosatu will simply be outflanked and out-organised by all manner of demagogic pseudo-unionists, left and right.

The conditions for re-building Cosatu and its affiliates are:

- Daily service to members on the shop-floor;
- Re-building worker control and

worker democracy;

- Transparency and clear worker-mandated approaches to union investment funds;

- The defence of the founding principles of Cosatu, and especially the principle of one-industry, one-union. The Numsa leadership clique's free-market approach to recruitment, encouraging competition and rivalry is a recipe for worker division. It feeds worker-on-worker violence as is now happening in a reign of terror at Medupi.

Also critical for re-building Cosatu and its affiliates is a close working relationship with alliance partners. Large numbers of South Africa's working class are casualised and informalised. Capitalism has always sought to weaken the power of the working class by creating a large pool of surplus labour.

And this is where our Alliance be-

**Numsa's free-market
approach to recruitment
encourages rivalry
– a recipe for worker
division**

comes important. It is absolutely critical that we combine work-place and community-based struggles of the broad working class. It is very hard for unions to reach the mass of casualised and informalised workers through shop-floor organisation alone.

But this means that our Alliance must be much more than just an Alliance for election purposes. It must be an active alliance with a common, campaigning programme of action that takes up the broader issues of the working class and of working class households and communities,

- The struggles for affordable housing, decent public transport, access to land;
- The struggles against the mashonisa and the Credit Bureaux;
- The struggle against the exorbitant charges of the cellphone companies;
- The struggle for access to quality education and health-care for our families'
- The struggle against corruption in the public and private sectors;
- The struggle to transform and capacitate the police to ensure that our communities are safe.

All of these struggles need to be combined with struggles at the work-place



Part of the May Day crowd that packed Currie's Fountain on May Day

for better wages and working conditions. We need to re-build our Alliance on this kind of active engagement.

Xenophobia

In the past weeks in Durban and in parts of Gauteng xenophobic violence once again reared its ugly head. The overwhelming majority of South Africans have spoken. In marches, in social media, in radio phone-in programmes we have condemned xenophobic violence. Cosatu, the SACP and the ANC in joint statements have spoken loudly and clearly against violence directed against foreign nationals. Government under the leadership of President Zuma has immediately set in motion a wide array of initiatives. These initiatives seem to have halted the turn to violence for the moment.

It is good that the majority of South Africans have condemned xenophobic violence. Unlike in many parts of Europe, for instance, here in South Africa every political party in parliament condemned xenophobic violence.

But to condemn it is one thing. To provide a clear understanding of what lies behind it, and therefore what needs to be done – that is another matter.

And here we find all manner of

opportunisms.

That arch-opportunist and demagogue, Julius Malema, lost no time in blaming xenophobic violence on the ANC, and on President Zuma in particular. He told a refugee camp in Durban that foreign nationals are not “stealing jobs from South Africans” because “there are no jobs to steal”. Government, he says, has failed to create any jobs.

Let's be very clear. It is not foreign nationals who are stealing jobs from South Africans. It is profit-maximising bosses who are exploiting the desperation of immigrants fleeing poverty and civil war in their own countries. Foreign nationals, especially those who are here illegally, are prepared to work for a pittance, and to work for long hours.

Malema and the neo-liberal South African Institute of Race Relations sing the same tune. Asked on SABC who or

**Xenophobia:
it's not foreign nationals
stealing jobs from us
– it's profit-maximising
bosses**

what was to blame for the xenophobic violence, the Institute of Race Relations' Mienke Steytler said: “People must blame government”. “Why?” the interviewer asked. “Because government creates unemployment by failing to implement a flexible labour market,” she replied.

This stupid Steytler was too ideologically blind to see that the latest flare-up of xenophobia was directly related to concerns that there was the employment of desperate (that is flexible) foreign nationals as strike-breakers in an industrial dispute in Isipingo in Durban just days before the violence. The community of Isipingo was wrong to blame the foreign nationals. They should have blamed the flexible labour market and those who profit from it.

We must condemn xenophobia and *all* forms of chauvinism – xenophobic chauvinism, racial chauvinism, royal chauvinism, ethnic chauvinism, and sexist chauvinism.

But we must also deal with the underlying causes that create a fertile soil for xenophobia. First we need to understand that in South Africa we are not alone.

Capitalist globalisation over the past 40 years has produced massive waves of migration by desperate work-seekers. Every year, more than one billion migrants are crossing national boundaries, many of them illegally. In the week that seven people were killed in South Africa in the latest xenophobic violence – 400 and then another 700 desperate illegal immigrants drowned in the Mediterranean Sea as they tried to reach Europe.

They were fleeing poverty and unemployment in their home countries. It was poverty caused by IMF and World Bank structural adjustment programmes. They were fleeing from civil war caused by imperialist regime-change agendas in Syria, in Libya, in Somalia.

They were fleeing the same evils that have brought millions of desperate migrants into our own 21-year-old, new democracy. In some of our public hospitals today, more than 60% of patients are foreign nationals, many of them without legal status. But they are human beings and we must treat them as fellow human beings. They are not the enemy.

In hotels and restaurants, on the farms in South Africa, many workers are now foreign nationals, many of them illegals. The bosses say that South Africans are not prepared to do this work. Actually, because South Africans have hard-won citizenship rights they should not be prepared to work for below the

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minimum wage, they should not be prepared to work illegally on 18 hour shifts in the security sector.

Some foreign nationals (not the majority) become involved in criminal activities. But foreign nationals don't have a monopoly over criminal activities like drug smuggling or child trafficking. Criminal syndicates – whether they are South African or non-South African – must be dealt with decisively. This is the message that government sent last week with the combined police and army raid on Jeppe Hostel in Johannesburg.

The middle classes think that it is the poor who are xenophobic and prone to violence. They are embarrassed on our behalf. We say that the great majority of working class South Africans have shown amazing tolerance and patience in the face of huge challenges.

But the root of these challenges must also be addressed. We cannot just preach morality to the poor, and forget the immorality of the rich and their capitalist system.

This means:

- Government must greatly improve its border control systems, not to turn back genuine refugees, but to properly document and process them. We need to know who is in our country – we don't even know this basic fact;

- The exploitation of vulnerable immigrants – whether by bosses or by corrupt officials – must be dealt with severely;

- The Department of Labour must greatly increase its labour inspectorate capacity. It must have the capacity to visit farms, hotels, restaurants, factory workshops, security companies. The trade union movement has an important supportive to role to play;

- Hostels and inner-city buildings that have been taken over by criminal syndicates – whether they are South African or non-South African must be cleared out. Criminals must go to jail.

And, finally, on this May Day 2015, International Workers Day, let us also understand that we cannot solve these challenges within South Africa alone. As long as imperialism wreaks havoc on our continent, as long as corrupt anti-democratic regimes oppress their peoples – there will be streams of migrants flowing into countries like South Africa where there are democratic rights and relative social peace and stability.

The beneficiation of our minerals, the re-industrialisation of our economy, the building of economic and social in-



Cosatu President Cde S'dumo Dlamini on the march towards the Curries Fountain May Day rally in Durban

frastructure – these are not just South African revolutionary tasks. A radical national democratic revolution is required throughout our sub-Saharan region, throughout our African continent, throughout the Third World.

Let us build our organisations to serve our people

Today the SACP is making a clarion call to the workers and trade union leaders to ensure that we revitalise service to workers in all workplaces. Let the President of Cosatu and all affiliates' presidents lead a campaign to intensify service to workers in the workplaces.

Let us not allow our unions to be used to pursue business unionism or build the individual egos of leaders. Let us build trade unions that truly serve the workers!

Let us strengthen the SACP to serve and unite the working class as a whole

Let us strengthen the SACP to serve & unite the working class – employed, unemployed or under-employed

– employed, unemployed or under-employed. Let our Party structures intensify political education amongst workers, especially at this time when political and opportunistic cultures are encircling and seeking to divide Cosatu. Let the SACP also intensify its important campaign to transform the financial sector, fight mashonisa and exploitative practices of the credit bureaux and against the ease with which banks are evicting people from houses.

Let us also build ANC branches that truly serve their communities. Let us not allow ANC branches to be captured by tenderpreneurs who use them to win conferences in order to capture and dispense patronage. Our ANC branches must not hide corrupt people who are serving their own selfish interests. ANC branches must selflessly serve their communities.

Let us build a Sanco that is rooted in real and live civic and other residential organisations.

Workers have an important role to play in all this, as they are found in all the structures of our Alliance and liberation movement as a whole.

Which is why we say: An injury to one, is an injury to all!

Let us intensify solidarity for the freedom of the oppressed the world over!

TWO GIANTS OF OUR STRUGGLE COME HOME

South Africa brings home communist sons of the soil



On 2 March this year, the remains of two giants of the South African struggle for democracy, and of our Party, were flown into Pretoria's Waterkloof Air Force base after more than half-a-century in exile.

Cde Moses Malume Kotane, general secretary of the SACP from 1939 until his death in 1978, and Cde JB (John Beaver) Marks, SACP chairperson until his death in 1972, had both been buried in the prestigious Novodevichy cemetery in Moscow, until the South African and Russian governments last year negotiated the return home of their remains. Cde Kotane was re-buried in Pella in the North West, on 14 March, and Cde Marks in Ventersdorp, on 22 March.

Both Cde Kotane and Marks were active in all three wings of the Tripartite Alliance, and were among its leadership throughout the 1950s and through the first two decades of underground and exile, the 1960s and 1970s.

Cde Kotane served as general secretary of the SACP

– overseeing its reformation following its banning in 1950 – as treasurer-general of the ANC, and as a member of the ANC's national executive committee. He is widely acknowledged as a key figure in creating the Alliance –

often referred to as the "chief architect" of the Alliance and of the struggle for democracy.

Cde Marks served as chair of the SACP, as head of the ANC in the Transvaal (incorporating Gauteng, Mpumalanga, Limpopo and parts of the North West), and as president of the African Mineworkers' Union (AMU) – forerunner to the National Union of Mineworkers. As AMU president he led South Africa's biggest ever strike in 1946, with between 60 000 and 100 000 black mine-workers going out for more than a week – until armed police forced them underground at gunpoint.

Edited versions of the speeches given by Cde Nziemande and Cde Solly Mapaila, SACP Second Deputy General Secretary, appear in the next few pages.

GIANTS OF OUR STRUGGLE

Cde Malume Kotane – chief architect of our struggle for freedom

Cde Blade Nzimande spoke at the official reburial of Cde Kotane on 14 March 2015



The return of the mortal remains of two political giants of our revolutionary struggle, Comrades John 'Beaver' JB Marks and Moses Kotane is a welcome event in the history of our struggle.

These were comrades-in-arms for more than 40 years from the 1930s. The return of the remains happens at a propitious time, when our Alliance continues to forge ahead in leading our people towards a better future, despite a number of challenges that we face. It is an appropriate time also because it forces us to think hard about what Cde Kotane would have done and advised in the wake of some of the challenges facing our trade union ally, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu). The outstanding example they set of building a united alliance, of selfless devotion to the cause of workers and the poor requires emulation more than ever before.

Cde Moses Kotane came from a peasant background and unlike many of us who are today fortunate to start our education at an early age, he first attended school when he had already reached the age of 15. Despite his late start and lack of formal qualifications, he was to become one of the greatest intellectuals and leaders of our national liberation movement, including the Communist Party. He joined the Communist Party in 1929, a year after Cde JB Marks. This was a very important period for the Commu-

nist Party.

It was in 1929 that the Communist Party became the first political organisation in South Africa to adopt a resolution calling for South Africa to become a Republic based on democratic black majority rule with equal rights for all races. This liberating idea started in 1927 inside the ranks of our Party. It was canvassed by Cde James La Guma, who played a key role in the development of our revolutionary nationalism. Cde La Guma took the idea to the Communist International in Moscow, which linked Communist Parties of all countries. To take forward the struggle, the Communist International adopted this resolution for the Communist Party in South Africa to work with the embryonic national organisations and build them into militant fighting organisations. These were the beginnings of our Alliance and Cde Kotane was in the forefront.

Unfortunately, not everyone fully understood the essence of this new policy. It was during this period that the outstanding leadership qualities of Cde

Kotane became apparent. During the deepest and longest crisis of the capitalist system, in the 1930s, both the Communist Party and the ANC dwindled in terms of membership, organisation and political activity. Cde Kotane was among those revolutionaries who played a leading role in re-organising both of these primary political formations of our glorious national liberation movement.

In 1934 he wrote what would become the famous Cradock letter, criticising abstract theory. He called for the Africanisation of the Communist Party; for special attention to be paid to the conditions of South Africa; and for the concretisation of the demands of the toiling masses from first-hand experience. This was one of Cde Moses Kotane's greatest contribution to the development of our liberation struggle through the application of Marxist-Leninist theory to the practical realities of South Africa; especially the need to see the linkages between the national and class struggles.

In 1937 the ANC was revitalised at the Jubilee Conference. Cdes Kotane and JB Marks worked together with other leaders of the movement, like Rev James Calata, Selope Thema and Rev Zacharias Mahabane in ensuring that the ANC was revitalised. Cde Kotane was a good communist – and all good communists are in the ANC.

In 1939 Cde Kotane became the General Secretary of the Communist Party, a position he served with outstanding brilliance until sickness and then death

Cde Kotane played a key role in shaping the revolutionary outlook of, among others, former President Nelson Mandela



Cdes Kotane and Mandela outside the Treason Trial in Pretoria

Pic: courtesy Jurgen Schadeberg

took him from us. As President Oliver Tambo said at Cde Kotane's funeral in 1978: "If Moses Kotane was the General Secretary of the SACP, he was no lesser degree a highly esteemed and completely devoted leader of the African National Congress..."

"Reflecting the confidence which our movement had in Moses Kotane, Chief Albert Luthuli, the late President-General of the ANC, often consulted him on complex issues calling for wise leadership and delicate decision-making. It was for similar reasons that, at our request, Comrade Moses left South Africa to join the external ANC leadership in Dar es Salaam in January 1963. Umkhonto weSizwe was one year old at the time and its members were leaving South Africa in large numbers for training abroad.

"In the arrangements for the political and military training of the cadres of Umkhonto weSizwe, the maintenance, deployment and logistic equipment of Umkhonto units, Comrade Moses worked tirelessly from the moment he arrived in Dar es Salaam in 1963 until he suffered a stroke in December 1968."

Cde Moses Kotane was a rounded revolutionary who grasped the link between the workers' struggles, national liberation and socialism. As a worker he had joined, become active in and led trade union struggles. During his leadership of the Communist Party, the biggest

strike in the history of South Africa – the 1946 African miners' strike led by Cde JB Marks – took place. The Party played a key role in that strike. In 1955 the first strong non-racial trade union federation was established in the country, the South African Congress of Trade Unions.

Cde Kotane played a major role in organising the Congress Alliance that co-ordinated the Congress of the People which adopted the Freedom Charter in 1955. He however could not attend. He was deployed by the movement to the major anti-imperialist international conference in Bandung, Indonesia.

A revolutionary who cherished the importance of the unity of purpose, unity in action, Cde Kotane simultaneously led the SACP as General Secretary and the ANC as Treasurer-General. Contrary to the new politics of opportunism, both of the right and the infantile "left", Cde Kotane did not see any contradiction in serving the SACP and the ANC at

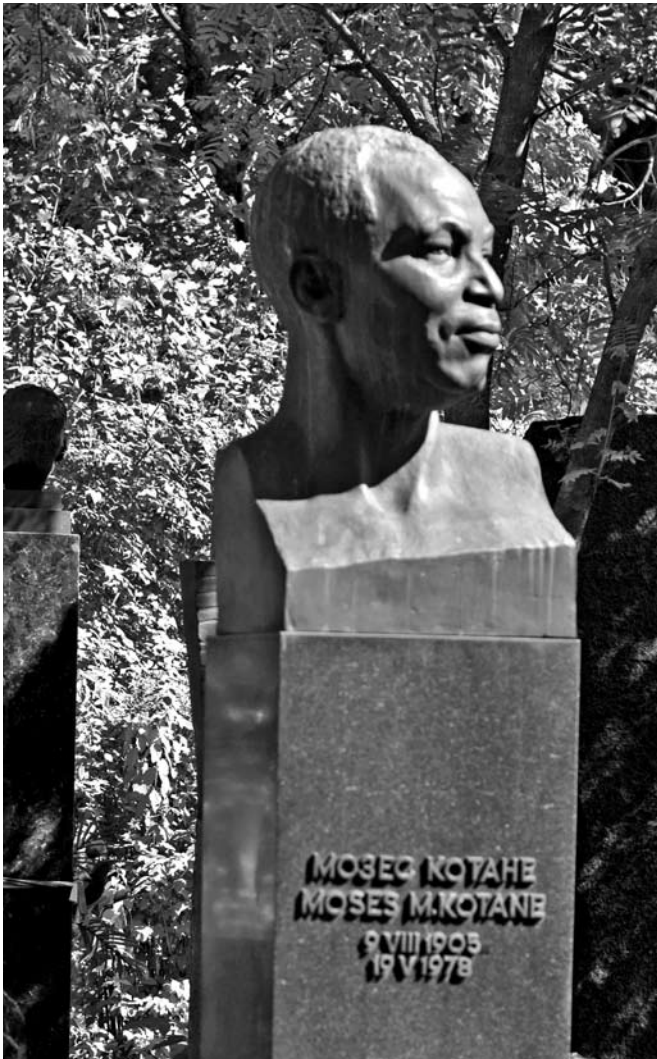
the same time. Neither did he subscribe to the idea that trade unions should distance themselves, either from the national liberation movement or from the vanguard Party of the working class.

Cde Kotane played a key role in shaping the revolutionary outlook of, among others, former President Nelson Mandela. When we study our history, there are a number of people who shaped the course of our struggle and who became its architects, but there is only one person who can justly claim the title of "Chief Architect of the Struggle" – and that is Cde Moses Kotane!

Of course, today Cde Kotane would have been very proud of the many achievements of our revolution, especially since 1994, despite the havoc that is still being caused by the capitalist system globally and in our own country. Our ANC-led government has built houses, expanded free education, built clinics and invested trillions of Rands in infrastructure.

But our economy remains unable to overcome the challenges of inequality. It is for this reason that the ANC and the Alliance have agreed on the urgency to drive a second, more radical phase of our democratic transformation. This must essentially entail shifting our economy from being a raw minerals exporter into becoming a manufacturing economy, with thriving small, medium and micro en-

Cde Kotane was a rounded revolutionary who grasped the link between workers' struggles, national liberation and socialism



Cde Kotane's gravestone in Moscow's Novodevichy cemetery in Moscow (left) and his memorial in his home town, Pella in North West

terprises and co-operatives, and a strong trade union acting as part of the motive forces driving an industrial economy.

It is these realities and challenges that would also strengthen Cde Malume Kotane's communist conviction that the national democratic revolution still remains our most direct route to socialism. He would also be proud of the role played by communists in all key sites of struggle and influence, both inside and outside of the state, and that indeed we continue, together with our allies, to take responsibility for our revolution.

Some of the most important lessons to be learnt from the revolutionary life and times of Comrade Moses Kotane include:

- The importance of the principle of democratic centralism in our Alliance formations. Cde Kotane demonstrated leadership in regard to this principle both as strategist and tactician when our Party tactically dissolved itself after it was banned in 1950, only to recon-

stitute itself shortly thereafter, under new conditions of illegality and being underground with stringent requirements for the cadre who would fit in the new reality. Once a decision has been taken collectively by the organisation, everybody must abide by it, even those who had argued against it. If any of the leaders disagree after the decision has been taken, that leader is placing himself or herself above the organisation, a practice that can destroy unity and cohesion in our organisations which the

Cde Kotane would also be proud of the role played by communists in all key sites of struggle and influence before and since 1994

likes of Cde Kotane hated thoroughly;

- Dual membership and the practice of ensuring that if you belong to more than one organisation you must abide by the decisions of all these organisations. If their decisions are in conflict with each other, those differences must be sorted out organisationally and not be reduced to individuals' problems;

- One cannot use one organisation in the Alliance to attack or settle scores in another;

- We must defend and build each other's organisations in our Alliance (these are our own organisations, by the way) as an important means of preserving the unity of our still much-needed Alliance. Going forward, and given the challenges we face, we will need more, rather than less, of our Alliance. Those who think otherwise are thoroughly mistaken.

Cde Blade Nzimande is the SACP General Secretary

GIANTS OF OUR STRUGGLE

In Uncle JB Marks' name, we will intensify our socialist struggle

Cde Solly Mapaila spoke at the official re-burial of Cde Marks on 22 March. This is an edited version of his speech on behalf of the SACP



On 14 March 2015, we reburied the remains of Cde Moses Kotane. Cde Kotane was a lifelong collaborator and comrade-in-arms of Cde John “Beaver” Marks. Cde Kotane was the General Secretary and Cde Marks the Chairperson of our Party. Their relationship was essentially a political, ideological and organisational one, but it was also a social relationship. There are striking similarities between these two heroes of our struggle for national liberation and socialism. It is very difficult to separate them.

But allow us, as we have done at the reburial of Cde Kotane’s remains when we paid tribute to him, today to pay tribute to Uncle JB Marks, as he was called in the ranks of our liberation movement.

Like Cde Kotane, Uncle JB died in the Soviet Union (a part of which is now Russia) where he was receiving treatment. He was buried at the Novodevichy Cemetery in Moscow, in dignity, among the heroes of the Soviet Union. Let us take this opportunity, once more, to express our sincere gratitude to the people of the Soviet Union and Russian Federation for looking after our leaders both in life and “after life”; and for according them the respect they deserved, the respect, like all other oppressed people, they were denied here at home.

That Uncle JB and other freedom fighters were buried in Moscow, far away



Cde JB Marks in June 1952, surrounded by “special branch police”, but undaunted

Pic: courtesy Jurgen Schadeberg

from their place of birth – although they were internationalists and this is what they had prepared themselves for – is a reflection of the difficulties of persecution and repression that our people were suffering. But this was also a reflection of the deep bonds of friendship between those who shared the vision of a society free from all forms of oppression, exploitation and discrimination internationally.

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics played a key role in supporting our

struggle for national liberation and socialism. We received invaluable solidarity and material support from it in particular and other socialist countries in general. During the most difficult times facing our struggle, the Soviet Union provided us with massive support. This ranged from military training, technical and material support, health care, and academic education, to mention but a few. Very importantly, all of these were done without any strings attached or a single demand for business or pay back.

Our success in dislodging the apartheid regime in April 1994 is thanks in great part to that decades-long revolutionary solidarity. During that period, all of the West isolated our movement and denied us support.

In fact, in countries like the United States, our movement, its cadres and leaders, were listed as terrorists. Our first democratically elected President, Cde Nelson Mandela, along with other cadres of our struggle, continued to be listed as a terrorist by the United States even after he was elected in 1994 – and this until only a few years before his death. In other words, this and other actions defined some of those countries on the side of the oppressor in a conflict that involved the oppressor and the oppressed. The ANC's 1969 Strategy and Tactics document has further details on this point, and can help our youth to appreciate the impact that imperialist support to colonial oppression in South Africa has had in delaying our advance to freedom.

Cde JB Marks joined our Party in 1928, after he was inspired by Cde SP Bunting addressing workers at the mine where he worked. He rose through the ranks of the Party, subjecting himself to the collective discipline of the organisation throughout his life. It is very important that our generation, and particularly the youth and the workers, take their cue from him. There was in fact a point where he was temporarily set aside because of inner Party processes. He respected the decision. He never fell into the temptation of defining himself as immune from iron discipline.

A cadre who was ready to acknowledge his own mistakes and to correct them, Uncle JB was later elected our Party National Chairperson. He was a comrade indeed. He differed from some of the post-1994 “heroes” who cannot take responsibility for their own actions and who, having committed purely personal-private mistakes, shift the blame to the components of our liberation Alliance in the name of the so-called “political agenda” which ostensibly exists against them.

Neither did Cde Marks waste time fighting against any component of our liberation alliance. He understood the distinct but interrelated historic missions of the trade union movement, the national liberation movement led by the ANC, and the Communist Party. He did not confuse those historic missions. Uncle JB belonged to all three components of our liberation Alliance. He clearly ap-



Cde Marks' memorial in Venterdorp in the North West

preciated that these formations were not just objects, but were constituted by warm bodies – that is human beings – and that he was one of them.

In the same vein, he clearly understood the risk of an attack on any of our liberation components. An attack on any

Cde Marks understood that an attack on any of Alliance components was an attack on him as a member

of them, he understood, was an attack on him as a member and leader. This is why he could not accept the illogical nature of attacking himself either through an attack on the movement.

Cde Marks was a true worker leader. He understood the importance of worker unity. He never engaged in activities that disrupted unity unlike some who disrupt unity today.

Uncle JB built the African Mine Workers' Union and led it to challenge economic exploitation. He also participated in forming the first effective non-racial trade union centre in South Africa, the South African Congress of Trade Unions (Sactu).

In memory of Cde Marks, the SACP reiterates its call to all Cosatu affiliates and especially those which decided to boycott the activities of the federation, to return to their home and engage. Similarly, let us build the liberation alliance; for going forward we will need more, and not less, of this Alliance which Cde Marks built and served with outstanding dedication.

Cde Marks was very clear who the primary opponent of freedom from oppression and economic exploitation was. We will remember him for the role he played, working under the guidance of our Party, in leading the biggest ever strike in the history of our country – the over 100 000 strong 1946 mineworkers’ strike. The strike shook the exploiters from their comfort zones.

It was four years after the strike and continuous mobilisation against oppression and exploitation that the National Party banned the Communist Party – the first political organisation to be banned in South Africa.

Cde JB Marks was an outstanding leader of the workers inasmuch as he was a leader of the Communist Party and the ANC. For him there was no contradiction between being a member of a trade union and a worker leader, a member and leader of the Communist Party and the ANC at the same time, and participating in the programmes of these formations. Uncle JB Marks understood that any differences belonged to the movement as a whole to address, rather than to individual members.

Cde JB Marks was elected our Party’s National Chairperson at its Fifth Congress in 1962. This is significant in the history of South Africa in many ways.

The Congress was held two years after the apartheid regime banned the ANC. This Congress characterised South Africa as a colony of a special type – a colony in which the coloniser and the colonised lived in the same territory under conditions of separate development defined by apartheid.

For South Africa to achieve freedom, it was important to eliminate this colonial relationship as it was to do away with imperialist exploitation. This, the Road to South African Freedom, was the programme that Cde JB Marks made himself available to lead as our National Chairperson.

That historic congress took place just a year after the SACP and the ANC established our joint armed wing, the people’s liberation army, Umkhonto weSizwe. It was at this Congress that for the first time our theory of struggle, especially its immediate task – the National Democratic Revolution – was elaborated and its relationship to socialism clearly articulated.

The National Democratic Revolution, summing up the collective experience of the Communist Party, our nation liberation movement and the oppressed as a whole, modified the Black Republic Thesis which had been adopted in 1929 (a year after Uncle JB joined the Party).

**For Uncle JB there
was no contradiction
between being a worker
leader, a leader of
the Party and the ANC
at the same time**

The main aim of the National Democratic Revolution, said our Fifth Congress was:

- “To achieve the national liberation of the African people in particular and black people in general;
- Ensure the destruction of the legacy of white supremacy;
- Build and deepen democracy in every sphere of life; and
- Transform South Africa into a non-racial and non-sexist society.”

The completion of the National Democratic Revolution, whose goals were captured in the Freedom Charter in 1955, would lay the indispensable basis for an advance to socialism. The National Democratic Revolution and socialism were seen as mutually reinforcing. The immediate implementation of the struggle for socialism would, in turn, thus boost the advance of the National Democratic Revolution to its logical conclusion.

This is the political and ideological programme that Cde JB Marks struggled to achieve, and for which he was prepared to lay down his life. He suffered discrimination for his world outlook, including the principle of non-racialism. Cde JB Marks, the son of a White Afrikaner midwife and an African railway worker, defined himself as an African.

As the SACP, we remain firm adherents of the values Cde JB Marks fought for. In memory of this gallant internationalist fighter of the working class, we will intensify the struggle for socialism. We will advance, deepen and take responsibility for the National Democratic Revolution. ●

Cde Solly Mapaila is 2nd Deputy General Secretary of the SACP.

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CHRIS HANI

Emulate his life as a communist and a revolutionary!

We must see Cde Chris as more than a “struggle icon” – communist comrades must measure themselves against what he did and achieved

Let us remember Cde Chris Hani properly – not just as a face on a T-shirt – a symbol of vague rebellion used even by those with no understanding of what he really stood for, as has happened with Che Guevara. Like Cde Che, Cde Chris Hani was far more than a fashion statement.

Chris Hani was first and foremost a communist – not only a member of the South African Communist Party, but a man who in every fibre of his being dedicated his whole life to the finest cause in the world – the liberation of humankind.

Belief and actual participation in the struggle go beyond simple emotion, even if anger and hatred of oppression are often a starting point. A real revolutionary, a real communist not only fights against oppression: a real revolutionary, a real communist fights for the creation of a better society, a just society in which every individual can recognise his or her true potential as part of a collective sharing rights and responsibilities in a dignified manner.

A person who merely reacts against a system without knowing or understanding how to change it is a rebel. One who understands society, the causes and drivers of the problems it faces, and who seeks to turn the society around – to actually change it – is a revolutionary.

Such was Chris Hani.

To be a revolutionary it is an absolute necessity to be politically educated. As the great Vladimir Lenin taught us, “Without revolutionary theory, there can be no revolutionary movement.” Like all great revolutionaries, Cde Hani was a great reader

and an intellectual. He held a BA degree in Latin and English, yet he came from a poor home in the Eastern Cape and his parents were hardly literate. He mastered the theoretical works of Karl Marx, Frederick Engels and Lenin.

Such was Chris Hani.

But as Marx himself taught us: “The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways: the point is to change it”. Or as Marx’s lifelong friend and collaborator, Engels said: “Practice without theory is blind. Theory without practice is sterile. Theory becomes a material force as soon as it is absorbed by the masses.”

Cde Hani understood these principles very well. He never reduced his work to ideas or to an abstract “intellectual” utopia stuck in ivory tower offices detached from the masses or without active participation in the key sites of the struggle. Guided by revolutionary theory, Cde Hani took action. He was involved in the real activity of struggle – which is the lifeblood of social change. In 1961, he joined the underground Communist Party; then the scholar became a soldier; in 1962 at the age of 20 he joined the ANC-SACP people’s liberation army, Umkhonto weSizwe (MK).

But Cde Hani also understood the

principle initiated by James la Guma and laid down in 1928 by the Communist International, an organisation bringing together all communist and workers parties of the world: “The Party should pay particular attention to the embryonic national organisations among the natives, such as the African National Congress. The Party, while retaining its full independence, should participate in these organisations, should seek to broaden and extend their activity. Our aim should be to transform the African National Congress into a fighting nationalist revolutionary organisation against the white bourgeoisie and the British imperialists, based upon the trade unions, peasant organisations, etc.”

This principle, not at first understood, was the principle put into practice by Cde Moses Kotane, “Chief Architect of the Struggle”, who played a major role in the revival of the ANC in 1937 and became General Secretary of the Communist Party in 1939. Cde Hani emulated the example of Cde Kotane. He had joined the ANC Youth League in 1957 at the age of 15 and by 1982 had become a member of the ANC National Executive Committee. And in 1991 he again followed in the footsteps of the great Kotane by becoming General Secretary of the SACP.

As a true communist, Cde Hani was a proletarian internationalist. In 1967 he was part of the joint Zipra-MK force. Zipra, the Zimbabwe People’s Revolutionary Army, was the army of the Zimbabwe African People’s Union (Zapu). The joint force crossed the Limpopo from Zambia and began the first armed resistance

**A real revolutionary
not only fights against
oppression (but also) for
a better, just society**



Cde Chris: We must not allow him to become simply a face on a tee-shirt

against the Smith regime in Zimbabwe, then called Rhodesia, in the Wankie and Siphililo Campaigns. Here he worked with the Zimbabwean military leaders Cdes Dumiso Dabengwa and Rex Nhongu. He retained a close relationship with the Zimbabweans for the rest of his life. How he would have hated xenophobia and despised those who perpetrate vicious acts against other Africans.

In 1969, he wrote the famous “Hani Memorandum”. This document developed a sharp, constructive self-criticism of our liberation movement in exile and was concerned with the plight of MK combatants and the imperative to push the struggle in the home front. This criticism was useful as it led to the watershed Morogoro Conference of 1969 and the establishment of the Revolutionary Council which was to direct and organise the struggle from then until victory. It was this exemplary history as a communist which led the counter-revolutionaries to select Comrade Chris as their prime target in 1993. This choice was no accident: it was (from their point of view) an informed and deliberate choice. Cde Hani, more than any other person at

this time, was likely to have led the people far beyond merely ending apartheid - and they knew it.

Today, as we enter the second, more radical phase of our democratic transition, as we begin to implement a programme to economically empower the working-class and the poor, the forces of imperialism internationally and within the country have embarked on a co-ordinated campaign of destabilisation. They have been joined by some former “Comrades” intent on dividing the movement and the people. Some of these elements have become the willing collaborators of the anti-ANC headed Alliance and democratic majority. Yet others, the New Tendency, are trying to sell the idea that economic transforma-

**He must be more than a
struggle icon – he must
be the template against
which we measure
ourselves**

tion means empowering them to become the exploiters of the masses and thus to wear the shoes of those who exploited our people during the era of colonial and apartheid oppression. Exchanging white capitalists by black capitalists – replacing white exploiters with black exploiters – the exploitation of the masses who suffer with class inequality, unemployment and poverty; that is what they mean.

In remembering Cde Hani, he must be seen as more than a “struggle icon”. His example must become the template against which other comrades measure themselves. His example must be emulated by our revolutionary youth as they study and analyse the current conditions of our struggle and take resolute and militant action to advance the second, more radical phase of our democratic transition: a transition rooted in the Freedom Charter, a transition in the revolutionary tradition of Chris Hani.

Let us emulate the spirit of discipline and self-discipline set by the example of Cde Hani in his revolutionary life and times. Cde Hani expressed his views without fear or favour, yet he respected the principle of democratic centralism. According to the principle, individual members and leaders must express themselves in democratic decision-making processes. They must respect, defend, and according to the applicable division of work, implement the collective decisions reached at the end of this freedom of discussion. It is this unity in action that is referred to as centralism, with the decisions taken by the highest leading organs binding on lower structures, individual leaders and members regardless of their personal views.

Cde Hani maintained this revolutionary discipline at a delicate time when the armed struggle was suspended at the beginning of the 1990s. He believed the decision was untimely, but despite his personal views he went on to defend it, even against people who shared his viewpoint but did not want to accept the decision of the higher body. In defending the decision, this is what he had to say: “In the current political situation, the decision by our organisation to suspend armed action is correct and is an important contribution in maintaining the momentum of negotiation”.

In memory of Cde Hani, let us build, defend and further develop the unity of the working class movement and our ANC-headed liberation Alliance! ●

This article appeared in Umsebenzi Online on 9 April

May Day: red flags across the world



Top: Russian Communist Party red flags billow over the streets of Moscow during May Day celebrations

Above, left: A Colombian street musician attacks armed police ranks during May Day protests in the Latin American city of Bogota, Colombia

Above, right: Bangladeshi garment workers demand higher wages in Dhaka

Right: US troops occupy the streets of Baltimore on May Day to discourage ongoing protests over the death in detention of 25-year-old African-American Freddie Gray two weeks earlier.

