



UMSEBENZI

ONLINE



**Defend Venezuela!
Defend Cuba!
Smash imperialism!**

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EDITORIAL

2026: the year to build people's power, reject imperialism, and reclaim the revolution

Welcome to a new year!

We enter this year under conditions of deep contradiction and rising clarity. It is the year we remember Joe Slovo not as a distant icon, but as a living revolutionary whose ideas sharpen our political vision at a time of local crisis and global confrontation. It is the year the working class must choose: between surrender and struggle, between quiet decline and revolutionary renewal.

Comrade Joe Slovo taught that political democracy without economic transformation is a betrayal of the people. That warning now sounds like a siren across our country. Poverty, unemployment, hunger, failing municipalities, energy insecurity, gender-based violence — these are not accidents of fate. They are the outcomes of a system that prioritises profit over people, a system that survives on organised exploitation.

Slovo's memory was honoured just days after imperialism reared its violent head again: the United States, under Donald Trump's second term, kidnapped President Nicolás Maduro of Venezuela and his wife, Cilia Flores. This was not just a crime against a sovereign nation. It was a declaration of war against all who dared to defy imperialism. As our General Secretary said, this was not diplomacy — this was mafia rule with missiles and masks.

Imperialism is on the march — from the Caribbean to the Mediterranean, from Palestine to Venezuela, from the Straits of Hormuz to the Congo. But it marches not from strength, but from desperation. A multipolar world is emerging, driven by the material force of the Global South, BRICS, and anti-imperialist resistance. But it is not guaranteed. It must be struggled for.

In this moment, the South African Communist Party has declared 2026 the year of:

- Building people's power – organising communities not as passive recipients of policy, but as active agents of transformation;
- Deepening self-reliance – not the neoliberal abandonment of the poor, but collective ownership, cooperative production, local manufacturing, and socialised services, backed by a democratic developmental state;
- Constructing a people's economy – driven by public need, not private profit; owned by workers and communities, not monopoly capital; rooted in township and rural industrialisation, not elite consumption.

And crucially, we have declared local government as the decisive terrain of class struggle. As the General Secretary affirmed, the SACP's decision to contest elections is not a break with the Alliance, but a call for principled unity — not silence in the face of corruption and collapse, but renewal from below, driven by the working class.

We are clear: where we govern, we will insource workers, release land for housing and co-operatives, expand public employment for social needs, support the informal economy, and fight corruption decisively.

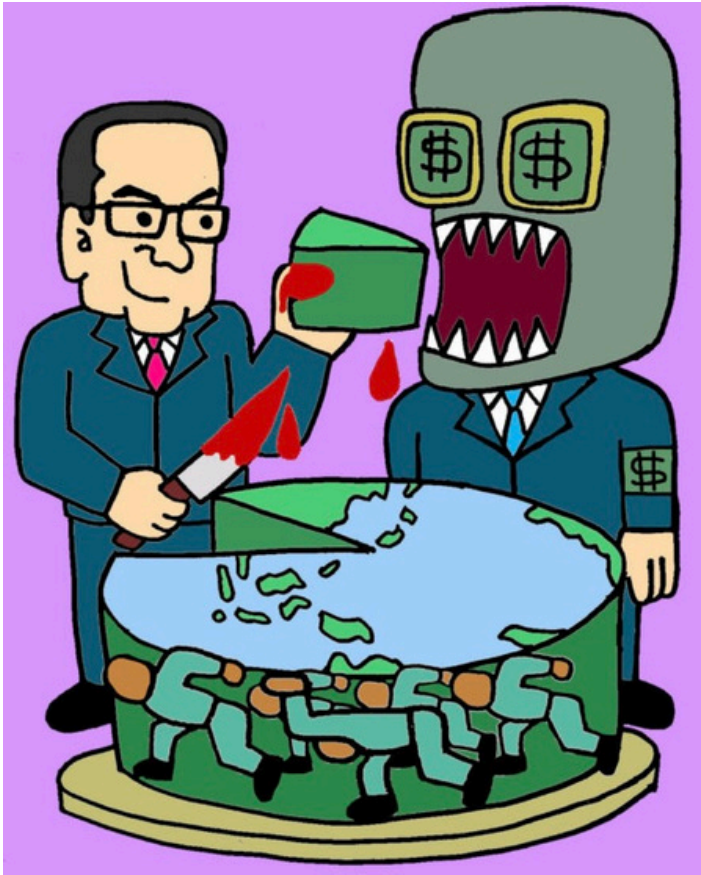
But we must also tell the truth: the Alliance is in crisis. It has drifted from its mass base, and from its historic mission. The National Democratic Revolution is stalled — political power was won, but economic power remains in the hands of apartheid-era monopolies and global capital. The GNU, wrapped in the language of maturity and stability, is an administrative mechanism, not a transformative force. It governs, but it does not rule in the interest of the working class.

This is why our General Secretary warned that socialism is not a dream deferred — it is the urgent next stage of our revolution. Socialism means:

- Democratic public ownership of wealth;
- Decent work and universal public services;
- Gender equality and social solidarity;
- Anti-imperialist internationalism and multipolar cooperation.

Our position on Venezuela is crystal clear: we reject US abduction, sanctions, mercenaries, coups and propaganda. The US behaves not as a beacon of democracy, but as a gangster state. We stand with Maduro, with Cuba, with Palestine, with all peoples under siege. And we call for mass mobilisation here in South Africa — protests, campaigns, consciousness-building — to turn our solidarity from slogans into power.

2026 is also a year of ideological confrontation. As comrade Dineo Majavu reminded us, Marxism is not a costume or cult of masculinity — it is a revolutionary method, a weapon of the oppressed. It must be rescued from distortion: from capitalist lies and from internal misuse. Reclaiming Marxism means defending clarity, exposing power, and organising for transformation.



From the artwork titled Sharing Economy, by Malaysian artist Choo Chon Kai. Image: Tricontinental Institute for Social Research.

And as Malefu Mokau warned, language itself has become a weapon of empire — “terrorist,” “dictator,” “democracy” — all used to justify bombing, starvation, and occupation.

We must speak plainly: imperialism is the enemy. Resistance is not terrorism. Socialism is not tyranny. And the working class must never again apologise for putting people before profit .

So, comrades, this is our message for 2026:

- Defend Venezuela, Cuba, Palestine, and all who resist imperialism.
- Deepen ideological clarity. Reclaim Marxism as revolutionary practice.
- Rebuild the Alliance on a militant, anti-capitalist foundation — or be overtaken by new, working-class forms.
- Turn the local elections into a battlefield for people’s power.
- Reject austerity, labour broking, privatisation, and neoliberalism in all its forms.
- Advance socialism as the only humane, rational, and just alternative to capitalism’s decay.

Let us not commemorate Joe Slovo with speeches alone. Let us continue his struggle. Let us turn 2026 into a year where the working class reclaims its power — in communities, in factories, in councils, in consciousness.

Forward to revolutionary action.
 Forward to a people’s economy.
 Forward to internationalist solidarity.
 Forward to socialism.

The future is not written by imperialists in Washington or capitalists in Sandton. It is built by those who organise, who resist, who rise.

Socialism is the future. Build it now.

JOE SLOVO

Honouring a revolutionary life



"We do not mourn Joe Slovo. We continue his struggle. We recommit ourselves to rebuilding the SACP as a mass vanguard of the working class, deepening the national democratic revolution, resisting neoliberal austerity, building people's power" - SACP GS Solly Mapaila speaking at the 31st Joe Slovo Commemoration, held at The Heroes' Acre, Avalon Cemetery, Soweto.

THULILE KUMALO

Each year on 6 January, South Africans and progressive movements around the world commemorate the life and legacy of Joe Slovo, a towering figure in the struggle against apartheid and a principled advocate for justice, equality, and socialism.

This date marks the anniversary of his passing in 1995 and serves as a moment to reflect on his immense contribution to South Africa's liberation and democratic transition.

Joe Slovo was born in Obel, Lithuania, and immigrated to South Africa with his family as a child. Confronted early on by the brutal realities of racial oppression, Slovo dedicated his life to the fight against apartheid. He became a committed member of the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the African National Congress (ANC). He eventually rose to become the SACP's General Secretary, a position he held from 1984 to 1991. He then took the position of National Chairperson when Chris Hani succeeded him as General Secretary.

Slovo played a pivotal role in shaping the strategic direction of the liberation movement. As one of the founding leaders of Umkhonto weSizwe (MK), the joint SACP and ANC armed wing, he helped steer the movement during some of its most difficult years in exile, combining revolutionary discipline with deep intellectual rigour.

His writings and political analyses remain influential, particularly his insistence on non-racialism, democratic accountability, and the centrality of the working class in the achievement of true freedom.

Beyond his role in the armed struggle, Joe Slovo was instrumental during South Africa's negotiated transition to democracy. As a key negotiator at the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (Codesa), he was known for his pragmatic yet principled approach.

His proposal of the "sunset clauses", which helped ease fears and ensured a peaceful transition, reflected his belief that compromise could be a tactical tool in service of long-term transformation.

After the first democratic elections in 1994, Slovo served as Minister of Housing in President Nelson Mandela's Government of National Unity. Even in government, he remained outspoken about the challenges of inequality and the need for radical socio-economic change to accompany political freedom.

The commemoration of Joe Slovo's revolutionary life is not only about honouring his past achievements but also about engaging with the unfinished business of the struggle he championed. Issues of poverty, inequality, unemployment, and access to land and housing remain central to South Africa's democratic project, issues that Slovo consistently warned could not be resolved without bold, people-centred policies.

As we remember Joe Slovo, we are reminded of a leader who combined courage with intellect, militancy with humility, and principle with flexibility. His life stands as a powerful call to today's generation to defend democratic values, resist injustice in all its forms, and continue the pursuit of a society rooted in equality, dignity, and social justice.

The 31st annual Joe Slovo commemoration, held at Heroes' Acre, Avalon Cemetery in Soweto, highlighted the need for unity among Alliance partners. ANC President Cyril Ramaphosa led tributes, emphasising Slovo's legacy of equality, internationalism, and strategic insight to bridge current disagreements.

President Ramaphosa delivered his address on behalf of the ANC, calling for the alliance to pursue a national democratic society despite recent rifts over SACP's independent election plans.

The event occurred amid serious debates within the Tripartite Alliance in light of the SACP's resolution to contest the 2026 local government elections independently. Some speeches used Slovo's legacy to call for unity while honestly addressing Alliance differences.

The commemoration became a platform for debates on the future direction of the Alliance and the broader liberation vision, with leaders, including from the Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa (Contralesa) and uMkhonto weSizwe Liberation War Veterans, urging accountability, ideological engagement, and deeper structural transformation.

Menzi Madazuka Zikhali, Chairperson of Bambanani Mahostela, the Gauteng branch of the nationwide organisation for hostel and shack dwellers, reminded Cdes Solly Mapaila and Panyaza Lesufi that they are sons of the East Rand where a great deal of corruption occurs, with the Madlanga Commission exposing some of the alleged role players.

He pointed out that leaders often visit communities to give speeches and pretend that all is well when the situation on the ground shows the opposite.

He further stated that in every election season political parties would visit hostel dwellers and promise them better living conditions and security but would disappear after the elections. He thus urged the SACP not to do the same thing as other parties.

Cosatu President Cde Zingiswa Losi delivered the federation's message of support. She reminded the people of the importance of communist and working-class unity, but that such unity does not just happen on its own: the working class must be organised, educated, and led.

Losi quoted Slovo's belief that socialism will not come by default; it will only come through conscious organisation and struggle.

YCLSA National Secretary Cde Mzwansile Thakudi said that Cde Slovo "never traded principles for comfort, never traded clarity for applause. He understood that apartheid was a franchise, a local branch of global imperialism – capitalism, white supremacy and fascism combined."

This year's Joe Slovo commemoration followed only a few days after the Trump administration's military assault on Venezuela and the abduction of its democratically elected president, Nicolás Maduro, together with his wife, First Lady Cilia Flores, in a brazen violation of international law. Speaking at the event, Venezuelan ambassador to South Africa, His Excellency Carlos Feo Acevedo praised South Africa's UN call against US military actions in Venezuela.

Cde Acevedo affirmed Venezuela's resistance to US imperialist aggression and thanked South Africa for solidarity with Venezuela and President Maduro. He expressed gratitude to South Africa and the comrades gathered at the commemoration for speaking out against external interference in Venezuela's affairs, echoing a shared commitment to sovereignty and the right to self-determination.

He emphasised that although Venezuela had been struck and suffered losses, the nation would not be defeated. He stated that foreign powers should not dictate Venezuela's governance, resources, or future, underscoring the determination to resist external domination and respect for international law. While his remarks were framed within the context of broader international solidarity, they connected the struggle against apartheid with contemporary struggles to resist modern forms of imperialism.

SACP General Secretary, Cde Solly Mapaila, opened his address by paying tribute to Comrade Joe Slovo as a revolutionary leader, strategist of the liberation struggle, and a lifelong servant of the working class. He emphasised that Slovo's struggle was not just historical memory but a living challenge for contemporary struggles against inequality, exploitation, and neoliberalism.

Cde Mapaila's speech was firmly rooted in working-class politics. He blended tribute to Slovo's revolutionary legacy with a strategic political stance on contemporary challenges, notably the SACP's bold electoral strategy, commitment to social transformation, and critique of neoliberal governance. The SACP's decision to contest the upcoming 2026 local government elections independently is a significant and much-discussed development.



Joe Slovo speaking at the second ANC National Consultative Conference, held in Kabwe, Zambia, in June 1985.

Cde Mapaila framed these elections not as routine, bureaucratic events, but as crucial battles in the class struggle and a way to advance working-class interests at the grassroots.

He stressed that the Party's participation was not motivated by personal ambition or the pursuit of government jobs, but by the need for accountable leaders and policies that truly serve workers and poor communities.

Cde Mapaila articulated key policy positions that would guide the Party's election manifesto and actions:

- Insourcing of workers instead of outsourcing and labour brokering
- Participatory budgeting and community involvement in local decision-making
- Land release for housing, agriculture, and cooperatives
- Public employment programmes linked to social needs
- Firm action against corruption and improved accountability
- Support for cooperatives and township enterprises

These were presented as part of issues to be canvassed in a people's manifesto to be determined together with communities, unions, youth, and other working-class formations.

While there have been questions regarding the future of the alliance since the SACP's electoral decision, Cde Mapaila reaffirmed the SACP's commitment to the Tripartite Alliance with the ANC and Cosatu but stressed that unity must be principled, not merely organisational or electoral. He stated that the SACP believes that standing up for working-class interests strengthens the alliance, even if tensions arise. He insisted that mass mobilisation, clarity of purpose, and social struggle are essential foundations of alliance unity and that an alliance without a clear class line risks becoming irrelevant.

On the economic question, the General Secretary sharply criticised neoliberal policies that have left poor communities to fend for themselves while corporate interests benefit from public resources. While the SACP has been working with communities as part of the People's Red Caravan programme for self-reliance and sustainability, he cautioned that self-reliance should not mean abandonment by the state and highlighted the continued need to redistribute economic power and resources to the people.

Cde Thulile Khumalo is the National Gender Coordinator for the National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union. She writes in her personal capacity.



“

It's not difficult in South Africa for the ordinary person to see the link between capitalism and racist exploitation, and when one sees the link, one immediately thinks in terms of a socialist alternative.”

Joe Slovo

PEOPLE'S RED CARAVAN

The PRC in Ganspan – building community self-reliance



SACP People's Red Caravan activists and Ganspan community members, December 2025.

TSHEPO 'FOOTSOLDIER' MOGOROSI

With the activation of the People's Red Caravan, the SACP has demonstrated in practical terms what people-centred development and grassroots organisation mean in Ganspan.

Rather than limiting political work to rhetoric, the Party translated its commitment to working-class and rural communities into concrete action aimed at self-reliance, food security and sustainable livelihoods. At the heart of the intervention was the establishment of a community spinach plantation and a small-scale chicken farming project. These initiatives were deliberately chosen because they respond directly to everyday challenges faced by the people of Ganspan: unemployment, food insecurity and dependence on external support.

By mobilising community members, sharing skills and pooling limited resources, the People's Red Caravan helped lay the foundations for local production that is owned and driven by the people themselves. Within just two weeks, clear and encouraging results were visible.

The spinach plantation showed healthy growth, signalling not only fertile soil but also disciplined collective work and proper planning. The use of organised planting methods and consistent watering reflected a transfer of practical agricultural knowledge to community members, ensuring that the project is not dependent on outsiders but can be sustained locally. The growing spinach stands as a living symbol of what collective effort can achieve when guided by a progressive political vision.

Similarly, the chicken farming project moved swiftly from setup to production. The chickens have already started laying eggs, providing an immediate source of nutrition for households and opening possibilities for small-scale income generation. This is particularly significant in a community where access to affordable protein is often limited. The project illustrates how even modest interventions, when well organised, can have a rapid and tangible impact on people's daily lives.

Beyond the material outcomes, the People's Red Caravan in Ganspan has strengthened community consciousness and solidarity. It reaffirmed the SACP's historic role as an organiser, educator and mobiliser of the working class and the poor. Community members were not treated as passive recipients of aid, but as active participants in building solutions.

This approach reinforces dignity, confidence, and a shared sense of responsibility for collective assets. In Ganspan, the SACP has shown that self-reliance and sustainability are not abstract slogans, but achievable goals when political commitment is matched with action. The success of the spinach plantation and the egg-producing chicken farm provides a practical model that can be replicated in other communities. It is a clear reminder that socialism begins with meeting people's basic needs, organised from below, and rooted in the lived realities of the people.

Cde Tshepo "Footsoldier" Mogorosi is a PEC member of the SACP in the Northern Cape

SOLIDARITY WITH VENEZUELA

South African Working Class in solidarity with Venezuela against US imperialism



Solidarity with Venezuela: SACP members at the protest in front of the US embassy in Pretoria. Photo: X/SACP

AVIWE RAPELANG MOHAPI

As the world reels from the brazen US military aggression against the sovereign Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, South African civil society, trade unions, and progressive organisations are rallying to defend internationalism and working-class solidarity.

A solidarity picket held on 8 January 2026 outside the US Embassy in Pretoria organised by a coalition of South African civil society groups - including Africa4Palestine, the Anti-Fascist International, and key political formations such as the SACP, Cosatu and other progressive organisations, was a defiant rebuke to American imperialism.

The picket's rallying cry, *#HandsOffVenezuela*, echoes the global outcry against the US's unilateral strike on 3 January 2026, which resulted in the illegal abduction of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores.

New chapter in US aggression

The events of early January 2026 mark a chilling escalation in the long-standing US campaign to undermine Venezuela's Bolivarian Revolution. Under the pretext of "restoring democracy" and pursuing drug-related charges, US forces launched a targeted military operation, capturing President Maduro and transporting him to New York, where he faces bogus charges in a US court.

This act of international piracy - condemned by the South African government as a "blatant violation" of the UN Charter, has drawn widespread international condemnation, with Pretoria leading calls for an urgent UN Security Council meeting that was convened on January 5th to address the crisis.

The strike killed much of Maduro's security detail, including dozens of Cuban personnel. It exemplifies the ruthless tactics of imperialism in its quest to control Venezuela's vast oil reserves and to secure US dominance over global petroleum markets. It aims to enforce trading in the US dollar, and counter efforts by nations like those in Brics to trade oil outside the petrodollar system or develop alternative currencies. And more widely it seeks crush any socialist alternative in Latin America.

In the days following the abduction of President Maduro, President Trump issued explicit threats against neighbouring Colombia and Cuba, signalling a broader regional offensive.

He accused Colombian President Gustavo Petro of complicity in drug trafficking and warned that a similar military operation "sounds good" to him, while suggesting that Cuba - a long time close ally of Venezuela, is "ready to fall" without further US intervention.

These threats extend US hegemony's reach, seek to dismantle progressive governments across the hemisphere and secure monopoly capital's grip on resources.

This intervention is no aberration but a continuation of US imperialism's historical playbook. Since the Monroe Doctrine of 1823, the US has treated Latin America as its "backyard," orchestrating coups, invasions, and economic blockades to install puppet regimes and plunder resources.

In Venezuela, the Bolivarian process - initiated by Hugo Chávez and carried forward by Maduro, has empowered the working class through social missions, nationalisation of key industries, and resistance to neoliberal austerity.

Yet, for over a decade, the US has imposed crippling sanctions, funded opposition forces, and recognised fraudulent "interim presidents" like Juan Guaidó in 2019.

The 2026 strike, occurring merely a year into Donald Trump's second term, signals a renewed offensive by monopoly capital to dismantle anti-imperialist governments worldwide.

Solidarity as a weapon against exploitation

For South Africa's working class, the protest is not merely symbolic - it is a vital expression of international working class solidarity, rooted in our own history of anti-imperialist struggle.

The picket, backed by organisations like the SACP and trade unions such as the Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union (Popcru), and the National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union (Nehawu), underscores the interconnectedness of global class struggles.

The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) has rightly labelled Trump a "savage imperialist," viewing the Venezuela incursion as colonialism in action - a reminder of how imperial powers exploit and divide the Global South to maintain their dominance.

Nehawu has also condemned the US aggression, opposing the abduction of Maduro and calling for solidarity against this violation of sovereignty, aligning with the broader anti-imperialist stance of COSATU and its affiliates.

South African workers, through federations like Cosatu and other leftist formations, have long recognised that imperialism abroad fuels exploitation at home.

During apartheid, the US provided covert support to the racist apartheid regime, arming it against liberation movements while profiting from cheap labour and minerals. Today, as South Africa grapples with neoliberal policies imposed by international financial institutions, the defence of Venezuela's sovereignty is a defence of our own.

The SACP has highlighted the shock of Maduro's abduction as "international piracy," calling for the unconditional withdrawal of US forces and linking it to broader anti-imperialist fronts, including solidarity with Palestine.

This perspective is echoed in the streets and on social media, where South Africans and global activists are mobilising under #HandsOffVenezuela. Protests have erupted in various areas, with calls for more mass action against US embassies.

For working-class organisations, participating in such actions builds class consciousness, exposing how imperialism perpetuates poverty, inequality, and underdevelopment across Africa and Latin America.

Africa against imperialism

As Africans, our solidarity with Venezuela is forged in the fires of shared anti-colonial resistance. The continent has endured centuries of imperial plunder - from the slave trade to neocolonial debt traps, and Venezuela's struggle mirrors our own.

Recent US airstrikes in Nigeria, targeting alleged Islamic State militants in late December 2025, further illustrate Washington's pattern of unilateral interventions in the Global South, often under pretexts that mask resource control and geopolitical dominance.

South Africa's leadership of Brics, alongside allies like Russia and China, positions us to challenge US unipolarity - particularly as the US seeks to thwart dedollarisation efforts, prevent oil trading outside the dollar, and oppose emerging alternatives to petrodollar hegemony.

The South African government's swift condemnation and push for UN intervention reflect this, warning that unilateral aggression threatens global stability and sets a dangerous precedent for interventions in Africa.

Join the pickets, build the revolution

The Hands-off Venezuela South Africa Solidarity picket is more than a protest; it is a step toward building a global anti-imperialist movement. Comrades from unions, progressive organisations, and the working class at large are urged to attend all the upcoming protests, placards in hand, to demand Maduro's immediate release, the lifting of sanctions, and an end to US meddling. In the spirit of internationalism, let us remember: an injury to one is an injury to all. By standing with Venezuela, South Africa's working class advances the cause of socialism worldwide.

Cde Aviwe Rapelang Mohapi is the National Education Officer at Nehawu, he is also a writer and political activist. He writes in his personal capacity.

SOLIDARITY WITH VENEZUELA

US regime change doomed to fail



Protestors at the US Embassy in Buenos Aires, Argentina. One of hundreds of protests held around the world opposing US aggression against Venezuela.

JOSÉ GREGORIO BIOMORGI

In complex times, where pain and confusion spread everywhere, silence, discretion and prudence are the best way to understand any situation and take the best decision. However, understanding that the first casualty in any war is the truth, and regarding the infamous behaviour of the mercenaries of the media, who serve the aggressor's interests, I decided to write this short article to bring to light what is plain to see, but which they don't want us to see.

For more than a decade, the Bolivarian Government has been denouncing the aggressions of the US and the entire global system of domination, through the unilateral coercive measures (UCM) applied to Venezuela.

These measures have a clear criminal nature and have caused deep social wounds and structural damage in our country, and we have learned to live with them and overcome them over the years. Proof of this is the almost five years of economic growth that we have experienced in Venezuela. However, the cost has been high. Although never as high as losing sovereignty and independence.

The people of Venezuela, noble, brave, stubborn, resilient and with an infinite sense of patriotism, have consistently denounced the aggression of the United States in all instances, at every level and at every moment. We have not been intimidated and we are not willing to surrender our sovereignty. We have been denouncing the blockade that the US has tried to impose on us, but at the same time, we have been working and moving forward. And that is what imperialism cannot forgive us for: our ability to overcome adversity.

A brief note that will help us contextualise what I will describe below: Venezuela has had a relationship with the US for over 120 years, and we have built an entire system of technological dependence with this country and its European satellites. This influence even extends beyond that, into the cultural sphere. To mention just one example: in all of South America, the most popular sport is soccer, except in Venezuela. Even in Colombia, which is further north than our country. In our case, the king of sports is baseball, and that is undoubtedly a product of the great influence that the US exerted on our country throughout the 20th century.

Let's get down to business. What arguments have we used to denounce the MCUs, and which sectors have they primarily affected?

The oil sector has undoubtedly been the most affected. Our oil production plummeted from nearly 3 million to 300 thousand barrels in less than five years, a consequence of our inability to purchase parts and components for maintaining our production system, as well as to conduct retrospective exploration studies for enhanced oil recovery, drill new wells to increase production, and a long list of other factors that would fill a book.

The production of petroleum derivatives dropped to zero during the most difficult times we faced, due to our inability to purchase diluents and catalysts, among other necessities, to be able to refine and produce fuels. We even had our three main refineries (CRP, El Palito, and Puerto La Cruz) shut down at one point. We have been working to reverse this, but at huge cost.

Our oil tankers, all under siege and sanctions, prevented us from transporting our main source of national wealth, forcing us to look for a complex and costly mechanisms to transport oil, which resulted in significant losses for the nation.

The electricity sector is another major casualty. Our primary source of electricity generation is hydroelectric power. All of this generation system, as well as the transmission systems, was designed, manufactured, and installed by multinational corporations from the US and Europe, using technologies and equipment developed by them, such as turbines, control systems, transformers, generators, among others. So, we were not able to perform timely preventive and corrective maintenance due to the inability to acquire pieces and parts from these multinational corporations, which significantly dropped down the electricity supply, affecting the quality of life of our people.

We have repeatedly denounced the impossibility of purchasing medical equipment, as well as parts and components to maintain our medical equipment.

We also had to find alternatives for acquiring all types of medications, which required adapting our internal regulations to make it possible. We even had to import essential medications that we manufactured previously, such as biological drugs, among others. We had to transform our agri-food industry, which has been one of our greatest successes, as we now have independence in this area, although not without paying a very high social cost.

We denounce the theft of our wealth by the global financial system and the impossibility of using them to acquire basic supplies of our industrial production.

We have always affirmed our willingness to establish trade relations with all countries, within a framework of mutual respect and recognition, making it clear that any ideological differences we may have should not interfere with trade relations between nations.

I could continue mentioning many things, but then this article would become infinitely long.

So, what is happening right now? The US is negotiating and defining mechanisms with the Bolivarian Government, for increasing the acquisition of Venezuelan crude oil (which they have done for over 120 years), as well as selling parts and components to us to improve and strengthen our electrical system, exploring investment opportunities in our oil fields with the aim of increasing our production, among many other announcements that our authorities will surely do soon.

All of this, of course, without relinquishing our sovereignty and our primary objective at this time, which is the rescue of our brother, President Nicolás Maduro, and our sister, First Lady and Deputy Cilia Flores, a courageous woman and an example of dignity and unwavering principles.

The US abducted our President. They cowardly took him and Cilia away in an extraordinary show of force, carried out by the most powerful empire that humanity has ever known. Faced with the repeated failures of the US administrations against the Bolivarian Revolution and the valiant people of Venezuela, they had no other alternative than use the force and the cowardly aggression, employing the most advanced technological warfare systems and weapons.

Let us not be swayed by the pain we feel at this moment. Let us not be blinded by the smoke curtains that the traitorous mercenaries, subservient to the aggressor, are trying to sell us. Let us not be misled by the enemy.



Venezuelan Vice-President Delcy Rodríguez being sworn in as the country's acting president on 5 January, following the abduction of President Nicolás Maduro by the US aggressor two days earlier.

However, the US administration seems to have finally understood that the only actor that can guarantee of stability in Venezuela is the Bolivarian Revolution. The only way for the US to negotiate is by sitting down with the Bolivarian Government. If the US want anything from Venezuela, they have to engage in dialogue with us.

The question arises: Who is winning this battle? Time will tell. Let there be no doubt. We will rescue Nicolas and Cilia, and once again we will prevail.

Dr José Gregorio Biomorgi is the Venezuelan Ambassador to Lebanon and Syria and the former Minister of Industry.

CUBA – TRIUNFO DE LA REVOLUCIÓN

Solidarity and sacrifice in the shadow of empire

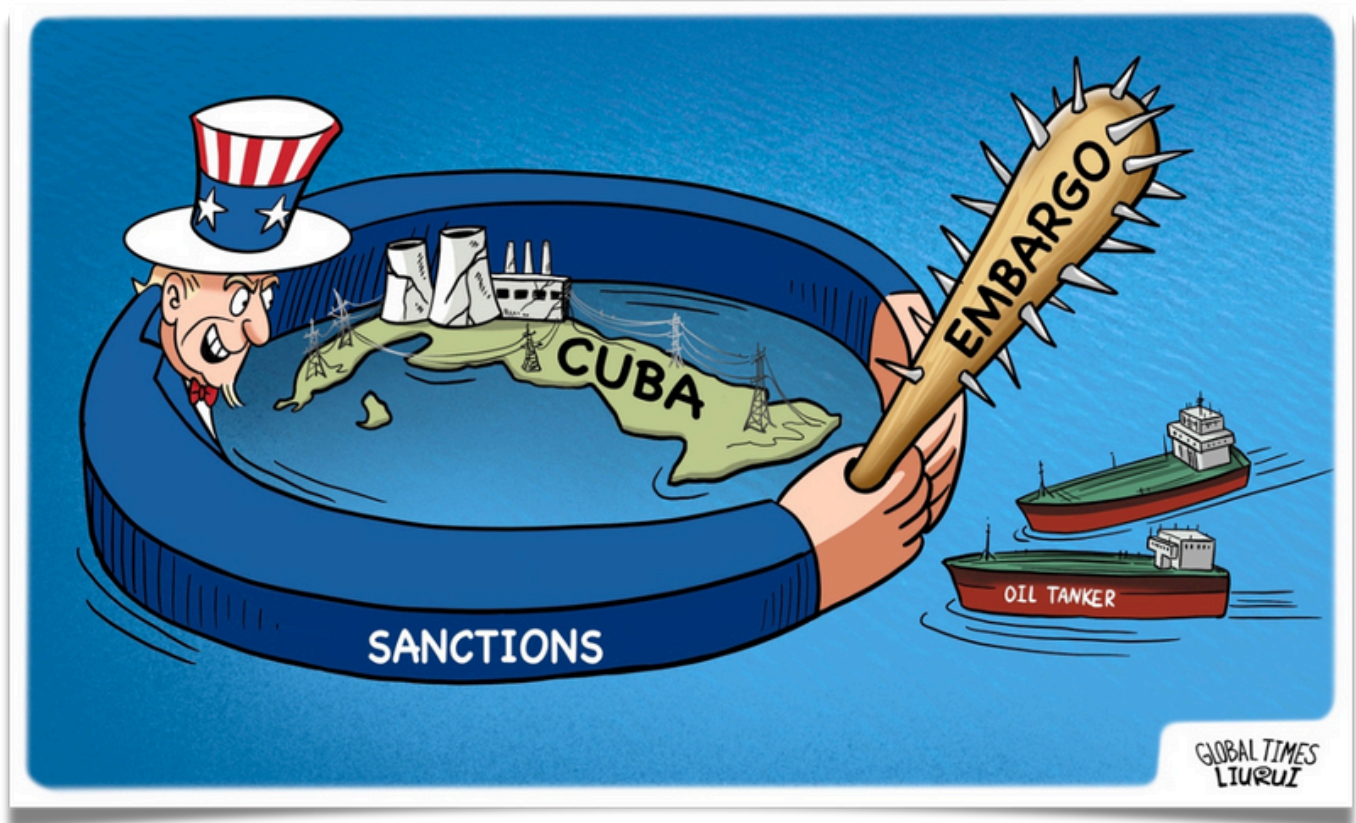


Image: Liu Rui/GT

SIBUSISIWE THOBELA

The anniversary of the Cuban Revolution is commemorated annually on 1 January to mark the 1959 overthrow of the US-backed Batista dictatorship. It serves as an occasion to examine the historical trajectory of Cuba’s socialist project, the persistent economic warfare waged by the US, and the unfolding geopolitical confrontation in Venezuela. The latter has once again brought the enduring legacies of imperialism and the imperative of anti-imperial struggle into sharp relief.

The Cuban Revolution emerged from a context of profound social inequality, political repression, and blatant US interference in Cuban affairs. After decades of neocolonial domination, first under the Platt Amendment and then constant US economic and political influence over Cuba, Fidel Castro’s July 26 Movement galvanised peasants, workers, intellectuals, and youth against the dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista.

Following a protracted guerrilla struggle culminating in Batista’s flight on January 1, 1959, the revolutionary government embarked on sweeping land reform, nationalisation of US holdings, and the establishment of universal education and healthcare.

Within months, the Eisenhower administration initiated economic sanctions that evolved into a comprehensive embargo, directed at isolating the island economically and politically.

This embargo was not a simple, benign trade policy but a tool of class and imperial domination, aimed at starving the revolution of resources, undermining its capacity to develop the productive forces, and impeding Cuba’s sovereignty.

Despite its rhetoric of promoting democracy, successive US administrations have used the embargo to restrict access to vital goods, limit foreign investment, and leverage global financial institutions against Havana. The embargo has been repeatedly condemned in international fora as a violation of international law and a form of collective punishment against the Cuban people.

The sustained sanctions are inseparable from the economic hardships experienced by Cuba. From shortages of basic goods to energy crises exacerbated by the loss of preferential Venezuelan oil agreements, the embargo has multiplied the pressures on an already embattled socialist economy.

These conditions, viewed through a materialist lens, illustrate how external economic coercion can retard national development and create social strains, which capitalist propaganda exploits to delegitimise socialist achievements.

It is within this historical continuity of US interventionism that the recent events in Venezuela must be understood. On 3 January 2026, a US military attack on Caracas led to the abduction of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and his wife on charges long denied by Maduro and condemned by many states as a pretext for regime change.

The operation resulted in the deaths of dozens of individuals, including 32 Cuban military and intelligence personnel who were in Venezuela at the express request of the Venezuelan government, serving in security and defence roles when they were killed during the US assault.

The US intervention in Venezuela can be interpreted as the latest manifestation of a longstanding pattern of imperialist aggression aimed at controlling strategic resources and suppressing socialist or anti-imperialist states. Venezuela's vast oil reserves, coupled with its role in supporting Cuba through preferential petroleum exchanges, placed it squarely in the crosshairs of US geopolitical interests.

The operation against Maduro resembles past interventions, such as in Guatemala (1954), Chile (1973), Grenada (1983), and Panama (1989), where overt or covert military means were employed to overthrow governments that threatened US hegemony in the hemisphere. The resultant deaths of Cuban personnel underscore the personal and collective costs of resisting imperialism, reinforcing the shared historical grievances of Cuba and Venezuela against external domination.

The Cuban revolutionary narrative has always emphasised proletarian internationalism: the idea that socialist states must support one another in the broader struggle against capitalism and imperialism.

Cuban assistance to Venezuela, ranging from medical cooperation to military and intelligence integration, stems from this ideological commitment. The deaths of these 32 Cubans, then, are not purely casualties of war but symbolically resonate with the historic sacrifices made in the defence of socialist sovereignty.

For the people of Cuba and Venezuela, the shared experience of US sanctions and interventions has produced not only material hardship but also a deep sense of collective outrage and resistance.

The geopolitical developments of early 2026, including the Venezuelan crisis and its reverberations across Latin America, reiterate the extent to which US foreign policy remains driven by strategic calculations that subordinate the self-determination of smaller nations to the imperatives of capital and empire.

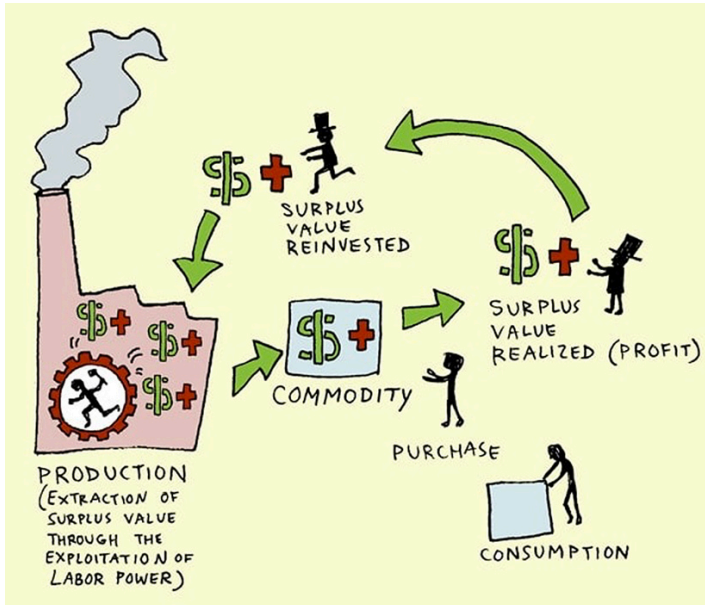
The anniversary of the Cuban Revolution is not merely a retrospective commemoration but an active reminder of the ongoing struggle against imperialism. The Revolution's legacy, despite enduring sanctions and external pressures, continues to inspire resistance to neocolonial domination.

The events in Venezuela highlight the persistent relevance of anti-imperialist solidarity. These struggles should be understood within the broader dynamics of class antagonism and imperial exploitation, underscoring the necessity for continued vigilance against economic coercion and military interventionism that threaten the sovereignty and welfare of socialist and progressive movements across the globe.

Cde Sibusisiwe Thobela is the SACP National International Relations Officer.

POLITICAL EDUCATION

Marxism has been distorted – we must salvage and protect it!



Marx's theory of surplus value: "Capitalist production is not merely the production of commodities, it is essentially the production of surplus-value. The labourer produces, not for himself, but for capital. It no longer suffices, therefore, that he should simply produce. He must produce surplus-value." From Capital Vol 1, Part 5 The Production of Absolute and of Relative Surplus-Value. Image: Monthly Review.

DINEO MAJAVU

The one theory capitalism has attempted to destroy is Marxism. Marxism, perhaps more than any other revolutionary theory in modern history, has been repeatedly attacked, misrepresented and distorted, often beyond recognition.

These distortions have cost the global working class dearly, alienating many who might otherwise find in Marxism a powerful framework for liberation. Today, more than ever, we must protect, reclaim and salvage this tradition from the forces, both external and internal, that seek to destroy or misuse it.

The urgency of this task was sharply illustrated in early January. On 6 January, the South African Communist Party held the 31st Joe Slovo Commemoration, honouring a leader whose life was shaped by Marxist internationalism and principled resistance to imperial domination.

This gathering took place only days after the US launched a military attack on Venezuela and abducted its President and First Lady, and shortly after the anniversary of the Cuban Revolution. Both Venezuela and Cuba continue to face unilateral economic sanctions and sustained political pressure, conditions that expose the ongoing vulnerability of socialist oriented projects to imperialist aggression.

These events are not isolated moments in history but active reminders of why Marxism remains a living and necessary framework for understanding power, exploitation and resistance.

In some circles of academia, Marxism is often portrayed as outdated or too "Eurocentric", while capitalist theories, despite their own violent histories, are celebrated as pragmatic and modern. In the legacy media, Marxism is treated as synonymous with dictatorship and utopia, ignoring the many democratic socialist movements that have used Marxist analysis to advance workers' rights and speak for the poor and excluded.

In political spaces, Marxist language is often stripped of its revolutionary meaning and reduced to clichés, slogans or campaign rhetoric. These distortions disconnect the working class from a theory designed to expose and dismantle their exploitation.

Despite these attempts, Marxism has remained a revolutionary method of analysis, a tool that has helped the working class at large – generations of workers, peasants and the like – understand their exploitation and identify the class enemy in its many forms. From the South African trade union movement, the anti-privatisation forums, the struggles of textile workers in Bangladesh, the working-class movements in the Flavela's in Brazil and the organising of Amazon warehouse workers globally, Marxism has offered clarity, structure and strategy.

The continued targeting of countries such as Cuba and Venezuela shows how Marxist-informed programmes that prioritise social need over profit are punished through sanctions, isolation and direct political and military intervention. These acts of aggression reinforce the importance of Marxism as an internationalist method that connects struggles across borders, linking the experiences of workers in the global South to those in imperial centres.

Marxism arms the working class with tools to name the exploitation that is received, whether it appears as low wages, unsafe working conditions, casualisation, or surveillance through digital platforms.

It helps to identify the different layers of capital, from multinational corporations to local political elites in government who manage and protect profit systems.

It provides tools for mobilising and organising strategically, not as fragmented individuals but as a collective class with shared interests across borders. Its internationalist, boundaryless framework has allowed the working class from Soweto to Havana, Nairobi to New Delhi, to recognise the interconnectedness of their struggles.

For decades, despite this huge undertone, Marxism has been known as a revolutionary idea that prompts the working class into action, allows them to better understand their conditions, puts a face to an "enemy" with its different layers of skin, and of course, think about ways to organise. It has truly brought a fresh lens to looking at an internationalist, boundaryless ideology that oppresses the working class in Africa, though, it has been used to project toxic masculine clarity and refers to what we call "leadership". In our young circles, a man who is known to epitomise this leadership would be referred to as Marx, Lenin or more importantly, commissar. Many have used it to protect their repressive personas of not tolerating dissent, and others have used it in attempting to preserve the organisation. Others have used it to suppress their actions against the working class, while others have used it to campaign. Such as Stalin and Robert Mugabe.

While capitalism has distorted Marxism from the outside, within our African political and activist spaces, another kind of distortion has taken place. Marxism has too often been appropriated as a symbol of masculinity, authoritarian certainty, and unquestionable “leadership.” For instance, in the Progressive Youth Alliance, a man who carries himself with a commanding or intimidating presence, often wearing the green Chinese military cap, is often referred to as — as a “Marx,” a “Lenin,” or a “commissar”.

This has had damaging consequences: it has turned Marxism into a personality cult rather than a collective tool for revolution. It has glorified authoritarianism, while silencing dissent in the name of “discipline.” It has excluded those who explain Marxism in different languages and without performance, and it has gendered the theory. It excuses patriarchal behaviour, because Marxist language is used as a shield for domination rather than for dismantling patriarchal relations.

The distortions of Marxism from within Communist Parties can be as destructive as distortions from the outside. When Marxism is used as a tool of repression, rather than freedom, when it is used to justify incorrect decisions, it becomes unrecognisable from its original purpose.

The lessons of leaders such as Joe Slovo, and of revolutionary processes such as those in Cuba, remind us that Marxism is rooted in humility, collective struggle, and accountability to the working class. These traditions stand in direct opposition to both imperialist violence and internal authoritarian misuse.

The danger of allowing Marxism to die or to be further distorted is not an abstract academic concern. Its loss would be a direct victory for the bourgeoisie — and a devastating defeat for the working class.

Marxism must be protected because it is still the most powerful tool for understanding capitalism’s evolving strategies, from privatisation to digital surveillance, from gig work to global supply chains.

It provides a lens for social reproductive struggles, helping us see how care work, household labour, and gender oppression uphold capitalism. It builds international solidarity, challenging the borders and divisions capitalism uses to weaken workers, calling for the protection of migrant labour. It centres the working class, refusing to allow the bourgeoisie to define the future on behalf of the majority.

Reclaiming Marxism means not romanticising the past, but returning to its core: a living, critical, revolutionary practice. Marxism has survived because it analyses the world accurately, revealing the mechanisms of exploitation, power and the potential for collective liberation. But for it to remain relevant and revolutionary, we must rescue it from distortion: from the capitalist project that seeks to destroy it, and from those who misuse it for personal or authoritarian gain.

To protect Marxism is to protect the working class itself. Salvaging it is not an academic task; it is our duty as communists to ensure Marxism remains what it was meant to be: a weapon in the hands of the oppressed, not a shield for the powerful.

Cde Dineo Sitole Majavu is the SACP Linda Jabane District Chairperson and YCLSA National Committee member.

ANTI-IMPERIALISM

Imperialism's invasion tactics: never be fooled by the rhetoric



Soviet era cartoon slamming US anti-Soviet and anti-socialist politics. The text in the image reads 'US war hysteria', and the bottom legend reads 'US policy...'

MALEFU MOKAU

Words used to excuse mass destruction in the 21st century — terrorist, dictator, democracy, communist and genocide — are among the terms weaponised by Western leaders and media to target and designate anyone who goes against their agenda.

Of all these, terror, terrorist, and terrorism have become the most useful tools in the imperialist playbook, applied selectively to designate those who resist or stand in opposition to US and European interests.

Once the label is applied, violence becomes easier to justify, civilian deaths are reduced to collateral damage, and entire populations are reframed as threats rather than human beings. These words carry power precisely because, historically, they were used to describe figures and regimes responsible for atrocities beyond measure. We have long been told that history has a way of repeating itself. For this reason, Nelson Mandela's 1994 Presidential Inaugural speech remains so resonant: "Never, never and never again shall it be that this beautiful land will again experience the oppression of one by another and suffer the indignity of being the skunk of the world."

From that history comes South Africa's solidarity with the Palestinian struggle — a struggle against occupation and an apartheid system enforced by the Israeli state, currently under the leadership of Benjamin Netanyahu and his allies. Rooted in the bloodshed and sacrifice of our fallen leaders, who gave their lives so that we might be free, this history informs our continued commitment to the eradication of the occupation in Palestine.

It is from our lived experience that we say: never again shall we be dehumanised nor stand by and watch others suffer, in the name of a system of exploitation. What we see instead is mainstream Western media consistently using very consistent labels when reporting on the atrocities in Gaza — dehumanising Gazans as mere casualties, or debating whether the war qualifies as genocide based on numbers.

This is often done by comparing the number of martyrs in Gaza to the number of Jews killed in the Holocaust, implying that because the figures differ, the term "genocide" does not apply — an argument that conveniently aligns with the political agenda by the Israeli and American governments.

The language they use is designed to manufacture consent for war. Only now, with social media and independent outlets exposing the

truth, are we able to connect the dots on patterns that were hidden for decades.

In the 21st century alone, three American presidents have relied on the same playbook — invading countries under the guise of democracy, human rights, or security, all to take what they could not extract through exploitation alone.

We witnessed it in 2003 when the then president of the US George W. Bush Jr, "The Liberator of Baghdad", and his allies saw it necessary and urgent to invade Iraq because Saddam Hussein was a dictator who could not be negotiated with and falsely accusing him of possessing weapons of mass destruction. The invasion was called Operation Iraqi Freedom and the common media label became the "new Hitler" in order to make total invasion become a moral duty.

In 2011 Barack Obama, "Leading from Behind", and his Nato allies invaded Libya to overthrow Muammar Gaddafi, the Libyan president who used Libya's oil for Libyans, not for Western corporations, and thereby directly challenged the global financial system dominated by the US and Europe.

Western political leaders alongside Libyan opposition figures publicly accused Gaddafi of committing Genocide against his people. An accusation that led to the justification of humanitarian war, where bombing becomes rescuing a nation from a "buffoon dictator."

Recently we have been subjected to Donald Trump's "Liberator of Venezuela" rant about how the Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro is a failed socialist dictator involved in narcotics and drug trafficking in the Americas, thus justifying the unlawful abduction of the President and the first Lady Cilia Flores from Caracas to New York city.

When all the propaganda has been said — when regime change has been justified and approved under the language of democracy and the American government and its allies have secured their strategic interests — what has this so-called obligation to bring democracy actually achieved? What are the people of these countries left with?

In Iraq, where the economy is almost entirely dependent on oil exports, the post-Saddam Hussein government has brought little meaningful change to the lives of ordinary Iraqis. Despite elections and a new political order. Corruption, political instability, and poor public service delivery have surged, while oil wealth continues to benefit elites and other countries rather than the population.

In Libya, another oil-dependent country, there has yet to be a successful presidential election since the execution of Gaddafi. Today, Libya is experiencing a deepening migration crisis, where economic instability and the collapse of state authority have created fertile ground for human trafficking, including forced labour and sexual exploitation.

We can only imagine what will become of Venezuela if world powers continue to treat it as a geopolitical battleground rather than a sovereign nation — allowing external pressure to dictate its future, regardless of the societal impact. Especially when South Africa is not an exception to Trump's false claims — that "horrible things are happening in South Africa". The seed has already been planted through repeated allegations of a so-called white genocide, claims that the country is aligned with terrorist states because of its ties with Iran and Russia, and portrayals of South Africa as a communist tyranny.

These narratives have no factual basis, yet they continue to circulate and gain traction. We should not put it past him to use these false allegations for political advancement in the future, particularly in a world where misinformation is easily weaponised.

Being a communist or a socialist is treated as something that must be justified. Why should we justify putting people before profit? It's just common sense and Western media relentlessly aggravates the crimes of communist regimes in the past while routinely framing imperial violence and exploitation as unfortunate side effects rather than deliberate acts against people.

Words carry enormous meaning — some more than others — depending on who you are and where you come from. A ceasefire, to the people of Palestine and those who stand in solidarity with them, means survival. To Netanyahu and Trump, it appears to hold little weight. A dictator is framed as a threat capable of mass destruction — of genocide, of undermining democracy — while those same accusations are selectively deployed to justify violence.

Communism and socialism, meanwhile, are demonised as greed — framed as governments seeking to take wealth away from hard-working people — and are therefore treated as intolerable and impossible. In this world, language is not neutral. It is weaponised to decide whose lives matter, whose suffering is legitimate, and whose destruction can be justified.

Cde Malefu Mokau is a member of the YCLSA.

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