

Chris Hani month – the Party mobilised!
Sudan: SA must act now - decisively!

May 2016

Voice of the South African Communist Party

Umsebenzi



WORKING CLASS ON THE MARCH

Sis Thelma: SACP HQ matriarch retires

SACP MAY DAY MESSAGE

Clinch ANC landslide to boost NDR's 2nd radical phase!

The SACP's 2016 May Day message outlines the sustainable revolutionary working class unity we need to defeat the onslaught of monopoly capital

We should not underestimate what we have collectively achieved – a constitutional democracy, worker rights, the mass roll-out of subsidised housing, water connections, sanitation, school enrolment, adult literacy, the world's largest roll-out of free anti-retrovirals that has significantly improved life expectancy. One third of South Africans now benefit from social grants – the largest such per capita distribution in the world. In 22 years we have provided household electricity to six million households. White minority regimes only achieved five million household electricity connections in over 100 years!

We still could and should have done much better. Unemployment at between 25% and 35% is a major crisis. Poverty still wears a black face. We remain one of the most unequal societies in the world.

We have survived over two decades, but there is much that is problematic and there are many vultures gathering. The basic message of the SACP this May Day 2016 is: "Let us unite our movement, let us close ranks, let us defeat the strategic agenda of imperialism and monopoly capital. Let us consolidate and accelerate a second radical phase of the NDR."

Need for Alliance programme

But on what programmatic basis do we unite? Is it unity simply for the sake of unity? Is it unity for public appearances? No, and again No! Is it unity because local government elections will be held 3 August? Yes, that's part of it, but that isn't a sustainable basis for revolutionary unity. After all, we have been there before.

Let us close ranks on the basis of a

strategic programme and active organisation and mobilisation focused on the needs and aspirations of the workers and poor of South Africa. To do that, we must say NO to the politics of money. NO to the politics of factions. NO to the politics of gate-keepers. NO to the politics of personal ambition and opportunism.

Cosatu, the largest federation in South Africa, has correctly chosen the theme for May Day 2016 as: *Celebrating 30 years and defending collective bargaining, workers' jobs and rights*.

The South African Communist Party as a steadfast ally of Cosatu fully supports these demands. The SACP has consistently stood by Cosatu as it has dealt with the greatest threat to its unity and existence. While respecting Cosatu's independence and internal organisational democracy, the SACP has fully supported Cosatu in the challenging task of rebuilding collective leadership in the face of personality cults and swollen egos. No individual is bigger than the organisation. No individual owns the federation.

Cosatu has correctly called for a back-to-basics approach. The prime task of unions is service to members, not to be springboards for individual careerism. Back to basics also means worker leadership, collective leadership, and internal democracy.

**NO to the politics
of money, of factions,
of gate-keepers,
of personal ambition
and opportunism**

Cosatu's May Day 2016 theme is "defend collective bargaining, workers' jobs and rights". That is absolutely right. But, together, we also need to go beyond a defensive posture. While defending collective bargaining, workers' jobs and workers' rights, how do we also go on to the *offensive*? How do we carry the fight to our class enemies?

And this is where Alliance unity becomes the critical factor.

For as long as we are fighting our own isolated battles we will remain on the defensive. Let us combine worker power on the shop floor with popular power in our communities, townships and rural villages, with democratic state power. Together, let us go on to the offensive to drive a second radical phase of the national democratic revolution.

But what does that mean?

There are many inter-related tasks, but at the heart of our struggle is the task of rolling back the monopoly power of big capital that is stifling our economy, siphoning off vast profits, casualising and retrenching workers, and over-charging citizens.

We must roll back the power of monopoly capital in other ways too. From the mid-1990s, with the disastrous Gear policies, capital markets and exchange controls were over-liberalised. The result has been the massive legal and illegal flight of capital from our country by all the major corporations that had grown fat in the years of white minority rule. Monopoly capital in South Africa has run away from non-racial democracy. We now confront Anglo American, Old Mutual, Sasol, Investec and many others as if they were foreign investors.

Even the predators who have para-

Major achievements – but SA needs more!

Addressing thousands of workers in Mamelodi in Tshwane, SACP General Secretary Cde Blade Nzimande said “We should not underestimate what we have collectively achieved over this short period. A constitutional democracy, workers’ rights, mass roll outs of subsidised housing and water connections.”

He urged support for the local government elections. “We are calling on the working class to come out in their numbers of 3 August and vote for the African National Congress.”

Cde Nzimande said that the revolution is on trial and the Alliance needs to defend its unity at all costs. He stressed that it cannot just be a convenient unity for the sake of the elections as that would imply that as soon as the elections are over different factions would again be at each other’s throats.

President Jacob Zuma told workers that the ANC is the only political party that has the best interests of workers at heart. “Without the ANC in power, this country will be in big trouble. The ANC is the only political organisation in the country that can produce policies and a legal environment that addresses the plight of the workers. The ANC needs to be in government, it needs to be in power at all material times.”

Cosatu President Cde Sdumo Dlamini focused on several worker demands: “Our fight is for the national minimum wage, our fight is for defending the jobs that we have. 60 000 jobs are threatened in the mining industry; it is our task to fight to defend those jobs. Let us stand together with the workers in the mines, let us stand together with the workers on the farms, in the



Blade Nzimande: The revolution is on trial – we must defend our unity at all costs

retail and fisheries industry, and fight to defend those jobs.”

He also expressed Cosatu’s concerns about e-tolls, labour brokers and the youth wage subsidy.

In his address to workers, Cde Nzimande dealt with key issues facing South Africa in the SACP’s May Day message (see main story). ●

sitically ripped off our new democracy in more recent times, like the Guptas, are running away to Dubai with their ill-gotten wealth, leaving their employees behind to face an uncertain future. The Guptas and their supporters are, of course, trying to blame the banks, brokers and auditors for this situation. But these same banks, brokers and audit firms were very happy to be making money out of Gupta transactions for many years, for as long as they could get away with it. But the smash-and-grab, hit-and-run greed of the Guptas has become so reckless that the banks have been warned that they are exposing themselves to international sanctions and even to losing their local operating licences if they continue dealing with these parasites. That’s the reason for what is happening – not some imperialist plot that those in bed

with the Guptas claim. The Guptas are not patriotic; they are parasitic.

We can’t effectively deal with established monopoly capital, we can’t defend our South African national sovereignty in the face of an external imperialist agenda if the parasites inside our economy have weakened the South African Revenue Services, or undermined the developmental mandate of an Eskom, or an Armscor, or an SAA, through their

At the heart of our struggle is the task of rolling back the monopoly power of big capital stifling our economy

plunder-preneuring activities. The struggle against corporate capture of our democratic state is a necessary struggle to defend our people, our democracy, our constitution in the face of imperialism and monopoly capital. It is not a question of supporting the Ruperts and Oppenheimers against the Guptas, or supporting the Guptas against the Ruperts and Oppenheimers. We have to fight capitalist exploitation in all its forms.

Deepen transformation of the financial sector!

In 2000 the SACP launched the Red October Financial Sector Campaign. Together with Cosatu and some 50 other formations we succeeded in achieving a Nedlac-convened Financial Sector Summit in 2002. In 2004 the Financial Sector Charter was signed, and it committed to

a comprehensive review of the Charter by 2015. That didn't happen – so we will have a second Nedlac-convened Financial Sector Summit this year.

The first Financial Sector Summit led to a partial credit amnesty, forced transparency on the credit bureaux, and emancipated many from the bondage of a life-time's unfair black-listing. The campaign led to the National Credit Act and the National Credit Regulator. The NCR has been active in exposing the illegal manipulation of credit by furniture retailers like Lewis, for instance.

There has been progress but much more needs to be done to radically transform the financial sector, which lies at the heart of contemporary monopoly capitalism.

The working class and the poor, even the so-called “new black middle class”, are trapped in a massive debt crisis:

- 45% of credit active South Africans are three months and more in arrears with their payments;
- Unsecured credit in South Africa has grown from R40-billion in 2008 to R172-billion in 2014;
- Much of this credit is for immediate consumption, and not for investing in something durable like a house; and
- When we talk about credit for consumption, we are often not talking about luxury items - 40% of loans from micro-lenders are simply to buy food.

The degree of monopoly concentration in banking in South Africa is among the highest in the world – the four largest banks hold 84% of total banking. And at the end of last year, foreign share-holders held 50% of all of our banking shares. Half of the massive dividend profits made by the banks from exorbitant bank charges and punishing interest rates doesn't even stay in South Africa.

We must advance the call for a new credit amnesty. Debt relief can take many forms, including a write-off where

payment is simply unrealistic. In other cases, a significant reduction of interest rates on unpayable debt must be made.

We must expose and root out all abuses of garnishee orders.

There is also massive abuse of house repossessions and home evictions now happening in South Africa, driven by the banks, corrupt estate agents and private developers. Thousands of families are being thrown out on to the streets, on a scale that is approaching the worst of the apartheid-era's forced removals. Regulations governing repossession must be tightened, and abusers must be dealt with. In many other countries, a repossessed house cannot be sold at a first auction at less than 95% of its market value. Here in South Africa we are coming across cases in which evicted owners are not informed of auction dates. Their R400 000 houses are being sold for R2 000 or R1 000 – we even know of one case where a house was sold for R100. This is happening because there are syndicates that involve corrupt estate agents, bank officials, court officials, and property developers.

There must be interest rate caps imposed on credit for productive purposes (building a factory for instance), or for social purposes (to address the crisis in the so-called gap housing market, all those who do not qualify for an RDP house but who also are turned away by the banks).

Our longer term objective is to nationalise or (more accurately) socialise

**The working class,
the poor, and the
so-called “new black middle
class”, are trapped in
a massive debt crisis**

the banks so that they serve the majority and contribute to a developing economy, with localisation, industrial development and job creation. But while we strive for this longer term objective, we must also greatly consolidate our own publicly-owned, and socially-owned financial resources.

Is the Public Investment Corporation playing an effective developmental role, or is it too often simply advancing the interests of narrow BEE factions?

We have long called for the Postbank to be given a full-banking licence.

Consolidate comprehensive social security now!

Cosatu was correct to say that we cannot proceed with amendments to workers' provident funds without a more comprehensive government approach to social security. This includes the struggle for a National Minimum Wage, National Health Insurance and the Right to Work.

The SACP will be actively campaigning for an overwhelming ANC-led victory. In supporting the ANC's campaign we are also saying that we support 100% the ANC guidelines on the selection of candidates. And for this principled reason where unpopular ANC candidates are parachuted into communities by factions and money-politics in defiance of the ANC's own selection procedures, the ANC national structures must step in and correct matters. Failure to do so will impact negatively on the ANC's electoral performance, and certainly the SACP will not support any factional candidate imposed by branch-level gatekeepers.

We must also deal with our own internal challenges as a broad ANC-led alliance. We must deal decisively with corruption, factionalism and Gupta-isation. We must unite our movement on the basis of a principled programme biased towards the workers and the poor. ●

Umsebenzi

EDITORIAL BOARD

Editor-in-Chief:

Blade Nzimande

Deputy Editor-in-Chief:

Jeremy Cronin

Editor:

Yunus Carrim

Joyce Moloi-Moropa

Solly Mapaila

Mluleki Dlelanga

Chris Matlhako

Malesela Maleka

Mark Waller

David Niddrie (sub-editor)

Alex Mohubetswane Mashilo

SACP & COSATU

SA working class on the march!

The first step in a campaign of rolling mass action by the two Alliance partners



SACP and Cosatu members march through eThekweni on the Red Weekend to support worker demands

Tens of thousands of people marched under the banner of the SACP and Cosatu in eThekweni on 23 April to support key worker demands, including an end to labour-brokering and casualisation, and for a national minimum wage, social security reform, national health insurance, free education for the poor, and cheap public transport. The focus was also on opposition to state capture.

SACP General Secretary Cde Blade Nzimande told the rally: “As the two leading working class formations, it is time for the working class to raise its

voice and start a process of intensified mobilisation to give more energy to driving the second more radical phase of our transition.

“While some of the new sections of the capitalist class want to play by the rules of the game, others are pursuing accumulation through massive looting of the state. They have no interest in the working class or in our organisations other than for purposes of capturing them and the state in order to enrich themselves.

“Let us mobilise to provide leadership in confronting the challenges fac-

ing our country. It is the working class that was at the head of the liberation of our country. It is important for workers to stand up now to defend our gains and drive an economic path that will create jobs. This is the beginning of rolling mass activities by the working class to place our demands as part of driving a programme to realise a second, more radical phase of our transition.

“We also declare our support for a decisive ANC victory in the local government elections. We firmly believe that it is only the ANC that is placed to lead a process of a better life for work-

ers and poor of our country. We are not going to support candidates who have been nominated through the corruption of ANC processes. We fully support that candidate councillors must be approved by communities, and that this must be followed to the letter.

“Comrade OR (Tambo, ANC President from 1967-1991) led our movement during a difficult time. He showed his wisdom by the way he responded to the memorandum of comrades in the camps who were frustrated with the ANC leadership, what became known as the Hani Memorandum.

“The memorandum was robustly frank. It openly and directly addressed the leadership about the weaknesses and challenges that our movement faced. This was initially received with anger from within the ranks of the leadership. Thanks to the collective wisdom of our movement, led by President Tambo, the anger was redirected into a constructive way forward with the watershed ANC Consultative Conference held in 1969 in Morogoro, Tanzania. That conference conducted constructive self-criticism. It adopted one of the most profound ways forward in the form of the first Strategy and Tactics document to be developed by the ANC and embraced by all Alliance components.

“As Comrade Chris was later to comment, President Tambo understood that he, the ANC and the rest of our movement had to hold together in unity and cohesion, and did not form cliques or factions with anyone. The three most important lessons from these revolutionary wise words are: readiness to accept mistakes and correct them, placing the unity of the organisation above all else, and firm commitment to the cause of the people!

“As we march forward in the context of the many challenges and difficulties that our movement and society are faced with today, let us take our cue from the revolutionary examples of our outstanding leaders like Hani and Tambo. These revolutionary leaders served our struggle to complete liberation and universal emancipation whole-heartedly. They served our people, not their own private interests.

“To allow regressive, reactionary and harmful tendencies such as corruption and corporate capture of the state and our movement to take root in our organisations and domestic policy is not to fight against imperialism. It is to open an entry door for imperialist

machinations.

“To allow factionalism, patronage, manipulation of internal democratic processes and gate-keeping to prevail in our movement is not to fight against imperialism. It is to weaken our movement. It is to divide it and prepare grounds for unbridled imperialist penetration.

“The reality is that our country cannot drive a sustainable transformational agenda against established monopoly capital, both imperialist and domestic, if our capacity within the state and our unity within the ANC and the alliance have been contaminated by corporate capture – including the widely reported problems caused by the Guptas.

“We must decisively tackle the problems of corporate capture, corruption, patronage, manipulation of internal processes and associated problems of division and disunity in the ranks of our movement and in government at all levels.

“Like all other important segments of the financial sector, banking is dominated by a few oligopolies – Standard Bank, Absa, FirstRand (FNB) and Nedbank. There is also a multiplicity of micro-lenders and loan sharks that, no different from the oligopolies, are ruining the financial and social lives of our people. Skyrocketing bank charges and interest rates are a norm that has worsened the levels of household indebtedness and financial exclusion.

“Later in the year the National Economic Development and Labour Council (Nedlac) will be convening a financial sector summit. We want the financial sector to end its investment strike and partner with government to invest funds to grow and develop our economy. The importance of creating productive work to address the problem of unemployment cannot be overemphasised!

“We want banks to invest in our townships and villages, in support of SMMEs, not just building malls that kill small enterprises. After all, banks and insurance companies receive billions of

We must decisively tackle corporate capture, corruption, patronage and manipulation of internal organisational processes

rands from our stokvels and burial societies, but there is hardly any investment in these areas by them.

“We want legislation to compel the financial sector to invest in identified priority developmental projects. We want the financial sector to invest in student housing for college and university student and to make resources available towards a comprehensive social security net, so that workers can have, amongst other things, decent but affordable housing.

“There are many workers employed under labour brokering, who are casualised, or who are irregularly employed under permanent temporary arrangements. We must continue the struggle to bring labour brokering to an end.

“We want accelerated implementation of the National Health Insurance (NHI), so we can strengthen primary healthcare and create an affordable health care system.

“While the government’s efforts to progressively roll out of free quality higher education are welcome, it is clear more funding and transformation of the system are needed to optimise resource utilisation including through shared services. The government must act decisively, among others through accelerating the coming into effect and the work of the commission appointed by the President on this matter.

Cosatu President, Cde Sdumo Dlamini, said: “This is just the start of rolling mass action of the Left. Whoever thinks they can replace the Left is wrong. No new federation can replace us. Those who want to disunite us, serve the cause of the enemy. The sell-by date of the Alliance hasn’t arrived, and those who say this are wrong.

“Those who want to kick us out of the Alliance, we are ready. We are going to fight for an ANC victory in the elections. We can’t be told by our enemies who should be the ANC President. We will deal with our issues internally. We will not allow a regime change agenda.

“As workers, we say hands off our pensions. We also want a national minimum wage to be implemented as soon as possible. Labour brokers are a slave system, and they are the enemy of the working class.”

Cde Nzimande stressed that “as the working class, we are on our own, for there is no other class to enforce our interests, to fight for the achievement of our aims, to advance our struggles, other than ourselves!” ●

CHRIS HANI MONTH

Paying tribute to Cde Chris – in word and deed

Throughout the country, Party activists at national, provincial, district and branch levels, mobilised to build on the legacy of the slain SACP general secretary



General Secretary Blade Nzimande lays a wreath on behalf of the SACP during the 25th anniversary commemoration of Cde Chris Hani's assassination

BY RENEVA FOURIE

April, Chris Hani Month, named after Cde Martin Thembisile Chris Hani (or simply Comrade Chris) was a month like no other.

In line with the Central Committee decision that we become more visible and more vociferous in driving community and working class struggles, many parts of the country were abuzz with marches, lectures, and debates organised by both the SACP and the YCLSA, every week, till the very last day, 30



Cde Chris: Never forgotten

April. Every event, whether national, provincial, district or branch, was well attended and the Party demonstrated that it is a formidable component of the Alliance.

On 31 March, SACP 2nd Deputy General Secretary Cde Solly Mapaila and YCLSA National Secretary Cde Mluleki Dlelanga reminded the young reds of the militancy, vigilance and discipline of Cde Chris at the YCLSA Bua Thursday held in Tshwane. The Bua Thursday was followed by a night vigil to welcome the start of Chris Hani Month. As the morning settled, comrades gath-



Walus parole: Cde Chris' widow, Limpho Hani (centre) during the hearing, with SACP representatives (from left) CC member Reneva Fourie, Treasurer Joyce Moloi-Moropa, 2nd Deputy General Secretary Solly Mapaila, and Party spokesperson Alex Mashilo

ered at Princess Park for an SACP-led Alliance march to Kgoshi Mampuru Correctional Services, which culminated in a lunch-time rally at Church Square.

Maintaining the momentum, the 23rd commemoration of the murder of Cde Chris took the form of a national memorial lecture and gala dinner at Boksburg Civic Centre on 8 April, which was addressed by Cde Naledi Pandor. And on 10 April, the date Cde Chris was shot, the SACP-led Alliance, in partnership with the Ekurhuleni Municipality, conducted a wreath laying ceremony and rally at the Thomas Nkobi Memorial Cemetery in Boksburg, addressed by the national leadership, including our General Secretary Cde Blade Nzimande and ANC Secretary General Cde Gwede Mantashe. The Red Weekend comprised of a joint Cosatu-SACP march on 23 April in which tens of thousands participated and SACP

District Councils on 24 April affirmed our grassroots appeal.

The discourse that dominated the month marking the memory of Cde Chris was significantly influenced by the Constitutional Court ruling of 31 March on the matter of Nkandla. This announcement drew attention to deepening corporate capture within the Movement and the state. Many reflected on how Cde Chris might have responded to the prevailing critical challenges. In her Memorial Lecture, Cde Pandor said that Cde Chris would have been proud of the ANC in areas where

it succeeded such as the provision of education, housing and basic services. She added though that he would have been concerned with the signs of decline in revolutionary morality and the poor ethics, immoral conduct and corruption among some within the organisation.

The message that underlined almost every speech and lecture was best captured in the address by Cde Nzimande at the wreath laying ceremony and commemorative rally. Cde Nzimande made special reference to the Chris Hani Memorandum of 1969. He stated that the memorandum "was about a combination of the problems facing the Movement at the time, in its first decade of exile and underground: problems of a problematic leadership style, including favouritism towards the children and descendants of some of the well-known leaders within the Movement, corruption, patronage and

**Cde Chris would have been concerned at the decline in revolutionary morality –
Naledi Pandor**



Outside court: SACP members and supporters demand that killer Janusz Walus be denied parole. Cde Hani's assassin will remain in prison until a petition to the Supreme Court of Appeal is heard

distance from the people insider the country.”

Highlighting Cde Chris's tremendous sense of discipline, Cde Nzimande emphasised: “The Hani Memorandum was directed to the ANC leadership, not to the commercial media. The memorandum did not threaten a walk out of the ANC, nor did it criticize the problems of favouritism, corruption, and bureaucratic neglect from the comfortable position of retirement from a holier-than-thought factionalism... It was written from a principled and not opportunistic or populist standpoint within, and with the fullest sense of responsibility to the wider Movement”. He commended the outstanding leadership qualities displayed by the late ANC President, Cde OR Tambo, and indicated how this leadership facilitated open and honest debate within the organisation at the Morogoro Conference. Cde Nzimande concluded his address

by calling on all to intensify the fight against corporate capture, to deepen the fight against monopoly capital and to accelerate the demand for the transformation of the financial sector.

At the same commemorative rally, Cde Chris's widow, Cde Limpho Hani, in her touching tribute to her late husband, said that she felt that our government had let her down in the manner in which it had managed the investigation of Cde Chris's assassination. In the subsequent days, however, the government made some strides in redeeming itself, when the Minister of Justice

and Correctional Services appealed the granting of parole of assassin, Janusz Walus. Flanked by SACP members, Cde Hani resolutely attended every hearing from 12 April, until the court finally ruled on 26 April, that parole would not be granted.

The hype of activities organised by the SACP and YCLSA during Chris Hani Month ensured that the memory of Cde Chris remained fresh in the minds of South Africans. But more importantly, the activities and their content created space for the opening of festering wounds within the Movement and for the commencement of a process of cleansing. This process will hopefully assist in ensuring that the Movement remains focused on the needs and aspirations of our people in a manner that is ethical and corruption free. ●

**Chris Hani Month 2016
ensured his memory
remains fresh in the minds
of South Africans**

Cde Fourie is an SACP Central Committee member

THELMA MANI

SACP says fond farewell to Sis Thelma

Cde Thelma Mani retires after serving tirelessly under four general secretaries and establishing herself as the unquestioned matriarch of the SACP head office

BY LEBOGANG PULE

The SACP organised a huge farewell reception for its longest serving staff member, Cde Thelma Mani, who retired recently.

SACP General Secretary Cde Blade Nzimande said: “In many senses, Cde Thelma is unique. She was initially employed to assist with cleaning, then very soon Cde Chris (Hani) moved her to the reception, and she began to play a major role in the office work. She served in the office under all the Party’s General Secretaries since our unbanning – Cdes Slovo, Chris, Charles and me. She has become such a familiar figure in the Head Office, and will be missed not just by us, but others who call at the office. We wish her the very best in her well-deserved retirement.”

SACP Deputy General Secretary Cde Jeremy Cronin said: “When Cde Thelma joined us in the SACP’s fledgling head office back in 1991, things were fairly chaotic and rudimentary. The National Union of Mineworkers’ had generously provided us with a bit of space in their Rissik Street head office. The Party was emerging from 40 years of illegality and with a membership in exile and in the underground of around 3 000. However, the Party and particularly its two key national leaders, Cdes Slovo and Hani, enjoyed massive popularity. Cde Thelma in the front office had to deal with a flood of well-wishers and prospective membership applications. There was also a lot of security police activity around the place. It was all quite chaotic. Cde Thelma handled it all with good humour and her

easy chuckle.”

Second Deputy General Secretary Cde Solly Mapaila said: “I came to know Sis Thelma in 1996 when we operated the office of the newly launched Swaziland Solidarity Network from the SACP HQ, with the late Cde Jack Govender (Sipho Khumalo), Sis Thelma’s beloved naughty boy. Sis Thelma welcomed us warmly and shared her lunch with us as we were not paid activists. She sometimes gave us transport money.

“She was a no-nonsense lady who occupied the front office with matriarchal dignity. We used to call her the Iron lady of the SACP. She was very strict in enforcing discipline and courtesy in the use of the common resources such as the photocopier and paper, telephones and the use of the reading room. She paid special attention to the well-being and disciplined behaviour of the YCLSA comrades and developed a special bond with them. She is a very strict woman and yet very caring and loving.

“When we received the first batch of Swazi exiles, most were young, mainly from the Swaziland Youth Congress and the Swaziland Association of Students, and we asked the Party to look after them. The Party organised their attend-

ance at schools and uniforms. The then National Treasurer Cde Kay Moonsamy organised them uniforms. The uniforms were too large for two comrades, Philemon Lukhele and Mlungisi Makhaya. Cde Makahaya is the current General Secretary of Pudemo. Sis Thelma jokingly told them that instead of returning the clothes to the stores, they should grow into them. The comrades were not impressed but they agreed. And then they realised how right she was, and now they laugh when they recall those over-size uniforms.

“Sis Thelma was available to work extra hours, even on weekends for any of the Alliance structures and the YCLSA. She had a powerful memory, and could remember cell numbers of almost all CC members and the phone numbers of the union offices. She kept contacts with families of Party and ANC stalwarts. Both the SACP and Cosatu HQs will be emptier without her motherly presence. I hope she enjoys her retirement.”

Cde Thelma served in the office from 1991, when she started as an unpaid volunteer. “My sister’s elder daughter, and her husband Pule Buthelezi worked for the SACP”, she said. “When they started at the National Acceptance House in 1991, before the first SACP Congress, he said they needed someone to do cleaning and administration work at the office, and my sister’s daughter told her husband about me, because I had a Junior Certificate and I was good with typing, and that’s when I started working for the SACP. When I started working here, Cde Joe Slovo was the General Secretary of the SACP, and Cde Dan Tloome was the Chairperson.

“Young people must learn to be long-hearted and to speak the truth, no matter how good or bad it is”



Cde Thelma Mani – the poster produced for her retirement ceremony at SACP offices in Cosatu House

But they did not last long, because immediately there was a Congress and Cde Chris Hani was elected as the new Secretary General, and the Chairperson was Cde Raymond Mhlaba. Cde Geraldine Moleketi was the administrator and we worked very well with them.

“The Party at first did not pay me, but because I love the Party, I did not mind working at the office because they supported us Christians and they clarified us as human beings just like them. And what they preached was the same as what my church – the Old Apostolic Church – preached, because they used to say God is within you and not above in the skies. I like the Party with all the activities and that is why I stayed so long. Later, I used to get paid R200 per month. In the morning I used to work at the Party and later on during the day, I would go to Yeoville and release Cde Mercy because her husband, Cde Dan, was sick and I was helping her out, taking him to the park and assisting him with his exer-

cise routine.

She joined the SACP in 1991. “When I started working at the SACP Head offices, I had to look for a branch at Zola, Soweto, where I am residing but I did not get a branch, and had to look for another branch at Emdeni. When people at Emdeni decided to open a branch for us at Zola, I joined that branch and started participating in the SACP events. But the truth is that I am not a very active member because I served full time at my church. Because my husband was a priest, I did not want to be elected for any SACP branch position because of my church commitment.

“But my husband understood that it’s part of my job, so he allowed me to attend meetings during the week and late at night. My husband was later diagnosed with throat cancer and passed away in 2001. I had one child who passed on, and I now have my sisters’ children who are also mine.”

Cde Thelma said that she enjoyed

working in the party. “I like the sense of humour of the Central Committee members. And they were all nice and kind.”

Cde Thelma feels that the future belongs to the youth, but “young people”, she said, “must learn to be long-hearted and to speak the truth, no matter how good or bad it is, because the truth will set them free. They must also be passionate about their work, and they must show humanity and Ubuntu.”

Asked what she does now that she’s retired, she laughed and said “Sleeping. I am not doing anything but relaxing, and being active at church and having a good time, and enjoying life as it comes. I love church and my favourite TV channel is Dumisa which plays gospel music.

“And now I am eating healthy, monitoring my diet and living a healthy lifestyle.” ●

Cde Pule is a member of the YCL and an intern in the SACP’s Media and Publicity Department

IN MEMORIAM: SHIRISH NANABHAI

An unassuming hero and SACP stalwart

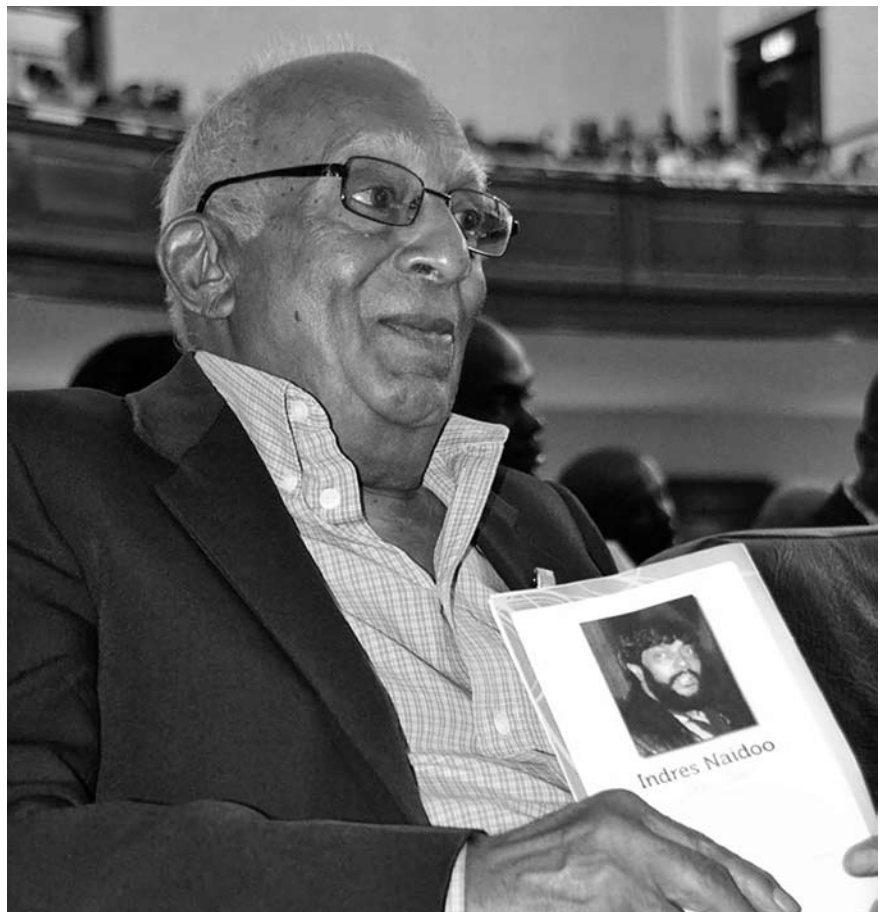
From his mid-teens until his last days, Cde Shirish was active in South Africa's struggle, as a democrat and communist. Reneva Fourie reports on his life and on his memorial service

On 4 April we bid farewell to yet another long-standing outstanding activist of our movement, Cde Shirish Nanabhai.

SACP General Secretary Cde Blade Nzimande said: "Cde Shirish was such a humble person. He made a huge contribution to our struggle. Yet you would never know that by engaging with him. He would never talk about himself, never claim anything for himself. It was over time that I got to know from others about his role in the struggle. He and his generation are amazing. Their humility, self-sacrifice, resilience is inspiring. I have eternal respect for Cde Shirish and his comrades.

"He was my senior, yet he treated me with such respect as the General Secretary of the SACP. He never made me feel that he was my senior. I think that's another form of his humility and discipline. I really regret I could not go to his funeral. I wish I had spent more time with him."

Deputy General Secretary Cde Jeremy Cronin recalls: "I first encountered Cde Shirish, indirectly - which is to say on an audio tape - before I ever met him in person. It was the mid-1980s when working with other comrades on a book commemorating the 30th anniversary of the Freedom Charter. We were tracking down veterans who had participated in the historic 1955 Congress of the People at Klipfontein and recording their stories. Shirish had been just 16 in 1955. As I listened to his quiet, unassuming voice, this veteran of a longish Robben Island incarceration spoke out of a deep history. 'In a way I would say I was born into the struggle', he told us, 'My dad was involved in politics from his early years. Prior to that even, he had been in the national struggle in India,



Cde Shirish Nanabhai: shortly before his death last month, at the funeral of fellow struggle hero, Cde Indres Naidoo

in the Congress movement there.'

"It was only in the early 1990s, several states of emergency and a personal spell in exile later that I finally met up with Cde Shirish in person. He worked voluntarily in the SACP head office for many years. Always unassuming, always a foot soldier, very caring of his own son, always with a

wry smile in the face of hassles and complications, as if to say: 'What do you expect? The struggle has its ups and downs, but that isn't going to deter us!'"

The SACP's tribute to him said: "We send our heartfelt condolences to the family, comrades and friends, our entire ANC-led national liberation movement, demo-



Decorated veterans: Shirish Nanabhai, Reggie Vandeyar and Abdulhai Jassat with their families and friends at a Lenasia event to mark their National Orders, awarded for their roles as Umkhonto weSizwe combatants

cratic and peace loving South Africans at large, for the sore loss suffered from the fall of our stalwart for national liberation and socialism, Cde Shirish Nanabhai.”

The memorial service, which preceded his cremation, was a serene blend of our normal revolutionary style, the formal, and the religious. The family had opted not to accept the offer of a state funeral, but chose this format to allow for greater intimacy and inclusion. Government had a presence, through the Department of Military Veterans and, with the provincial ANC, supported the efforts of the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation to ensure that the departed hero received a fitting tribute.

The option to have a broad range of stakeholders participating in the memorial service was a true reflection of the character of Cde Nanabhai. Formal speeches by Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan and ANC Provincial Chair Cde David Makhura were interspersed with tributes from young female and older male family members and friends. There was video footage of Cde Nanabhai's life, a broadcast tribute by Cde Ahmed Kathrada, traditional music and prayers, as well as the occasional struggle song. The diversity of contributions painted a colourful mosaic depicting the richness of a life of compassion.

Cde Nanabhai was born on 1 March 1938 in Fordsburg. Humility and compassion were among the most outstanding traits of Cde Nanabhai. It was that sense of humility and compassion that compelled him to become politically active – and which led to his first arrest, at the tender age of 17, on Fordsburg's Red Square. In 1956 he was elected on to the executive of the Transvaal Indian Youth Congress, and after studying in London for a year, he immersed himself in political work, for

which he was detained for a month during the 1960 State of Emergency.

In 1962 he joined Umkhonto weSizwe and received basic training in explosives. He used that training well but unfortunately got caught just five months after being recruited, while planting and detonating explosives at a railway signal box in Riverlea. He was brutally beaten and tortured in custody and sentenced to Robben Island from 1963 to 1973. After his release he was placed under house arrest until 1978.

A communist activist, Cde Nanabhai was one of the first members to work at the SACP headquarters in 1990 after our unbanning. He also maintained a presence in all activities of the ANC and MKVA and quietly contributed to the local community and other social programmes of the movement.

Cde Shirish's undying revolutionary spirit saw him continuing the fight against colonial oppression and social inequality until the very end of his life. He maintained his belief as an African communist in the specific conditions of South Africa that the successful completion of the national democratic revolution and the indispensable basis it must herald – of an advance to socialism – are the primary answers to the national and social questions South Africa has to resolve.”

The selfless, giving nature of Cde Nanabhai impelled all speakers to reflect on some of the ills afflicting the ANC today. It had to be raised as it was a matter that was of major concern to him. Minister Gordhan lashed out at greedy and selfish leaders who brazenly looted state coffers. He asked leaders within the movement to emulate Cde Nanabhai stating: “Cde

Nanabhai and his generation set themselves higher values without which they could not execute the struggle against apartheid. These were values of sacrifice and uprightness, not the hubris we see today”.

Cde Makhura equally spoke out strongly about the malaise that dominates the current discourse around the state of the ANC. Not mincing his words, Cde Makhura posed hard questions regarding placing the organisation above the people: “Many of us know that in history when the ANC was going to consider what next to do, we knew that the ANC would act in the best interest of the people and the country. We should ask ourselves... whether we can still say that today, and if we have any shadow of a doubt, there is a fundamental problem we must fix,” Cde Makhura said.

Most touching though were the remarks of Cde Nanabhai's young niece. She projected a general sense that the current developments were a betrayal of the legacy of her uncle and his peers. It was clear from her remarks that the inability of members of the ANC to assert its glorious traditions of good ethics and selflessness was leaving her deeply disappointed in the current leadership of the movement. It was difficult for any member of the ANC, SACP, Cosatu and Sanco Alliance not to feel that we must do more. And so, we bid farewell, with a strong sense of guilt but an equally strong sense of determination to ensure that the good that still does exist within our movement gains hegemony, to promote the things the movement is doing right, and to fix the things that are going wrong. ●

Cde Fourie is a member of the Central Committee

SACP VISITS NORTH SUDAN

Sudan: our liberation movement must intervene urgently!

More than 1-million have been displaced by a brutal five-year conflict in Sudan. Solly Mapaila reports on a formal SACP visit to Sudan's liberated zones and argues for a more active SA role

SACP Central Committee member Cde Charles Setsubi and I visited the liberated zones of Sudan over the Easter Weekend for four days.

We were in the Nuba Mountains, and the South Gordofan regions of the oppressed Sudanese people. Kauda is the home of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement, from which came the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N). This area, covering the Nuba Mountains, the South Gordofan and Blue Nile regions of Sudan, is bigger than Botswana. SPLM-N controls it. We could not visit the Blue Nile areas due to time and other logistical considerations.

Conditions in the Nuba Mountains and South Gordofan

The people of the Nuba Mountains subsist largely on primary agriculture – crop production, animal husbandry, and related activities. The mode of production can be characterised as a primitive peasant system, with the early characteristics of a capitalist trading system. There are neither factories nor production centres in the area, not even primary banking services.

The area is virgin terrain for all sorts of development, which is desperately required across the region. It is extremely under-developed. For instance, there is not a single kilometre of tarred road, a clear sign of neglect by the Khartoum govern-

ment. Sometimes rivers are used for travel during the dry season.

The developed part of the economic system is based mainly on the support of myriad Western-based NGOs and Christian organisations doing humanitarian work in the area. The area is currently in the midst of a raging war that has displaced thousands of women, children and the elderly, and robbed many people of a peaceful life, especially the youth. Most young people are active participants in the war, with no real schooling available apart from a few classes run by humanitarian NGOs using the Kenyan syllabus. South Africa should consider recruiting educators and other professionals to carry out humanitarian work in the area.

During our stay three major battles that took place, and our host garrison and another place of abode were attacked twice with Iranian-made long range missiles. Our convoy was also attacked twice with bombs launched from Antenov planes and was missed by just a few hundred metres.

Antenovs are Russian-made cargo planes, which have apparently been modified for highly destructive attacks that support the ground forces of the Khartoum government in its operations. The bombs are dropped indiscriminately, destroying villages and maiming the civilian population.

Of course, with such a short visit, it is



Cde Yagoub Osman Kalouka (deputy chief of staff, political and moral orientation), Cde Amar Amon (Nuba Mountains Region SPLM-N SG), SACP 2nd Deputy GS Cde Solly Mapaila, Cde Ezad Kuku (deputy chief of staff, administration), SACP CC member Cde Charles Setsubi, Cde Suliman Jabon (Deputy Governor, Nuba Mountains Region), Cde Karlo Terer (deputy chief of staff, military intelligence), Cde Habel Katan (Police Commissioner, Nuba Mountains Region)

not easy to draw final conclusions. But we saw enough that left us with an indelible impression. We heard many accounts from local people and our hosts, as well as more than 20 NGOs. We asked many, sometimes annoying, questions, but everybody we met showed extreme patience and understanding. We found the answers we got quite convincing.

We visited the frontline fortification area with a 10km buffer zone of hostilities. We witnessed constant movement and the indiscriminate attacks by Antenovs on villages, in addition to those on our convoy. We visited several places that were severely damaged and others completely destroyed by the incessant



SACP CC member Charles Setsubi at a graduation ceremony in the liberated area controlled by SPLM-N



SPLM-N General Secretary Cde Yasser Arman at a mosque in the liberated zone destroyed in a Sudanese aerial bombing raid



SPLM-N General Secretary Cde Yasser Arman with SPLA-N troops on the frontline

aerial bombardments, including several mosques, churches, schools, hospitals and clinics. These provocative actions led to the untimely withdrawal of the United Nations Development Programme from the area, to the muted concern of the African Union (AU) and the United Nations (UN) which were placating a dictator they have now embraced.

There is a shocking human disaster situation, and the level of disregard and even conscious neglect by the AU and the UN boggles the mind.

We visited some of the soldiers in hospital who were injured. Their morale seemed high.

We pay homage to the few NGOs and humanitarian organisations continuing to work in harsh conditions to carry out critical life-saving work for the people with very little support from the outside world.

On the peace process

There is an AU peace initiative process headed by former President, Cde Thabo Mbeki.

At the signing of the peace treaty in April 2016, the SPLM-N refused to endorse the deal based on what they consider to be

fundamental flaws, among them.

- These include its inability to bring on board the most critical protagonist force against the Al Bashir regime – the SPLM-N – which remains banned by Khartoum. The peace process does not provide sufficient guarantees for the SPLM North following the negotiations period. This will mean the dissipation of the SPLM North’s military force and might. The only pride of the oppressed Sudanese in the region is their resistance to annihilation by a belligerent regime, which has stripped its own citizens of their national identity; sullied their human dignity; questioned their right to belong to the country of their birth; and fails respect any human rights whatsoever. It is almost impossible to come to a peace agreement under such conditions.

The negotiators had visited the area within two months of the breakout of war in 2010 but since the deterioration of the humanitarian situation have never returned to the area – and yet they concluded the peace deal. The SPLM-N comrades have made a concerted plea for the AU mission and the UN to visit the area and assess the reality of the situation to gain a different dimension of the actual conditions of the people in the area.

Ideas for the way forward

a) Our movement should be actively involved to engage the belligerent and protagonist forces for a peaceful solution to the deepening disastrous human conditions.

b) The need to practically support the



Cde Solly Mapaila (front row holding an AKM rifle), Cde Charles Setsubi (third row, in cap) and Cde Yasser Arman with troops of the guarding division of the SPLA-N

revolutionary movement, listen to them, their concerns and considerations, consider where they come from, exchange ideas particularly on the on-going talks for a peaceful settlement of the Sudanese question, and consider an inclusive Sudan settlement for all its people, not a select few based on colour and religion.

c) To organise material and humanitarian support and aid to the entrapped women and children and the elderly in the Nuba mountains, South Kordofan and the Blue Nile.

d) The need to urgently support a schooling programme for the children of the affected area, by providing material facilities and books, educators and support personnel. The long-term impact of the lack of schooling is too ghastly to contemplate

for a generation of African children, who are growing up without formal education even at an elementary level. This unpardonable misconduct by the Khartoum regime must be punishable under international law.

e) Our government and movement need a clearer political strategy, without confusion, recognising the necessity of meeting both the SPLM-N and Khartoum government.

f) The current impasse of the AU peace mission should not be seen as unable to bring about peace: it needs to be bolstered with stronger political will by the AU, the UN and regional bodies to finally attain the peace mission. Other avenues should be explored on the possibility of attaining lasting peace and ending the humanitarian disaster in the oppressed territories of Sudan, as failure would lead to another process of the dismantling of Sudan through a debilitating war. The AU peace mission should arrange a week’s cessation of hostilities agreement to allow for a visit to the affected areas and see first-hand the devastation of war and the impact of the unending attacks on the civilian population by the Khartoum government.

g) Our liberation movement should commit to helping fraternal revolutionary forces that continue the fight for full rights for all the people of Sudan. In this regard we must mobilise for humanitarian aid to save lives as an immediate task and commit fully to engage the SPLM-N, the heroes and defenders of the oppressed people. The women and children in the refugee camps are living in misery and without basic human rights. We need a special South African mission and role to support the refugees. ●

Cde Mapaila is the SACP 2nd Deputy General Secretary

The SPLM-N struggle

The Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N), which hosted the SACP fact-finding mission, was part of the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement, which fought the Khartoum government of President Omar al-Bashir to a standstill, resulting in the division of the country into Sudan and South Sudan in 2011

SPLM has ruled South Sudan since its independence in 2011. SPLM-N launched its struggle partly in response to the exclusion, without consultation, of the Nuba Mountains, South Kordofan and Blue Nile states from South Sudan – the Al-Bashir government held on to both provinces. By October 2014, 2-million people had been affected by the conflict, with more than 500 000 having been displaced and about 250 000 of them fleeing to South Sudan and Ethiopia. Fighting has intensified since January 2015, as Al-Bashir’s government tried to regain control of rebel-held territory ahead of April 2015 general elections.

SPLM-N is a Sudanese national movement seeking to “change the policies of the centre in Khartoum and to build a new centre for the benefit of all Sudanese people regardless of their religion, gender or ethnicity background”. Since the resumption of conflict, the party has called for negotiations and a ceasefire. ●

BRAZIL

President Dilma facing a slow-motion coup

Out of power for nearly a generation, Brazil's right-wing political parties, backed by the media and ambitious prosecutors, are attempting to force out the elected PT government

BY ALFREDO SAAD-FILHO



Every so often, the bourgeois political system runs into crisis. The machinery of the state jams, the veils of consent are torn asunder, and the tools of power appear disturbingly naked. Brazil is living through one of those moments — it is dreamland for social scientists and a nightmare for everyone else.

Dilma Rousseff was elected president in 2010, with a 56%-44% majority against the right-wing, neoliberal Brazilian Social Democratic Party (PSDB) opposition candidate. She was re-elected four years later with a diminished yet convincing majority of 52%-48%, a difference of 3.5-million votes.

Dilma's second victory sparked a heated panic among the neoliberal and US-aligned opposition. The fourth consecutive election of a president affiliated to the centre-left Workers' Party (PT) was bad news for the opposition, among other reasons because it suggested that PT founder Luís Inácio Lula da Silva could return in 2018. Lula had been president between 2003 and 2010 and, when he left office, his approval ratings hit 90%, making him the most popular leader in Brazilian history.

This threat of continuity suggested that the opposition could be out of federal office for a generation. They immediately rejected the outcome of the vote. No credible complaints could be made, but no matter; it was resolved that Dilma Rousseff would be overthrown by any means necessary. To understand what happened next, we must return to 2011.

As Umsebenzi went to press, Brazil's senate voted to suspend President Rousseff pending a senate impeachment hearing

Dilma inherited a booming economy from Lula. Alongside China and other middle-income countries, Brazil bounced back vigorously after the global crisis. GDP expanded by 7.5% in 2010, the fastest rate in decades. Lula's hybrid neoliberal, neo-developmental economic policies seemed to have hit the perfect balance: sufficiently orthodox to enjoy the confidence of large sections of the internal bourgeoisie and the formal and informal working class, and heterodox enough to deliver the greatest redistribution of income and privilege in Brazil's recorded history.

The real minimum wage rose by 70% and 21-million (mostly low-paid) jobs were created in the 2000s. Social provision increased significantly, including the world-famous *Bolsa Familia* conditional cash transfer programme, and the government supported a dramatic expansion of higher education, including quotas for black Brazilians and state school pupils.

For the first time, the poor could access education as well as income and bank loans. They proceeded to study, earn, and borrow, and to occupy spaces, literally, that were previously the preserve of the upper-middle class: airports, shopping malls, banks, private health facilities, and roads, with the latter clogged up by cheap cars purchased on 72 easy payments. The government enjoyed a comfortable majority in a highly fragmented Congress, and Lula's

legendary political skills managed to keep most of the political elite on his side.

Then everything started to go wrong. Dilma Rousseff was chosen by Lula as his successor. She was a steady pair of hands and a competent manager and enforcer. She was also the most left-wing president of Brazil since João Goulart, who was overthrown by a military coup in 1964. However, she had no political track record and, as will soon become evident, lacked essential qualities for the job.

Once elected, Dilma shifted economic policies further away from neoliberalism. The government intervened in several sectors seeking to promote investment and output, and put intense pressure on the financial system to reduce interest rates, which lowered credit costs and the government's debt service, releasing funds for consumption and investment. A virtuous circle of growth and distribution seemed possible.

Unfortunately, the government miscalculated the lasting impact of the global crisis. The US and European economies stagnated, China's growth faltered, and the so-called commodity super-cycle vanished. Brazil's current account was ruined.

Even worse, the US, UK, Japan, and the Eurozone introduced quantitative easing policies that led to massive capital outflows towards middle-income countries. Brazil faced a tsunami of foreign exchange that overvalued the currency and bred de-industrialisation. Economic growth rates fell precipitously.

The government doubled its interventionism through public investment, subsidised loans, and tax rebates, which



President Dilma Rousseff: primary target of the creeping coup

ravaged the public accounts. Their frantic and seemingly random interventionism scared away the internal bourgeoisie: local magnates were content to run government through the Workers' Party, but would not be managed by a former political prisoner who overtly despised them.

And her antipathy was not only reserved for the capitalists: the president had little inclination to speak to social movements, left organisations, lobbies, allied parties, elected politicians, or her own ministers. The economy stalled and Dilma's political alliances shrank, in a fast-moving dance of destruction. The neoliberal opposition scented blood.

For years, the opposition to the PT had been rudderless. The PSDB had nothing appealing to offer while, as is traditional in Brazil, most other parties were gangs of bandits extorting the government for selfish gain. The situation was so desperate that the mainstream media overtly took the mantle of opposition, driving the anti-PT agenda and literally instructing politicians what to do next. In the meantime, the radical left remained small and relatively powerless. It was despised by the hegemonic ambitions of the PT.

The confluence of dissatisfactions became an irresistible force in 2013. The mainstream media in Brazil is rabidly neoliberal and utterly ruthless: it is as if Fox News and its clones dominated the entire US media, including all TV chains and the main newspapers. The upper-middle class was their obliging target, as they had economic, social, and political reasons to be unhappy.

Upper-middle class jobs were declining, with 4.3-million posts vanishing in the

2000s. In the meantime, the bourgeoisie was doing well, and the poor advanced fast: even domestic servants got labour rights. The upper-middle class felt squeezed economically, and excluded from their privileged spaces. It was also dislocated from the state.

Since Lula's election, the state bureaucracy had been populated by thousands of cadres appointed by the PT and the Left, to the detriment of "better-educated," whiter, and, presumably, more deserving upper-middle class competitors. Mass demonstrations erupted for the first time in June 2013, triggered by left-wing opposition to a bus fare increase in São Paulo.

These demonstrations were fanned by the media and captured by the upper-middle class and the Right, and they shook the government — but, clearly, not enough to motivate it to save itself. The demonstrations returned two years later. And then again in 2016.

After the decimation of the state apparatus by the pre-Lula neoliberal administrations, the PT sought to rebuild selected areas of the bureaucracy. Among them, for reasons that Lula may soon have plenty of time to review and to regret, the Federal Police and the Federal Prosecution Office (FPO). In addition, for overtly "democratic" reasons, but more likely related to corporatism and capacity to make media-friendly noises, the Federal Police and the FPO were granted inordinate autonomy; the former through mismanagement, while the latter has become the fourth power in the republic, separate from — and checking — the executive, the legislature, and the judiciary.

The abundance of qualified job seekers

led to the colonisation of these well-paying jobs by upper-middle class cadres. They were now in a constitutionally secure position, and could bite the hand that had fed them, while loudly demanding, through the media, additional resources to maul the rest of the PT's body.

Corruption was the ideal pretext. Since it lost the first democratic presidential elections, in 1989, the PT moved steadily towards the political centre. In order to lure the upper-middle class and the internal bourgeoisie, the PT neutralised or expelled the party's left wing, disarmed the trade unions and social movements, signed up to the neoliberal economic policies pursued by the previous administration, and imposed a dour conformity that killed off any alternative leadership.

Only Lula's sun could shine in the party; everything else was incinerated. This strategy was eventually successful and, in 2002, "Little Lula Peace and Love" was elected president. (This was an actual campaign slogan.)

For years the PT had thrived in opposition as the only honest political party in Brazil. This strategy worked, but it contained a lethal contradiction: in order to win expensive elections, manage the executive, and build a workable majority in Congress, the PT would have to get its hands dirty. There is no other way to "do" politics in Brazilian "democracy."

We only need one more element, and our mixture is ready to combust. Petrobras is Brazil's largest corporation and one of the world's largest oil companies. The firm has considerable technical and economic capacity, and it was responsible for the discovery, in 2006, of gigantic deep-sea oil fields hundreds of miles from the Brazilian coast. Dilma Rousseff, as Lula's minister of mines and energy, was responsible for handling exploration contracts in these areas including large privileges for Petrobras. The enabling legislation was vigorously opposed by PSDB, the media, the oil majors, and the US government.

In 2014, Sergio Moro, a previously unknown judge in Curitiba, a southern state capital, started investigating a currency dealer involved in tax evasion. This case eventually spiralled into a deadly threat against Dilma Rousseff's government. Judge Moro is good looking, well educated, white, and well paid. He is also very close to the PSDB.

His "Lava Jato" (car wash) operation unveiled an extraordinary tale of large-scale bribery, plunder of public assets, and funding for all major political parties, centred on the relationship between Petrobras

and some of its main suppliers — precisely the stalwarts of the PT in the oil, shipbuilding, and construction industries.

It was the perfect combination, at the right time. Judge Moro's cause was picked up by the media, and he obligingly steered it to inflict maximum damage on the PT, while shielding the other parties. Politicians connected to the PT and some of Brazil's wealthiest businessmen were summarily jailed, and would remain locked up until they agreed to a plea bargain implicating others. A new phase of Lava Jato would ensnare them, and so on.

The operation is now in its 26th phase; many have already collaborated, and those who refused to do so have received long prison sentences, to coerce them back into line while their appeals are pending. The media turned Judge Moro into a hero, for whom he can do no wrong, and attempts to contest his sprawling powers are met with derision or worse.

He is now the most powerful person in the country, above Dilma, Lula, the speakers of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate (both sinking in corruption and other scandals), and even the Supreme Court justices, who have either been silenced or are quietly supportive of Moro's crusade.

Petrobras has been paralysed by the scandal, bringing down the entire oil chain. Private investment has collapsed because of political uncertainty and the politically driven investment strike against Dilma's government. Congress has turned against the government, and the judiciary is overwhelmingly hostile.

After years of sniping, the media has been delighted to see Lula fall under the Lava Jato juggernaut, even if the allegations against him are often far-fetched: does he actually own a beachside apartment that his family does not use, is that small farm really his, who paid for the lake and the mobile phone masts nearby, and how about those pedalos (pedal boats)? No matter: in a display of bravado and power, Moro even detained Lula for questioning on 4 March. He was taken to the São Paulo airport and would have been flown to Curitiba, but the judge's plan was halted by fear of the political fallout. Lula was questioned at the airport, then released. He was livid.

To shore up her crumbling administration and protect Lula from prosecution, Dilma Rousseff appointed Lula her chief of staff (the president's chief of staff has min-

isterial status and can be prosecuted only by the Supreme Court). The right-wing conspiracy went into overdrive. Moro (illegally) released the (illegal) recording of a conversation between President Dilma and Lula, pertaining to his investiture. Once suitably misinterpreted, their dialogue was presented as proof of a conspiracy to protect Lula from Moro's determination to jail him.

Large right-wing upper-middle class crowds poured into the streets, furiously, on 13 March. Five days later, the Left responded with not-quite-as-large demonstrations of its own against the unfolding coup. In the meantime, Lula's appointment was suspended by a judicial measure, then restored, then suspended again. The case is now in the Supreme Court. At the moment, he is not a minister, and his head is poised above the block. Moro can arrest him at short notice.

Why is this a coup? Because despite



Ex-President Lula da Silva and his successor, incumbent President Dilma Rousseff

aggressive scrutiny, no presidential crime warranting impeachment proceedings has emerged. Nevertheless, the political Right has thrown the kitchen sink at Dilma Rousseff. They rejected the outcome of the 2014 elections and appealed against her alleged campaign finance violations, which would remove from power both Dilma and vice president Michel Temer, now the effective leader of the impeachment.

The Right simultaneously started impeachment procedures in Congress. The media has attacked the government viciously, neoliberal economists “impartially” beg for a new administration “to restore market confidence,” and the Right will resort to street violence as necessary. Finally, the judicial charade against the PT has broken all the rules of legality, yet it is cheered on by the media, the Right, and even by the

Supreme Court justices.

Yet the coup de grâce is taking a long time coming. In the olden days, the military would have already moved in. Today, the Brazilian military are defined more by their nationalism (a danger to the neoliberal onslaught) than by their right-wing faith and, anyway, the Soviet Union is no more. Under neoliberalism, coups d'état must follow legal niceties, as was shown in Honduras in 2009 and in Paraguay in 2012.

Brazil is likely to join their company, but not just now: large sections of capital want to restore the hegemony of neoliberalism; those who once supported the PT's national development strategy have fallen into line; the media is howling so loudly it has become impossible to think clearly; and most of the upper-middle class has descended into a fascist odium for the PT, the Left, the poor, and black Brazilians.

Their disorderly hatred has become so intense that even PSDB politicians are booed in anti-government demonstrations. And, despite the relentless attack, the Left remains reasonably strong, as was demonstrated on 18 March. The Right and the elite are powerful and ruthless — but they are also afraid of the consequences of their own daring.

There is no simple resolution to the political, economic, and social crises in Brazil. Dilma Rousseff has lost political support and the confidence of capital, and she is likely to be removed from office in the coming days. However, attempts to imprison Lula could have unpredictable implications and, even if Dilma and Lula are struck off the political map, a renewed neoliberal hegemony cannot automatically restore political stability or economic growth, nor secure the social prominence that the upper-middle class craves.

Despite strong media support for the impending coup, the PT, other Left parties, and many radical social movements, remain strong. Further escalation is inevitable. Watch this space. ●

Saad-Filho is a professor of political economy in the Department of Development Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

This article is reproduced from the online magazine “Jacobin”, in which it appeared on 23 March 2016.

KARL MARX BIRTHDAY

Marx: still inspiring our struggle – 133 years on!

This is an edited version of a speech by Solly Mapaila at a celebration of the birthday of Karl Marx convened by the iKwezi Institute and the Wits City Institute on 5 May

Today marks the 198th anniversary of the birth of Karl Marx, who was born in Trier, Germany, in 1818. He studied jurisprudence in Bonn, and later in Berlin, where he switched to philosophy. It was after this that he focused extensively on studying political economy, with his chief focus including France, the French revolution, and England, which became his main case study in his voluminous work, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*. This was a direct result of one of the two tenets of his materialist method, the materialist conception of history, which he articulated and applied along with the other tenet, materialist dialectics.

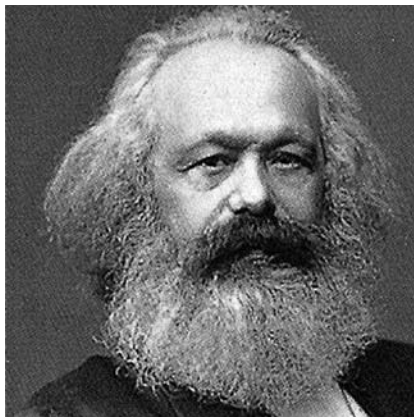
Frederick Engels became Marx's life-long comrade and closest collaborator. He worked with Marx on joint works, among others such as the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1848). Engels edited or completed Marx's works that were incomplete at the time of Marx's death, works that had to be published posthumously. He best understood Marx and his approach to the study of society, and is basically the first authority on Marx.

Engels stated three days after Marx's death at his grave at the Highgate Cemetery in London, on 17 March 1883: "Marx discovered the law of development of human history: the simple fact, hitherto concealed by an overgrowth of ideology, that [hu]mankind must first of all eat, drink, have shelter and clothing, before it can pursue politics, science, art, religion, etc.; that therefore the production of the immediate material means, and consequently the degree of economic development attained by a given people or during a given epoch, form the foundation upon which the state institutions, the legal conceptions, art, and even the ideas on religion, of the people concerned have been evolved, and in the light of which they must, therefore, be explained, instead of vice versa, as had hitherto been the case."

Above everything else, as Engels stated

at Marx's burial: "...Marx was before all else a revolutionist. His real mission in life was to contribute, in one way or another, to the overthrow of capitalist society and of the state institutions which it had brought into being, to contribute to the liberation of the modern proletariat, which he was the first to make conscious of its own position and its needs, conscious of the conditions of its emancipation."

Marx wrote extensively on a wide range of subjects. By and large, the content of his work, such as the *Manifesto of the Commu-*



Karl Marx: Still relevant & celebrated

nist Party and *Capital*, remains generally true in its analysis of the contradictions and overall movement of human society. 133 years after his death, Marx's method and the findings he arrived at following it continue to inspire revolutionaries and working class struggles across the world.

Our very outlook of society as the SACP derives its existence from Marx's scientific and revolutionary work. Our liberation struggle in South Africa as the ANC-led national liberation movement that dealt a blow dislodging the apartheid regime in 1994 was significantly inspired by, and derived its theoretical guidance from Marx's method of inquiry into society.

This is evident, among others, in the ANC's 1969 *Strategy and Tactics* document.

Very few individuals in history have had the enormous influence that Marx – in the context of class struggle – has firmly established through his contribution.

The Communist Party was the first political organisation to be banned in South Africa by the apartheid regime. This was by no means an accident. Marx's work (which came to be known as Marxism, and as Marxism-Leninism following Vladimir Lenin's contribution) became the number one enemy of colonial oppression, capitalist exploitation and imperialism.

The banning of the Communist Party in South Africa, came in the aftermath of the 76 000-strong African mine workers strike of 1946. Through its leading activists, the Party played a pivotal role in that strike. The Communist Party was South Africa's first non-racial political organisation.

The suppression of Marx's work continues, even under the name of academic freedom. One idea, neo-liberalism, is being imposed in what amounts to a straight-jacketing type of education, or what Paulo Freire in the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* called the "banking concept of education". This cannot be right.

Hosting this celebration of the birthday of Karl Marx in a university setting is very important. The celebration must contribute to the all-important imperative to achieve real freedom in our universities. Genuine academic freedom therefore curriculum transformation, is crucial. This should include freedom to teach Marx's work and develop it further. The best way we can honour Karl Marx and celebrate his contribution is to deepen the struggle to achieve universal emancipation!

As Marx has scientifically shown in *Capital* and other writings, class inequality, unemployment and poverty are very much an inherent feature of capitalism – which is not just some national but a world system. Class inequality, unemployment and poverty are, as Marx put it, the basic conditions, necessary products and levers for the accumulation of wealth on a capitalist basis. It would not serve any use to declare these systemic effects an enemy, while turning a blind eye to the primary, the real enemy, which is the system that produces them: capitalism – in its highest stage imperialism – and the class behind the system. Without doing away with the system, the only thing that can be achieved is to chamfer the sharpest edges of the impact of its effects and reduce it, and then only to a limited extent. ●

Cde Mapaila is 2nd Deputy General Secretary of the SACP