

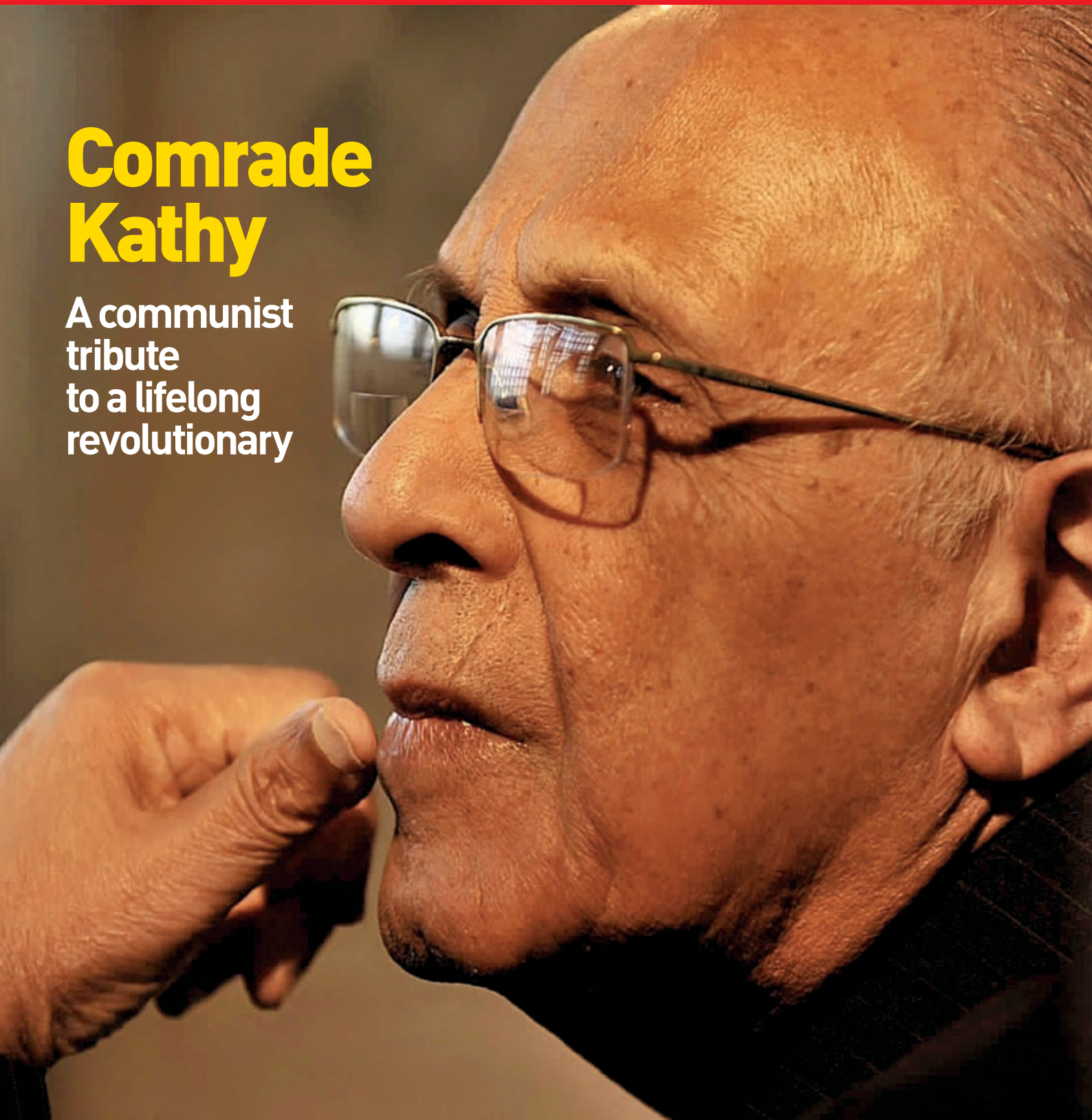
Assassination bid on Solly Mapaila: We will not be silenced!
President Zuma, it's time to resign!



Umsebenzi

Comrade Kathy

A communist
tribute
to a lifelong
revolutionary



SACP CC STATEMENT

Beware fake 'radical economic transformation'

The SACP's February Central Committee meeting warned against moves to promote personal accumulation masquerading as 'radical economic transformation'

The SACP Central Committee met in Johannesburg over the weekend of 24-26 February. The CC discussed a political report presented by the national secretariat, focusing on the challenges posed by the domestic situation and the responsibilities confronted by the SACP within this context.

Much of the focus of the discussion related to concerns around the continued worrying turbulence and factionalism within our ANC-headed movement, which is also clearly impacting upon the performance of government itself. Over the past two months, since our mid-December Augmented Central Committee, the general features of this situation have persisted and in some respects intensified.

In particular, we are seeing growing recklessness and a disdain for collective decision-making and for formal democratically elected structures. Policy shifts with a radical sounding air are being announced randomly. Existing and even deeper looming crises in the water sector, or in revenue collection, or in the payment of social grants are left unattended for apparently factional reasons, while ministers performing patriotic service in extremely difficult circumstances become the targets for sustained and factionally-orchestrated undermining.

Over the past two months this factional behaviour has sought to re-calibrate its public positioning somewhat. While the Gupta family clearly lurks in the background in many cases, there has been an attempt to downplay links in this direction and adopt a more radical sounding, Africanist posture. The SACP strongly supported the ANC's 2012 Mangaung call for a second radical phase of the National Democratic Revolution to

address the core crises confronting the majority of South Africans – unemployment, poverty and inequality. At the time, the SACP sought to engage its Alliance partners on the question of what content lies behind the call for a second more radical phase. We advanced a wide range of programmatic proposals which we believe remain relevant.

It is only now, belatedly, that from the side of some within the ANC and government that we are seeing an attempt to provide a gloss to the notion of radical transformation. Unfortunately, "radical" in these quarters, is largely rhetorical and is almost entirely focused on advancing narrow black elite accumulation. This very narrow version of BEE evokes "Blacks in general, and Africans in particular", but in effect, it's about "me and mine specifically".

The reduction of "radical economic transformation" almost entirely to a question of private black corporate "ownership, control and management of the economy" sidelines any notion of social ownership, or of popular control, or of worker ownership and management.

We are told that companies directly controlled by blacks only own 10% of the JSE, but what is left unexplained is: if individual blacks owned 80% of the JSE, how would that impact on the triple (and racialised) crises of unemployment,

poverty and inequality? The same applies to the constant references to "white monopoly capital" – if it became black monopoly capital would that change the lives of the majority of South Africans? The fudging of class is carried through in the way in which correct statistics are presented but abbreviated – for instance, we are told "White households earn five times more than black households". Shamefully, that's true, but notice what is missing – the word "average". The StatsSA finding from which this is drawn says: "The average white household earns five times more than the average black household". That reality is, of course, absolutely scandalous and is the source of social instability. But when you omit the word "average", you omit class and wilfully omit the growing class divisions and diverging class interests within the ANC itself.

All of this is designed to position private accumulation by narrow black elite as "radical transformation" for the benefit of the majority in general.

The Minister of Finance, Comrade Pravin Gordhan was, therefore, absolutely right to remind us in his budget speech last week of the 1969 ANC Strategy and Tactics document which asserted that: "Our nationalism must not be confused with chauvinism or narrow nationalism of a previous epoch. It must not be confused with the classical drive by an elitist group among the oppressed people to gain ascendancy so that they can replace the oppressor in the exploitation of the masses."

The way forward

So what is the way forward? And what are the responsibilities of the SACP in this volatile situation?

**... recklessness & disdain
for collective decision-
making. Radical sounding
policy shifts are announced
randomly ...**



The CC agreed that, while consistently exposing factionalism and holding the line against looting, we must guard against becoming over pre-occupied with factional palace politics. Organic links with concrete programmes of action must be deepened with working class and poor communities who are being battered by unemployment and preyed upon by criminals and drug dealers.

Radical transformation of financial sector

The financial sector campaign needs to be intensified. We welcome the announcement that a much delayed, second Financial Sector Summit will be convened by Nedlac this year. The Summit must review the failure of the banks and financial institutions to implement many of the commitments made at the first Financial Sector Summit in 2002 and in the Financial Sector Charter signed in 2004. Among these is the failure to invest in social housing and local amenities through community re-investment commitments.

We also welcome the forthcoming Parliamentary hearings on financial sector transformation and we call on community-based and social movement formations to actively engage with these hearings.

Over the past two decades the financial sector in South Africa has grown enormously and the major banks and their corporate elites have made billions of rands, but this growth has not been for the benefit of the majority of South

Africans, nor is it a sustainable growth trajectory. The much vaunted black middle class, lacking historical assets, has been floated on household debt, and this household debt crisis is threatening all-round social stability. Nearly, half of all credit active South Africans, over 10-million consumers, have impaired credit records. Much of this credit is for immediate consumption, and 40% of loans from micro-lenders are simply to buy food. This dire reality lies behind much of the crisis of affordability in the higher education sector, for instance.

The Financial Sector Summit must agree on a debt amnesty for poor and lower middle class households. The fact that debt is being taken on not to acquire assets but for basic consumption on food, education and transport, underlines the imperative of radically placing our economy on to a different shared and inclusive growth path.

The levels of indebtedness of the working class and poor result in many oppressive and irrational outcomes. In the government's iconic Cosmo City subsidised housing project, for instance,

If white monopoly capital became black monopoly capital would that change the lives of the majority of South Africans?

the overwhelming majority of original beneficiaries have sold their houses at prices far below the cost to government for their construction. Indebtedness is also crippling land restitution and reform, with many intended beneficiaries opting for cash payments simply because day-to-day pressing needs compel poor households to forfeit the possibility of acquiring a more enduring asset.

This crisis of poverty and indebtedness is further aggravated by loan sharks, unscrupulous court officials, estate agents, and the major banks. Bank evictions have reached apartheid-era Group Area removal proportions.

It is in this context that the SACP condemns the hypocrisy of those who have suddenly and belatedly jumped on to the bandwagon of dealing with the financial sector. These forces support the call for the Postbank to be re-capitalised and to function as a core community based bank. But they are absolutely silent about who crippled the Postbank in the first place by removing it as one of the channels for paying social grants. The very ones who proclaim piously about the need for publicly-owned banks are those who piloted an illegal contract with the Nasdaq-listed Net1/Cash Paymaster outfit. And they continue to defy the courts in this regard.

The SACP salutes Nehawu for actively taking up the crisis in the social grant payment situation. It is imperative that we build and deepen the unity of the organised working class and communities

The land question – both rural and urban

ADDRESSING the land question is a central component of radical economic transformation. But, here again, the CC recognised we must be careful that radical-sounding rhetoric is not really disguising either black elite accumulation ambitions or perhaps even the absence of any serious will to drive substantive land reform. We need to place emphasis on productive capacity. When land reform is reduced simply to nominal “ownership” quotas in the absence of serious attention to productive sustainability through active agricultural extension officers, and appropriate irrigation, logistics, fencing and marketing measures, land reform will simply produce failure, or elite enrichment.

We need also to recognise that while rural land reform is critical, increasingly the real land question is an urban issue. Massive land and asset dispossession did not just occur in the dismal colonial and apartheid periods – dispossession of the poor is occurring daily in the present. Home repossessions, gentrification of inner city suburbs like that occurring in Woodstock or Bo-Kaap in Cape Town, driven by private sector developers working collusively with Metro authorities, or the proposed dispossession through shopping mall developments of the small farmers of Philippi are examples of this continued dispossession.



Land dispossession of the poor is occurring daily in the present

Cape Town, of course, is not the only municipality affected by these trends. Again we need to mobilise the widest range of progressive forces in struggle to ensure that we do not compound apartheid spatial oppression and dispossession. We need to radically transform the persisting and deepening legacy of apartheid geography. ●

around common issues that affect the organised and unorganised, the employed and unemployed, the working poor and the indebted middle strata.

Let us strengthen our unity in action. Let us intensify our struggles against an oppressive system dominated by monopoly capital. Let us struggle for a comprehensive social security system that begins to address the right to work, and the expansion of the social wage including affordable housing and public transport.

A great deal of noise is heard from factionalist quarters about collusion in foreign currency trading among 17 local and international banks. As the SACP we agree that this kind of behaviour needs to be criminalised and individuals involved should serve jail time. But what the sudden opportunistic champions of bank regulation fail to recognise is that the exposure by our Competition Commission of foreign currency trading collusion is part and parcel of a wider move to tighten regulation and deal decisively with illicit capital flows to places like Dubai through closing banking accounts of companies and individuals involved in dodgy transactions. The imperative of tightening up the Financial Intelligence Centre Act through an amendment bill

is equally an integral part of the transformation of the financial sector and of dealing with those who are looting our country and continent.

The 2014 Global Financial Integrity (GFI) report estimates that South Africa suffered illicit financial outflows over \$122-billion (R1,6-trillion) financial outflows between 2003 and 2012, making South Africa one of the top 10 victims of this ruthless corporate dispossession of our public wealth. Our Financial Intelligence Centre says over the last decade South Africa has lost in excess of R600-billion in illicit flows, with trade mispricing playing a major role.

National minimum wage

Cosatu comrades presented the CC with a progress report on the National Minimum Wage agreement. The CC congrat-

**R3 500 is not a living wage ...
but enforcement of a national
minimum wage represents
an important advance for the
working poor**

ulated the Cosatu negotiators at Nedlac for their tough and principled negotiating stance. While Cosatu has not yet formally signed-off on the R20-an-hour, R3 500-R3 900 monthly national minimum wage, the progress made is a major Cosatu-led victory, based on its November 2014 11th Congress resolution. While R3 500 is not a living wage, 6,2-million workers are currently earning less than that and the enforcement of a national minimum wage will, therefore, represent an important advance for the working poor in particular.

However, enforcement will not be automatic. The resourcing of the Labour Department's labour inspectorate is critical, but, above all, it is the union movement together with community organisations and the SACP on the ground, that must ensure that this advance becomes a meaningful advance for the working poor. For many organised sectors, in the public sector, or in much of mining, for instance, the national minimum wage is far below what has already been achieved through worker struggles. But the principle of working class and trade union solidarity must prevail to ensure that there is a collective advance for the most vulnerable sectors,

while, as the national minimum wage agreement explicitly states that there must be no downward adjustments for sectors in which much higher levels of wage have been achieved through collective bargaining.

The SACP calls on the wider trade union movement and all federations to close ranks in support of the working poor, rather than indulge in sectarian point scoring. We note, for instance, that one Numsa leader has rubbished the R20-an-hour rate. We note that on 18 November in its own Motor Industry Bargaining Council settlement agreement regarding minimum wages for the period ending 31 August 2019, Numsa agreed to hourly wage rates for chargs (R19,07) and parking garage attendants (R14,61) below the R20-an-hour national minimum wage.

Higher education

The CC discussed a report on the current situation in higher education. The SACP fully supports the progress made towards ensuring free higher education for the poor and working class, while firmly rejecting the revolutionary-sounding but retrogressive slogan of free higher education for all. Karl Marx as long ago as 1875 noted that in capitalist societies “free higher education institutions...only means in fact defraying the

cost of the education of the upper classes from the general tax receipts”, that is, at public expense. In a society like South Africa with the enormous inequalities prevailing, this observation has a special significance.

Together with our Alliance partners the SACP will be convening a Higher Education Summit in the coming weeks. The SACP will raise a number of key issues, including the importance of producing a new generation of university academics; providing substantive meaning to the call for de-colonisation of university and college syllabi, and teaching practices; the deeply concerning patriarchal and sexual harassment behaviour on campuses; and the imperative of building, defending and transforming a strong public higher education system against encroachments by both narrowly elite private higher education providers, and lower-end fly-by-night operators. Some of the problems in our higher education campuses are the result of ill-considered corporatisation and the outsourcing of key functions, and these issues must also be urgently addressed.

Since late 2015 over R1-billion worth of damage has been caused to campus property in the course of protest actions. We believe that the great majority of students reject this senseless and self-defeating destruction.

We call on the Young Communist League, the wider Progressive Youth Alliance and the wider university community to provide leadership and not to be held ransom by, or tail behind, tiny and destructive groupings with agendas that have little or nothing to do with education.

Many of the challenges in the higher education sector are symptoms of a broader failure of our post-1994 reality. While the 1994 breakthrough marked a decisive and radical rupture with the political, juridical and constitutional structures of white minority rule, there has not been a corresponding cultural revolution based on the values of solidarity, the defence of national sovereignty, non-racialism, non-sexism and internationalism.

We call on the trade union movement to close ranks in support of the working poor, rather than indulge in sectarian point scoring

Xenophobia and the failure of the police service

THE CC condemns attacks against foreign nationals. However, moral condemnation of criminal xenophobic behaviour by opportunistic elements will not gain traction until we recognise the abject failure of the police in many poor communities to deal effectively with crime, including drug dealing, whether perpetrated by South Africans or foreign nationals. As numerous voices emanating from besieged communities are telling us, there is a sense of absolute desperation.

Community activism against the real criminals in their communities needs to be supported and responsibly engaged by the police through cooperation in representative and effective community police forums and neighbourhood watch structures.

Instead of embroiling themselves in factional, palace politics – the leadership of the SAPS and our intelligence services need to focus on providing real personal and community security to the working class and poor, not least for women and girls in these localities. Wealthy suburbs rely on a burgeoning private security sector which now outnumbers the police. Poor communities have no such resort.



Criminal xenophobic behaviour flows from abject of police in many poor communities to deal effectively with crime

Let us re-build the unity of our movement on the basis of principled programs of action, rooted in working class and poor communities, in rural and urban areas. Let us rebuild dynamic connections in struggle between the organised working class and communities. Let us re-build shop steward local councils. Let us use the major organisational events of 2017, not least the SACP’s July National Congress to take forward this strategic agenda.

SACP POLITBURO STATEMENT

President Zuma must now resign!

Increasingly our country is being ruled not from the Union Buildings, but from the Gupta family compound, the SACP Political Bureau warned in March

The Political Bureau of the SACP met in Gauteng today in the context of the deep crisis into which the reckless actions of President Zuma have once more plunged our ANC-led movement, our hard-won democratic institutions, and our country in general.

The recall from an overseas trip of comrades Pravin Gordhan and Mcebisi Jonas while on a promotional tour in South Africa's interests, and now the firing of these comrades and other well-performing ministers is more than regrettable. It is frankly outrageous, particularly while the worst performers in Cabinet continue to enjoy presidential protection and even, in some cases, promotion.

This recklessness has provoked widespread concern and anger within the ANC itself, and across all sectors of our society. We have reached a decisive moment in which, in the considered view of the SACP leadership, Zuma must now resign.

The coincidence of the dramatic Cabinet events with the desperate application this week in the Pretoria High Court by the Gupta-linked Vardospan company should not be missed. Vardospan brought an urgent application to force the Reserve Bank, the Registrar of Banks, and the Minister of Finance to allow it to take over ownership of the obscure Habib Bank. The current owners had given them a deadline of today (31 March), to settle the matter. Vardospan's desperation is clearly linked to the closure of Gupta-related bank accounts by the major South African banks,

the Bank of China, and now reportedly by their last remaining banking facility, the Indian headquartered Baroda Bank. The Reserve Bank opposed the Vardospan application on the grounds that it has a responsibility to ensure the financial sustainability of the proposed deal. According to the Reserve Bank, Vardospan has failed to provide clarity on the source of their funding and to provide transparency on other Gupta-related companies, including the notorious Tegeta mining



Before the fall: Pravin Gordhan and Mcebisi Jonas

company involved in a dodgy deal with former Eskom CEO Brian Molefe.

The timing of Zuma's Cabinet reshuffling and the deepening banking troubles faced by the Guptas is not, therefore, fortuitous. Once more it lays bare a disturbing reality. Increasingly our country is being ruled not from the Union Buildings, but from the Gupta family compound. More and more, critical ANC decisions are being decided not by elected and collective structures in Luthuli House but in Saxonwold.

In the coming days the SACP will be meeting with our provincial structures, all our Alliance partners and a wide range of social movements and formations. It is imperative that popular anger is mobilised and organised in constructive ways that unite South Africans of all persuasions and backgrounds in the defence of our country's interests.

This is not a struggle against an individual. This is not a factional struggle. It is a struggle against a network of parasitism and patronage in defence of our hard-won democratic sovereignty. Let us roll back corporate capture of the state! Let us call for the South African passports and residential rights of the Guptas to be revoked immediately! Let us call for the sacking of General Ntlembeza, an ex-Transkei security policeman, who many allege tortured our own comrades. Let us demand progress on the numerous stalled prosecutions and investigations. What has happened to the civil and criminal prosecutions recommended in regard to the Nkandla scandal? Let us ensure that the dodgy Tegeta deal is exposed. Let us insist that those involved in the whole-sale ripping off of the public broadcaster, the SABC, and of key State

Owned Corporations, including Prasa, Eskom, Denel, and SAA are brought to book. Mainstream corporate outfits like Allan Gray and the Ruperts' Remgro must own up to their profit-driven collusion with Cash Pay Master Services, Net1, and Grindrod in the exploitation of vulnerable social grant beneficiaries. Politicians and officials who have benefited from back-handers in all of this must be exposed.

Inevitably, SACP members who serve in executive positions in government are now being asked if they will resign. The PB's instruction to

these comrades is: Remain at your posts. This is not because there is any individual entitlement. You are serving in various capacities because of the support you enjoy across the ANC movement, because of your struggle credentials, and because of your performance in government. You have a responsibility to serve a massive constituency and the country at large – now more than ever. If you are fired at the behest of the Gupta network because of the SACP's stand on these matters – so be it. ●



Marchers in Pretoria demand the President's resignation

THE ANC

Watching a giant teeter

Reneva Fourie assesses the state of the Movement and the negation of high principles and probity that has thrown it into crisis



President Jacob Zuma's birthday was on 12 April. Some in the African National Congress (ANC) organised a big birthday bash in Klipfontein, Soweto, to celebrate the occasion. While they were partying in the place where the historic Freedom Charter was crafted, at the same time, South Africans in their thousands were taking to the streets demanding that the President resign because the essence of the Freedom

Charter was being violated.

Choosing to party was a rather callous response to the plethora of protesting voices and displayed total disrespect for the concerns of citizens. The marches were labelled part of a regime-change agenda, staged in resistance to the President's efforts to transform the economy. Undoubtedly the ANC and its left-leaning policies are not popular and there are many that would like to see it out of power. But while the opposition to the ANC were participants in the marches,

the bulk of those who marched came from within its ranks.

Stalwarts of the ANC and its former armed wing, Umkhonto weSizwe (MK); its Alliance partners the South African Communist Party (SACP), the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu); the South African National Civic Organisation (Sanco); and structures from within the ANC such as its Veterans' League and Integrity Commission, all their voices to calls for the President to step down. Breaking ranks in this way,



Zuma-must-go' marchers on the way to the Union Buildings

in what is collectively termed “the Movement”, is unprecedented.

Having had to operate under severe repressive conditions during the years of apartheid resulted in the Movement remaining a relatively cohesive and coherent force that took us to democracy and five successive terms of governance. This cohesion and coherence was forged through a practice of democratic centralism.

Alongside democratic centralism, collective leadership and organisational discipline are also firmly entrenched historical principles of the Movement. Leaders seldom used to take decisions entirely alone, or act outside of the engagement of the collective within the organisation: when a decision is taken, it binds all. Jacob Zuma recently reshuffled the Cabinet without consulting the officials of the ANC. And he has not heeded the advice of ANC Veterans and the ANC Integrity Commission.

For members of the Movement to call for the President of South Africa to resign outside of the confines of the structures of the Movement was not an act of vindictiveness or ill-discipline. It was an act of desperation – desperation informed by a determination to preserve good public governance and to protect the integrity of the state. What was being termed radical economic transformation unfortunately was reduced to the manipulation of procurement processes in favour of those close to the President, amounting to what

some have called radical looting. The many in the ANC who still believe in its organisational principles and values felt obligated to take to the streets to stop this, even if it meant marching with opposition parties, because speaking within the structures has had no effect.

Sadly, the gross enrichment of those close to the President is no myth. The President’s family enjoys a huge portfolio in business. Many of the companies where they are located have done business with the state. Evidence has also emerged of people closely associated with the President attempting to bribe public officials and/or facilitating their dismissal in the event of their non-compliance to illicit demands. While allegations have surfaced regarding unscrupulous business deals associated with state-owned enterprises such as Eskom and Denel, the final straw seems to have been the removal of the Minister and Deputy Minister of Finance, Cdes Pravin Gordhan and Mcebisi Jonas respectively, who had supposedly been hindering the processing of a banking licence and delaying a very costly nu-

If power is lost ...
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clear deal.

The ANC has witnessed significant deterioration since 2007. People died, went to jail and neglected their careers, families and loved ones so we could be liberated. Many people globally participated in anti-apartheid movements, making personal sacrifices for the sake of the ANC; our neighbouring states experienced apartheid-sponsored destabilisation from which they are still struggling to recover. The post-apartheid South Africa made unrivalled strides in delivering houses, water, electricity, schools, clinics and world-class infrastructure. Much of what the ANC has accomplished has been erased in less than a decade.

In this decade, there have been two breakaways from the ANC: the Congress of the People (Cope) and the Economic Freedom Front (EFF). In 2012 the ANC boasted a membership of over a million. By 2015 it had lost almost a quarter of its membership. The ANC elections manifesto launch in Port Elizabeth last year was a heart-wrenching occasion, as the President addressed a stadium with far fewer people than you would ever have expected. The ANC lost three strategic metropolitan cities in the 2016 local government elections, and barely held on to Ekurhuleni. The Alliance is facing a serious rift. Mass protests against the President have now become regular occurrences. But while the people of South Africa rise, those who could and should effect change, chose to party.

Those within the Movement who have called for the President to resign did so with the intention to restore the ANC to its former glory. As members prepare for the ANC’s June Policy Conference and December National Conference, the calibre of leadership required is at the centre of discussions. Critical, is how best to position the ANC to ensure that it is able to restore public confidence in its ability to drive a progressive, transformative, corruption-free programme that will secure an electoral victory in 2019. Having a neo-liberal political party in power in 2019 would be catastrophic for South Africa, the continent and progressives across the world. It is incumbent upon all members of the Movement to act decisively. Once power is lost, regaining it will not be easy, and the full realisation of the objectives of the National Democratic Revolution will be indefinitely delayed. ●

Reneva Fourie is a member of the SACP Central Committee

ASSASSINATION BID

You will never silence our voice!

SACP statement on the bungled attempt on the life of Cde Solly Mapaila, SACP 2nd Deputy General Secretary, at the 24th anniversary of the murder of Cde Chris Hani

The South African Communist Party condemns in the strongest terms possible the abuse of a state event to carry out assassination plots and pursue factional agendas.

On Monday 10 April a rogue element produced a gun aimed at Cde Solly Mapaila, SACP Second Deputy General Secretary. Cde Mapaila was ascending the stage to deliver the Party's message at the commemoration of the 24th anniversary of the assassination of Chris Hani, former SACP General Secretary who was murdered on 10 April 1993.

The gunman who was oblivious that there a video recording capturing him on the fringes of the mob of a few hooligans who were premeditatedly coordinated to boo Cde Mapaila and silence the voice of the Communist Party. The gunman aborted his mission after what seemed to be an alert to him that he had been exposed. In addition Cde Mapaila had an umbrella because of a heavy rainstorm. This caused a distraction when he ascended the stage where he immediately announced that he could no longer deliver the SACP message because of the storm, and exited the podium.



The SACP's Solly Mapaila after the bungled assassination bid

The SACP will today lay charges with the police and will discuss the matter and other information it has gathered with Alliance partners starting with the African National Congress (ANC). Those who planned to disrupt the commemoration by silencing the voice of the Communist Party and pursuing intent to spill blood on Hani's gravesite were clearly inspired by his murderers. The thugs and the elite of political lumpen who co-ordinated them wanted to commit a second

assassination on 10 April time and force us into a state of déjà vu, using the same modus operandi copied from Hani's cold-blooded murderers and pasted on his gravesite.

This is a worst form of political and ideological degeneration and will, if allowed to prevail, completely destroy the ANC-headed political movement. In particular this comes against the background of the ongoing systemic murders of SACP members in Inchanga in KwaZulu-Natal. The SACP will intensify its efforts to tackle the rot politically by democratic means. This includes confronting corporate capture within the ranks of our movement and the state; corruption; rent seeking; patronage; and abuse of state resources and processes. The SACP will not allow anyone, regardless of their methods, to succeed in silencing the voice of our Party .

The SACP remains the Party of Chris Hani and is inspired by his fearless revolutionary spirit!

●
April 2017



The weapon - visible, and pointing towards Mapaila, in this still from a smartphone video



A close-up portrait of an elderly man with white hair and glasses, wearing a brown tweed jacket. The background is a blurred grey wall.

Hamba Kahle Comrade Kathy!

*Ahmed Mohamed
Kathrada*

21 August 1929 – 28 March 2017

CDE AHMED KATHRADA

A generation ahead of its time – a communist tribute

This is the speech delivered by SACP General Secretary Blade Nzimande at Cde Kathrada's funeral



The South African Communist Party stands up today to lower its red banner in honour of this revolutionary stalwart, Cde Ahmed Kathrada, a cadre and leader of our liberation movement, a communist and a principled champion of a non-racial South Africa till the end. We also stand today to give our most heartfelt condolences to his partner, Cde Barbara Hogan, and the rest of the Kathrada family, as well as all his comrades and friends in our broader national liberation movement.

To us as the SACP, Cde Kathy has been part of our family for decades. Cde Kathy joined the ranks of the Young Communist League in the 1940s at the tender age of 12 years and his early politicization was through the then Communist Party of South Africa and the Transvaal Indian Congress under the leadership of Dr Yusuf Dadoo, who was later to become the General Secretary and National Chairperson of the SACP.

Cde Kathy was part of a generation that was ahead of its times. At the height of racial oppression, including the victory of the National Party in 1948, it would have seemed easier for the likes of Cde Kathy to mobilise the black oppressed on the basis of anti-white politics and racial chauvinism. But because they were far-sighted their answer to colonial and apartheid racism was a superior goal, that of building non-racialism! Building non-racialism is a task we must never take for granted.

However, Cde Kathy also understood that the struggle for non-racialism is inseparable from the struggle against class exploitation and patriarchy! This is a lesson we have learnt from the likes of Cde Kathy as a younger generation, and must



Kathrada with US President Barack Obama on Robben Island in 2013

be learnt by future generations. We must also thank Cde Kathy's generation for having built a giant non-racial organization like the ANC. In honour of Cde Kathy we have a duty to defend and protect this organization at all costs so that it remains true to its mission as a people's movement. We thank them for their foresight in building and leaving us a Communist Party, a vanguard organization of the working class, allied to the ANC. We must also look after it!

Cde Kathy's politics was formed through community activism in the passive resistance campaigns and against the so-called Ghetto Act. He was also active in student politics and led the South African delegation to the World Festival of Youth and students in Berlin in 1951. He subsequently worked full time for nine months at the headquarters of the World Federation of Democratic Youth. He was an internationalist and fighter against imperialism from a very young age, who also witnessed the defeat of fascism in Europe and thanks to the Soviet Red Army. He believed strongly that a new world of peace and justice was indeed possible!

Back in South Africa, he was active in

the growing co-operation between the ANC and the Indian Congresses. This was a key moment in deepening the non-racial values of our struggle of our struggle in practice and activism. As I said, they were indeed ahead of their times! It is important to remember this history at a time when a parasitic patronage network is today seeking to hide its intentions to loot the state resources behind a veneer of narrow African chauvinism, and monopoly capital seeking to capture our state through the exploitation of the black majority.

After his release from prison in the late 1980s Cde Kathy served in the interim national committee of the ANC, and was later elected to the ANC NEC in 1991.

As we say goodbye to Cde Kathy, the SACP also regrets that we never interviewed him in detail about key aspects of the history of the SACP, especially between its reconstitution underground in 1953 till his arrest in 1963. Cde Kathy was not only an encyclopedia of the liberation struggle, but was particularly such an encyclopedia of the history of the SACP between the 1940s and the early 1960s.

Let us remember Cde Kathy for his humility, simplicity, sacrifice, and love for the African people and the rest of the oppressed of the world. Let us teach the current and future generations about this giant as part of building a new and better South Africa. Cde Kathy leaves us at the time when our movement desperately needs the wisdom of people like him. In the name of Cde Kathy, let us defend the political authority and morality of our movement, for the sake of our country and its future generations! ●

Cde Nzimande is SACP General Secretary

CDE AHMED KATHRADA



Comrades-in-arms: Ahmed Kathrada visiting Nelson Mandela at his Houghton home

Our Party dips the red flag in honour of a revolutionary hero

SACP statement on the passing away of Cde Ahmed Kathrada

The SACP has received with extreme sadness the news of the passing away of struggle stalwart, Isitwalandwe/Seaparankoe Cde Ahmed “Kathy” Kathrada who passed away at the age of 87. The SACP extends its heartfelt condolences to the family, friends and comrades of Cde Kathrada.

Cde Kathrada dedicated his life to fighting injustice and since he became an activist at the tender age of 12 he diligently and selflessly excelled at this task. He was exemplary in many respects with how he approached the revolutionary task at hand.

Cde Kathrada was imprisoned as one of the Rivonia Trialists who included Cdes Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Govan

Mbeki, Andrew Mlangeni, Wilton Mkwayi, Elias Motsoaledi, Raymond Mhlaba and Denis Goldberg. In the post-democratic dispensation he served as Parliamentary Counsellor to the first democratic President of South Africa, Cde Nelson Mandela.

Cde Kathrada’s life can best be summed up by the words of Che Guevara: “if you tremble with indignation at every injustice then you are a comrade of mine”. Cde Kathrada hated injustice wherever it reared its ugly head and once South Africa attained her freedom he dedicated his life to the struggle for justice internationally. He campaigned tirelessly for the freedom of the people of Palestine.

In his honour we ought to focus our

organisational renewal efforts to inculcate among the members of the movement broadly the values Cde Kathrada represented. We need to deepen our resolve to continue the struggle to end poverty and want, diseases, illiteracy, lack of housing and intensify the fight against corruption and the crisis of corruption impunity currently threatening the unity of our broad movement and society.

Comrade Kathy was an example of humility, full of revolutionary example of selfless service to the people and he leaves a lasting legacy to be emulated by all, particularly the youth of our country to whose wellbeing he dedicated his life.

May his legacy live on and his fighting spirit thrive forever! ●

CDE AHMED KATHRADA

The SACP backs Kathy's call on the President

Jeremy Cronin delivered this tribute on behalf of the SACP to the Ahmed Kathrada memorial service at St George's Cathedral, Cape Town



Our greetings to, and deep sense of solidarity with Cde Barbara Hogan, Cde Kathy's life partner, with the Kathrada family, his close friends and all who loved and cherished a wonderful human being.

The SACP is proud of Cde Kathy's association with the Communist Party. It was as a 12-year old and as a member of the Young Communist League that Cde Kathy first became politically active. Key mentors in his early development were outstanding communists like Dr Yusuf Dadoo, a leader in the Transvaal Indian Congress, and later SACP general secretary. After the unbanning of the SACP in 1990 and after his own release from prison, Cde Kathy served on the interim national coordination committee of the SACP.

When, months ago, Cde Kathy politely advised President Zuma to step down, he did so not because of any personal animosity; not for factional reasons; not (obviously) because he was in the pay of monopoly capital, or part of some bogus imperialist conspiracy. He made the call not because he imagined that the challenges facing the ANC and the broader movement would be simply solved by a stepping down on its own.

Cde Kathy made this call out of deep concern for the ANC, for its proud legacy, for the movement and the struggle to which he devoted his entire life.

He did it out of a strong moral repugnance for the parasitic looting and patronage networks that have penetrated into the uppermost echelons of the state and ANC.

He did it not just for the ANC and the movement – but for the future of our country and our hard-won constitutional democracy.

The SACP aligns itself fully with Cde Kathy's call and the principles that underpinned it.

As the SACP we have taken note of the ANC's National Working Committee (NWC) statement issued yesterday. The statement indicated that the ANC wishes to engage once more with the SACP. We look forward to such a meeting and we promise to stand our ground on the principles with which we engaged the ANC's Top 6 in our bilateral on Monday last week.

It was in that bilateral that we were told by President Zuma that he intended to axe Cde Pravin Gordhan. We indicated our strong disapproval. It was in this meeting that we heard for the first time about the "intelligence report", alleging treasonable activities on the part of Cde PG (Pravin Gordhan). We immediately questioned its status and provenance. The SACP has referred this bogus report to the Inspector General of Intelligence, requesting that its origins be investigated and those responsible exposed.

The NWC has now indicated that it was a mistake for the so-called intelli-

gence report to have been the basis for the abrupt and clumsy recall from London of Cdes PG and Mcebisi Jonas, and outgoing DG Lungisa Fusile. But the NWC has accepted that the "irretrievable breakdown" of the Zuma-Gordhan relationship was a "good enough reason" for Cde PG's axing.

But surely it is only "good enough" if we are also told why there was an irretrievable breakdown in the relationship.

If there was a breakdown because Cde Gordhan refused to rubber stamp an unaffordable and unneeded multi-multi-billion rand nuclear energy programme that would benefit a select few...

If there was a breakdown because Cde PG refused to intervene with the banks on behalf of the Gupta family to re-open bank accounts....

If there was a breakdown in the relationship because Cde PG stood his ground when the NPA and Hawks were unleashed against him...

If there was a breakdown because Cde PG exposed the real rogues in SARS....

If the breakdown was related to Cde PG's refusal to turn a blind eye to what was happening in the boards of SAA, Eskom, Denel and others...

If these were the reasons for the "irretrievable breakdown" in the relationship – then it is not acceptable for the ANC NWC to say blandly that they accept President Zuma's grounds for firing Cde PG. That would be a betrayal of all the values and principles of the ANC.

We now know from yesterday's NWC press conference that President Zuma had already told the officials in November 2016 that there was an irretrievable

Cde Kathy first became politically active as a 12-year old and as a member of the Young Communist League



Actor Samuel L. Jackson presents Ahmed Kathrada with an Artists for a New South Africa award in Los Angeles, USA in 2013

breakdown in his relationship with Cde PG. So why was there the sudden flurry of events last week?

The bogus intelligence report appears to have been concocted to justify the sudden and clumsy move of recalling Cde PG, his deputy minister and DG in the middle of a Cabinet-sanctioned, international investor roadshow.

But why last week?

Last week there were two notable court cases involving the financial sector. Both were connected to the Gupta business empire. The first was fairly widely covered. It was the case brought by Cde PG for a declaratory order to say that the Minister of Finance cannot intervene on the part of private parties, the Gupta family and associates, in a private banking matter.

The second case was less covered – but possibly even more indicative of what might have been afoot last week. Last year all the major South African banks closed the banking accounts of Gupta related companies. In February the Bank of China closed the Gupta-linked VR Laser Asia bank account. Baroda Bank of India is reported to have set last Friday as the deadline for closing Gupta accounts.

And so, with Gupta accounts running out of options, another Gupta-linked company, Vardospan, has been attempting to purchase Habib Bank. Last week,

Vardospan took the Reserve Bank and Cde PG to court on the grounds that they were “blocking” the purchase. Vardospan indicated that the current owners of Habib Bank had given them 31 March deadline (again 31 March comes up) to get the go-ahead from the Reserve Bank.

The Reserve Bank in the court papers indicated that it was impossible for it to give the green light until there was clarity on the source of the funding for the purchase. The Reserve Bank in particular singled out the dodgy Tegeta-Eskom deal, indicating that although Tegeta was indicated as one source of the funding for the proposed purchase, there was a refusal to be transparent about Tegeta’s financials.

The court threw out the Vardospan application.

So why the sudden rush last week? Why the clumsy recall in midstream of Cde PG’s Team SA from London? Why the high risk Cabinet reshuffle? Why the

**Cde Kathy made his call
(for Zuma to step down)
out of deep concern for the
movement to which he
devoted his entire life**

inadequate consultation with the ANC’s Top officials?

Perhaps there are dots to be connected?

And this goes to the heart of the crisis we are facing as an ANC, as an Alliance, as a constitutional democracy. If elected and collective leadership is by-passed in critical decisions, whose content and timing are seemingly determined outside of Cabinet, outside of parliament, outside of the NEC – then we are in trouble.

We call for:

The immediate implementation of the Public Protector’s requirement that an independent judicial inquiry be established to investigate the financial links and dealings between all public entities and the Gupta family and companies associated with them;

Lifestyle audits for all ministers, deputy ministers, DGs and board members of state owned companies;

The revoking of the citizenship and residential rights of the Guptas;

Dealing decisively with the real under-performers in government.

And therefore, to create the conditions in which these crucial steps can be taken, we believe President Zuma should step down. ●

Cde Cronin is SACP first Deputy General Secretary

ANC IN GOVERNMENT

The challenges of governing South Africa

Our success is not measured by the granting of the rights in the Bill of Rights, argues Popo Maja, but by the creation of the necessary socio-economic and political conditions for the effective exercise of such rights

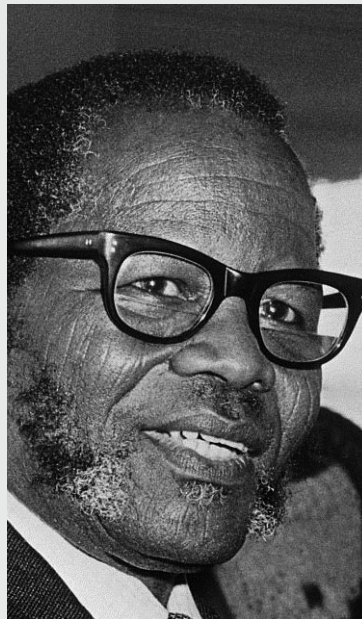


The dialectical method of analysis teaches us how to observe and analyse social reality. That is, the analysis of opposing relations of various things should on the basis of such analysis point out the methods of resolving the contradictions.

This is best achieved through discussion and debate and then by derivation, the investigation of 'truth' or solutions. A sober analysis of the current situation in South Africa requires a spirit of collective leadership – a leadership that seeks to qualitatively transform society and establish one that is based on principles of social justice, which can only develop through the cut and thrust of constructive debate. If discussions are to become an active ingredient of acceleration of qualitative transformation of our society, it has to be realised that no one holds a monopoly of the truth either in formulating or in resolving the pressing problems of the country.

We need to realise that in resolving these problems, we cannot force practice to conform to theory but, as Lenin put it, "the historical moment has arrived when theory is being transformed into practice, vitalised by practice, corrected by practice, tested by practice". (VI Lenin, Collected Works, Vol 26, p 413).

In the calls for organisational unity and renewal and fighting factionalism within the African National Congress (ANC), inertia in thinking and practice has proved to be too obdurate and efforts made to achieve the objectives of these calls blatantly inadequate. In recent decades a system has been established that



Learn from other revolutions

You might think it is very difficult to wage a liberation struggle. Wait until you are in power. I might be dead by then. At that stage you will realise that it is actually more difficult to keep the power than to wage a liberation war. People will be expecting a lot of services from you. You will have to satisfy the various demands of the masses of our people. In the process, be prepared to learn from other people's revolutions

– ANC President OR Tambo, 1977

undermines the fundamental principle of the realisation of objectives of our National Democratic Revolution (NDR). Many organisational mistakes could have been avoided if, in word and deed, the leading organs, not only of the ANC, but also of the entire society, had spoken out against the emergence of tribalism and the culture of disrespect for the elders. Those of us who had the ability to speak out and denounce these social illnesses did not speak out.

Equipped with the panoply of the experience and fruits of the 'spirit of collectivism' and lessons of other liberation movements, we have to move towards a system based on general conceptualisation of social reality. What is required today is to take an unbiased attitude, to be self-critical, to acknowledge honestly and openly the consequences of our past mistakes that have contradicted essential values and principles of our NDR.

There is also a need to recognise that the path of governance of a country and of building a new society, which is the negation of the previous unjust and racial society, requires us to find answers to the questions that life raises; does not run from the manipulation of truth, but from the realities of existence and actual processes of real life. The task for collective leadership is to conceptualise and dispassionately analyse the past in its entirety and with all its dialectical contradictions, to see the whole set of causal relations, whether in the economy, social, political or other spheres, and in between; in pursuit of ways and means of addressing social discontent and not to simply dismiss this as troublesome survivals of the past society.

Governing a country cannot be done by way of simplification of social reality. ANC President Cde OR Tambo has been quoted as having said; “You might think it is very difficult to wage a liberation struggle ... wait until you are in power ... be prepared to learn from other people’s revolutions”.

In view of this, we seem not to have learnt much from other people’s revolutions.

The ability to govern a country is gauged by the extent that a governing party (in a democracy) succeeds in maintaining and regulating the proportions between different needs of the society. It calls for cognisance of the globalised world in taking political decisions that have implications for our economy and international relations. All the organs of our society must realise that democracy as enshrined in our Bill of Rights is measured not simply by granting these rights, but by the creation of the necessary socio-economic and political conditions for the effective exercise of such rights.

Suitable forms and incentives for real participation by people in day-to-day decision-making processes at the national and community levels – beyond just voting every five years – need to be found and crystallised. Mechanism whereby democracy operates as a means of resolving emergent social problems of all kinds, also need to be identified and solidified as precisely as possible.

The time has come for an understanding of the real value of giving juridical form to social relations and for the all-round development and effective utilisation of the humanist and moral potential of our country’s Constitution. Without law, legality and justice, social progress cannot be achieved, and the normal func-

tioning of the economy and of the institutions of political democracy cannot be ensured. Without access to institutions of law and the material wealth of the country by all citizens, our beautiful Constitution will remain a legal document designed to secure colonial privileges and benefitting only a small black elite.

It is deceitful to speak about the beauty of our Constitution when it does not provide a legal basis for the redress of colonial injustices in a real material sense. It has to be realised that the legal status and the rights and freedoms of citizens are rooted in the totality of social relations, while the law sets down and safeguards what has been formed in real life. As it is, our Constitution and laws have failed to grasp the real link that exists in our country between social harmony and poverty.

Special attention needs to be given to improving the ability of our laws to lay the juridical basis for economic reform; to introduce cardinal changes needed in those sectors of jurisprudence that underpin the economic, political and social rights and freedoms of South Africans.

To steer the law in the direction of turning respect for human dignity into an unconditional priority, constitutes today a most serious task of the collective leadership of our country.

Beyond marching and shouting in accord with increasingly and dangerously

personalised political discourse, the time has come to exert the same effort against poverty. It cannot be denied that poverty undermines peace and social harmony. Poverty sows seeds of conflict. Poverty degrades. Poverty enrages. Poverty dehumanises. It must be realised that peace and social harmony are indivisible from concerted efforts to reduce levels of poverty in our country.

Recognition that colonialism has looted and committed crimes against humanity in Africa should be embraced if there is to be social harmony. From a sociological point of view, this means stepping up the fight against the scourges of colonialism: hunger, disease, poverty and illiteracy. From a philosophical point of view, it means that all of us, black and white, must strive for harmony in human relationships and the cleansing of hearts and minds of all forms of social evil caused by the huge gap of the ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots’. It means building relationships between different cultures, social and economic backgrounds. Doing something that does not always benefit the individual. Those who ‘have’ in this country hold onto their material possessions, status and greed so tightly that they forget about others, and become so self-absorbed, thus their identities become ingrained in their bank balance, clothes they wear, where they live, etc.

There has to be something bigger, and there is. It is once we realize the need for social solidarity based on the respect of human dignity, that we can all make a difference, no matter how big or small, that our land and the people will change. ●

Popo Maja is an SACP member, former MK soldier and Robben Island political prisoner

Without access to institutions of law by all citizens, our Constitution will remain a document designed to secure colonial privileges

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STATE POWER

Contesting elections – a tactic in the strategy?

The Party would be absolutely correct to contest elections, but needs mature and agile decision-making to decide when, how and where it does so

The democratic South African state has its origins in a highly contested negotiated settlement of a decades' long people's resistance, uprising and war. It is a state embedded in a social contract, guided by a negotiated Constitution, which mandates members of the nation-state to give a mandate to a few elected representatives to rule the country on behalf of the people. This same state, originating as it did from a strongly contested social contract, is also a site of class struggle waged in a mixed economy which remains strongly dominated by the capitalist owners of the means of production, and an aspirant capitalist class fraction that utilises the state apparatus for accumulation purposes.

A state is created in the interests of the dominant class(es) as a political and ideological set of institutions to protect and promote the economic relations and dominant class interests and to maintain a political and social system that enables the accumulation of capital and wealth and protection of the overall interests of the dominant class(es). The class nature of the state is determined by the dominance of particular class interests.

In simple, and perhaps simplistic terms, the state consists of various terrains:

- The legislature (the law making machinery);
- The judiciary (the arbiter of that law);
- The executive (the policy and strategy decision maker and driver of implementation);
- The administration and organs of state (the institutions of actual delivery on law and policy); and
- The institutions of knowledge and communication (the arena of the battle of ideas).

Each of these terrains is highly contested in a class society – and more so in a nation with its roots in struggle against “colonialism of a special type”, where capitalism, apartheid and patriarchy were entwined in a state controlled and driven in the interests of the minority racial group and an extremely confined but very powerful ruling class.

As the SACP, challenging state power where it is not in the interests of the majority of the people and the black (in its broad definition) working class in particular, has been and continues to be at the centre of our strategy. Socialism requires working class hegemony in the nation and in the state, and this duality of hegemony is critical and must inform our debate and approach to state power.

Contesting an election as a Communist Party in a mixed economy controlled by the capitalist class can provide an important platform for on-going contestation of bourgeois power, including in its changing colour and gender clothing. However that on its own cannot provide the working class with state power, nor even ensure that state power is exercised in the interests of working class women, men and children, and the working classes' allies. The battle has to be fought on all fronts – electoral contestation and victory is but one tactical site of struggle.

The level of organisation of the work-

**Challenging state power
where it is not exercised in
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of our strategy**

ing class in the formations of the labour movement, civil society, the progressive intelligentsia, and with the SACP playing a vanguard role, is perhaps the most fundamental building block for any electoral, parliamentary, and executive role of the Party to be of value. Without the organised, conscious and active presence of the formations of the working class, contesting an election, getting seats in Parliament, controlling a municipality, a provincial government or even a national Cabinet, is of limited value, albeit providing an important mobilising and ideological terrain.

In 1985, Cde Joe Slovo asked the question what colour the flag that flew over the Union Buildings would be on Freedom Day. He argued that whether it was the black, green and gold, or the red of the people's flag would be determined by the extent of the working class within the ANC led liberation movement. It is this that we need to remember as we engage in debate about electoral politics in the current conjuncture. A conjuncture in which the dominant interests in the ANC and hence in many of the institutions of the state are driven by aggressive private capital accumulation interests; the labour movement has been severely weakened; social movements lack adequate coherence of strategy and tactics, with some of the more vociferous being driven by narrow African bourgeois aspirations to the exclusion of black working class interests; and the institutions of the state have been weakened.

Neither the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) nor the socialist revolution belongs to any one organisation. They both, if they are to achieve their objectives, belong to the majority of the people, organised in a variety of forma-



Unity in action: But the basis of a high degree of programmatic unity, transparency and trust has eroded in the past 22 years

tions and led by organisations that clearly have been chosen by the people.

Key to determining the tactical decisions of the SACP at this point is analysis of the programmatic unity and commonality between the Party and the dominant forces within the ANC. A strategic alliance with an aspirant indigenous bourgeoisie hell-bent on looting through control of state institutions, in particular state owned enterprises, cannot be in the interests of working class hegemony and interests. A strategic alliance in which the ANC has not in the past 20 years related to the Party as an Alliance party except where it was in its narrow interests to do so, must also be reconfigured to ensure that manipulation of Alliance partners is not the dominant form of interaction.

In addition, it is critical for the SACP to engage with forms of electoral contestation and a range of possible scenarios. Electoral success and hence power in a legislature, let alone power in a Cabinet, is determined by the level of mass support for and hegemony of any particular

political party. The strategic alliance in the NDR has resulted in Cosatu and the SACP campaigning with the ANC to put it in power. This can be effective when the Alliance is based on a high degree of programmatic unity and transparency and trust between the members of the Alliance. It is clear that these conditions have radically changed over the 22 years of democracy.

A post-election coalition is a tactical decision based on an electoral outcome other than that desired, and reflects the relative inability to form a majority government by one elected party. The post-election coalition is formed on the

An alliance with an aspirant indigenous bourgeoisie hell-bent on looting state institutions cannot be in the interests of the working class

basis of strength shown in the election outcome in which the number of seats in the legislature becomes an instrument of power in the management of coalition politics. As the vanguard of the working class, that must lead the working class formations, what are we doing to ensure the balance of forces is in interest of the working class?

Moving from the premise that the state is a critical site of class struggle, we should constantly be asking in whose interests does the state work. This requires us to reflect on whether the balance of class forces in the state is determined by the composition of the state and outcome of electoral processes, or by the level of organisation of working class and its allies to influence, shape and force state to attend to working class interests.

We find in communities that:

- Young women are being trafficked with the support of their mothers to get jobs to reduce the poverty of the family;
- Young women are being told to have sex with an employer to be able to get

a job;

- Women, are raped in their own homes by family members or youth from the community;
- Women are murdered by partners;
- Men believe that they can report their wives to the police station because they have been denied conjugal rights;
- Men and women of working age are unable to find sustainable livelihoods and jobs;
- Those dependent on social grants are victims of grant misuse, or of violence and theft of grants;
- Youth are damaged by substance abuse and drugs making them socially and economically dysfunctional;
- Learners are not safe to go to school or to learn in school and teachers are sexually abusing learners;
- Perpetrators of violence against women and children are not brought to justice and continue to terrorise communities; and
- Although community organisations, political parties and NGOs exist, they are unable to find solutions to the challenges that these women experience.

So we must ask ourselves: Whose interests is the state working for? Where and how effective are progressive organisations? Where is the progressive discourse on social issues? Where is the morality of the Left and how is it experienced in working class communities and families? Where is the impact of employment and economic opportunities and community development? The experiences of working class girls and women are critical barometers of the balance of forces in society and the maturity of the class struggle. Intensified organisation of the working class to assert hegemony in the community, in the workplace and in the institutions of the state must be the corollary to the contestation of elections. Exercising state power lies in the strength of organisation of progressive formations, of the working class and its allies, of the ideological hegemony of the working class in society, in political and economic discourse.

The debate about “state power” must not be reduced to merely discussing electoral politics. The prevalence of disaffected citizens, leaders and opinion makers concerned by the failure of the NDR to deliver on the Freedom Charter, and by the extent of corruption and state capture, is resulting in comrades feeling that Party must go it alone in the election process. Contesting elections as the Party is absolutely correct, but several factors



Elections: The SACP must become the option for progressive, disillusioned South Africans

must all be considered carefully:

- The timing of it;
- The readiness of the Party machinery to undertake such a massive campaign;
- The question of which parts of the three-tiered government system are contested; and
- The extent of the organised hegemonic support that the Party has to empower those elected to wage the class struggle in the institutions of Parliament and government.

The tactical decisions about the when, how and where require a mature and highly agile Party decision-making ability. Reflection on the level of anger, desperation and frustration of the masses and the working class must be combined with an analysis of how ready the masses and the working class are to be mobilised and led.

The immediate challenge is to define under what circumstances elections should be contested by the SACP. Do we,

with our allies, have the ability to seize the moment and is the relationship between the SACP and Cosatu such that there is a convergence of views on such matters?

The Party must be positioned as the option for progressive disillusioned South Africans, as opposed to any other party or a new party. The SACP must be **the voice** against corruption, against looting, against non-delivery to the masses, against violence and abuse of the most vulnerable, and against radical economic transformation aimed at merely changing the colour and gender of the face of capital. The SACP must create the platform to provide this leadership.

In this 100th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution, we ask ourselves: what does it mean to be a Communist in South Africa in 2017? How do we mobilise young people in a pro-socialist direction? How do we build a solidarity economy as part of building socialism now exploring the Nicaraguan experiences? How do we give hope to the working class and mobilise it on issues of the national minimum wage; the social wage issue; corruption in the social security system; a comprehensive social security system; and the corruption of the safety and security and criminal justice systems? ●

Is there the hegemonic, organised support the Party needs to empower those elected to wage the class struggle in Parliament?