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CONFERENCE OF THE LEFT | PEOPLE'S RED CARAVAN | CDE JOE SLOVO

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Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the State of Palestine.

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EDITORIAL

They say it is not the Left, but the working class says otherwise



The Conference of the Left is the most important development in the organised life of the South African working class since the formation of Cosatu in 1985.

From 29 to 31 May more than 300 delegates gathered in Boksburg for the Conference of the Left. Thirty-eight political parties and 103 organisations took part, among them the SACP, EFF, MK Party, Azapo, PAC, SOPA, AAPRP, Numsa, Cosatu, the Progressive Women's Movement, shack dwellers' associations, faith formations, internationalist campaigns and progressive intellectuals. They all came together under a single banner: **Building a Left Movement for Working-Class and Popular Power**. On 31 May, they adopted a Declaration and an eight-cluster Programme of Action. They established the Council of the Left as a standing instrument of coordination, political education, and mass mobilisation.

This edition of *Umsebenzi Online* carries that Declaration in full, alongside Comrade Aviwe Mohapi's account of the three days themselves. Together they constitute a historic record. The Conference of the Left is the most significant gathering the SACP has convened in a generation — and the most important development in the organised life of the South African working class since the formation of Cosatu in 1985. We say this not to inflate a moment, but to name it accurately.

The material conditions that produced this Conference are not abstract. Comrade Lukhanyo Mtshingana's analysis of the latest Quarterly Labour Force Survey documents the ground the Conference was built on: unemployment at 32.7%,

up 1.3% in the first quarter of 2026 alone, 301,000 jobs lost, the rate above 30% for five consecutive years. South Africa remains among the most unequal societies on earth. The cost of a basic food basket continues to climb beyond the reach of minimum wages. Deindustrialisation has gutted entire sectors. Public institutions collapse while consultants, tender networks and political careers survive. This is the crisis of monopoly capitalism in South Africa — not a policy error, not a governance failure, but a structural emergency. A crisis this deep cannot be answered by fragmented, siloed resistance. It demands coordination. It demands a front.

and safety; climate justice; internationalism; and constitutional review. Third, the Council of the Left — not a new political party, but, as the Declaration puts it, “a weapon of the working class,” a broad, democratic, non-sectarian platform for unity in action.

The Conference was not received in silence. It had its critics from both expected and unexpected quarters.

Amongst its critiques was the ANC—which boycotted the Conference. Its Secretary-General, Fikile Mbalula, was forthright about why. “There is nothing leftist about it,” he said. “The composition

is itself the political argument.” He argued that a gathering seating chambers of commerce alongside the Bolshevik Party, MK alongside Azapo, business formations alongside trade unions, cannot claim the left as its designation. He went further: “It is a coalition of negation... united by what it stands against, namely the ANC in government — and unable to articulate the positive programme by which the working class and the people would advance. It is a political project dressed in theoretical clothing.”



The SACP's decision to convene the Conference of the Left is not a departure from the NDR, but a demand that the NDR be taken seriously.

The Conference answered that demand with three concrete outcomes. First, the Declaration itself — a fighting document that puts nationalisation of the Reserve Bank, land expropriation without compensation, public-led employment and industrialisation, abolition of student debt, and constitutional review back on the national agenda. As *The Citizen* newspaper noted in its coverage, these are demands that the 1994 compromise pushed off the table. They are back. Second, the Programme of Action — eight clusters, each with working groups, timelines and measurable outcomes: economic transformation; cost of living and social protection; land and local economies; public health and NHI; social violence

These are serious charges. They deserve serious answers.

On the question of ideological coherence: the Conference of the Left never claimed doctrinal uniformity as its basis. The Declaration is explicit: “What unites us is not identical terminology, but a common commitment to struggle.” For many participating formations, the strategic goal is socialism. For others, it is radical economic transformation, Pan-Africanism, land justice, or the defeat of neoliberalism. What is important is that the constituencies of all are the working class and the poor. The Declaration welcomes all of these and names socialism as the horizon. This

is not confusion. It is the united front tradition — as old as Dimitrov’s address to the 7th Comintern Congress in 1935, as South African as the Congress Alliance of the 1950s, as recent as the UDF. The breadth of the front is the tactic, not a contradiction of it. The SACP’s own vanguard role has always been exercised within multi-class formations, not apart from them.

On the question of negation: the charge that the Conference could not articulate a positive programme collapses immediately on contact with the evidence. The eight-cluster Programme of Action — clustered and time-bound, with working groups assigned and measurable outcomes specified — is not the product of a gathering united only by grievance. A coalition of negation produces a press release. The Left produced a plan. The Declaration opens with the words: “We have not gathered to lament this crisis. We have gathered to organise against it.” That is not theoretical clothing. That is a programme.

On the ANC’s absence itself: we say this with care but without evasion. When a governing party absents itself from the largest gathering of the organised working class in a generation, the question is not whether the gathering has legitimacy. The gathering proved its legitimacy by happening, by delivering a Declaration, by establishing the Council. The question is who is drifting from whom. The ANC entered the Government of National Unity with the Democratic Alliance. It sits in Cabinet alongside those who oppose the NHI, who have fought land reform in every court available to them, who represent the concentrated interests of the very capital whose structures the struggle was meant to transform. The SACP’s decision to convene the Conference of the Left is not a departure from the NDR. It is a demand that the NDR be taken seriously.

The Conference also did something that no gathering of the left has done clearly enough in recent years: it named the real enemy. Two pieces in this edition — Comrade Thabile Lenkwane on the 50th anniversary of June 16, and Comrade Sinxolo Mahlatshana on the “*Abahambe!*” movement — frame the moment the Conference belongs to. The March and March movement, the

growing anti-migrant populism, the “*Abahambe!*” war cry — these are the politics of a crisis displaced onto the wrong target. The Declaration states it directly: “The enemy is not the migrant, the unemployed neighbour, the informal trader, the poor household, or the worker from another country.” The youth of 1976, as Lenkwane reminds us, understood oppression as a system. They did not fight Bantu Education to produce a generation that blames Zimbabwean workers for South African unemployment. The test is whether the left can reassert that structural clarity loudly enough to be heard above the noise of scapegoating. The Conference of the Left is that reassertion.

The Conference does not stand alone. It is the national architecture above work that is being done at ground level — and this edition documents that work with the care it deserves. Comrade Seitabaleng Dikole and Comrade Sarah Mokwebo’s accounts of the 6th People’s Red Caravan activation in Gladstone, Free State, are not footnotes to the Conference. They are its proof of concept. The Conference declares that communities must be liberated from dependence on the state and capital; the PRC demonstrates how. Cooperatives built, boreholes repaired, a clinic water tank fixed after a year of leaking, a community cooperative store opening in an unused hall. Production as the anchor. Solidarity as the multiplier. The Conference is the macro framework; Gladstone is the micro practice. Both answer the same question: how does the working class build power, not merely demand it?

This edition also marks the centenary of Cde Joe Slovo, born 23 May 1926. Cde Lehlohonolo Mahlatsi’s commemoration arrives in the same month the Conference was held — fitting, and not only by coincidence of the calendar. Slovo understood, more clearly than most of his generation, that the vanguard role of the SACP and the broad united front were not competing commitments but a single tactic. He understood that ideological leadership did not mean ideological exclusivity. The Conference of the Left, convened in the month of his centenary, is the inheritor of that understanding. Comrade Hlengiwe Nkonyane’s piece on the night schools tradition — the communist-run workers’ education programmes

that produced generations of cadres — is the reminder that political education has always been inseparable from political organisation. The Council of the Left has inherited that mandate too.

The Declaration closes with a sentence that every branch, every study circle, every shop steward council, every community organisation affiliated to the left should carry into its work: “The future will not be given to us. It must be organised.”

Those who say the Conference is incoherent mistake its breadth for weakness. The working

class is not ideologically homogeneous. It never was. What it can be — what the Conference of the Left has begun to build — is organised. And an organised working class, united in action across its differences, is the only force in South African history that has ever compelled capital to concede.

The critics sat out. The working class showed up.

Forward to the Council of the Left! Forward to working-class and popular power! Forward to socialism!

CONFERENCE OF THE LEFT

Building a Left Movement for Working-Class and Popular Power



The Conference of the Left is a collective step towards rebuilding the organised power of the working class and the poor, strengthening unity across the Left and progressive forces, and adopting a common programme of action for the present period.

Key points

- A united left, not a new party
- The capitalist crisis demands structural answers
- An alternative economic programme
- Social demands and land justice
- Internationalism
- Council of the Left.

Declaration adopted by the participating organisations of the Conference of the Left, held 29-31 May in Boksburg

Preamble

We, the political parties, trade unions and federations, community and social movements, co-operative and solidarity economy formations, youth and women's formations, student formations, faith and religious formations, traditional leadership structures, progressive intellectuals, international solidarity organisations, and fraternal continental and global organisations of the Left, gathered at the Conference of the Left from 29 to 31 May 2026, declare the following.

We meet in a time of deep structural crisis. South Africa is marked by mass unemployment, poverty, hunger, inequality, social violence, gender-based violence, public institutional decay, ecological destruction, corruption, the crisis of social reproduction, and the deepening

power of monopoly capitalism. Across Africa and the Global South, working people face neo-colonial domination, debt dependency, extraction, sanctions, war, occupation, militarism and imperialist aggression.

“What unites us is not identical terminology, but a common commitment to struggle”

We have not gathered to lament this crisis. We have gathered to organise against it.

This Conference is not the launch of a new political party. It is not an electoral platform. It does not dissolve the identities, mandates, programmes or disciplines of the participating formations. It is a collective step towards rebuilding the organised power of the working class and the poor, strengthening unity across the Left and progressive forces, and adopting a common programme of action for the present period.

The Conference of the Left is clear that the strategic goal is a society beyond capitalism, based on social ownership, democratic economic control, wealth redistribution, land justice, equality, solidarity, ecological sustainability, peace, and the full liberation of workers and the poor. For many of us, this goal is socialism.

At the same time, the Left movement must be broad enough to unite all who stand with the working class, the poor, the unemployed, women, youth, students, rural communities, people with disabilities, LGBTQI+ communities, migrants, faith-based justice movements, traditional leadership structures, and other oppressed groups – including those who do not identify as socialist but are committed to fighting exploitation, inequality, neoliberalism, austerity, monopoly capitalism, patriarchy, racism, xenophobia, Afrophobia, war and imperialism.

The banner of “Building a Left Movement for Working-Class and Popular Power” enables unity across progressive traditions, including socialists,

communists, trade unionists, community activists, feminists, Pan-Africanists, radical democrats, co-operators, environmental justice activists, faith-based justice movements, youth and student activists, and others. What unites us is not identical terminology, but a common commitment to struggle, democratic popular power, redistribution, public ownership, decent work, land reform, universal basic services, peace, anti-imperialist solidarity, and economic transformation in the interests of the majority.

Transformation is not delivered from above. It is won through organised struggle.

1. The present moment

South African capitalism is in a structural crisis. Mass unemployment has become permanent. Secure work has been replaced by casual labour, outsourcing, labour broking, platform work, informal survivalism and the daily humiliation of joblessness. Millions of young people are denied work, income, skills, culture and hope.

The cost of living has become unbearable. Food, electricity, transport, fuel, rent, school costs and debt consume working-class households. Where wages exist, they are eroded. Where wages do not exist, families survive through grants, informal work, debt and unpaid care.

“Working-class women carry the heaviest burden of this crisis: low wages, precarious livelihoods, unpaid care work, gender-based violence, unsafe communities and weakened public services”

Working-class women carry the heaviest burden of this crisis: low wages, precarious livelihoods, unpaid care work, gender-based violence, unsafe communities and weakened public services. Patriarchy is not separate from class exploitation. It is built into capitalist society.

The 1994 democratic advance was a historic victory of the people's struggle against apartheid colonialism. It opened political space, extended democratic rights, and created the possibility of deeper transformation. These gains must be defended. But the 1994 settlement did not resolve the national, class, gender and land questions. It did not dismantle the ownership and control of the economy by monopoly capitalism. Finance, mining, energy, land, food systems, retail, logistics and major productive sectors remain concentrated in the hands of capital.

“The enemy is not the migrant, the unemployed neighbour, the informal trader, the poor household, or the worker from another country.”

The task of the present period is therefore to defend democratic gains while advancing beyond the limits of the 1994 settlement towards economic democracy, social ownership, land justice, working-class power and socialism.

The crisis is not only a crisis of policy. It is a crisis of ownership, power and class rule. Capital dominates investment, production, prices, land, credit and development. The state has too often been subordinated to austerity, investor confidence, financial markets and the interests of monopoly capital.

Reactionary forces exploit popular suffering. They redirect anger away from capital and towards migrants, women, workers, informal traders, the poor, LGBTQI+ people, people with disabilities and vulnerable communities. They offer scapegoats instead of transformation. They divide the oppressed so that monopoly capitalism can continue to rule.

The Left must answer this moment with clarity. The enemy is not the migrant, the unemployed neighbour, the informal trader, the poor household, or the worker from another country. The enemy is

the system that produces unemployment, hunger, low wages, inequality, dispossession, violence and despair.

2. Property relations, state power, working-class leadership and mass action

The Conference declares that who owns and controls the commanding heights of the economy is the foundational question of our period. Without changing ownership, there can be no real social transformation or advance towards a society beyond capitalism. Without democratic control over production, finance, land, energy, food systems and public resources, democracy remains incomplete.

The Conference commits to the expansion of public, social, worker, co-operative and community ownership of the principal means of production, distribution and exchange. This does not reduce socialism to co-operatives, nor to state ownership alone. Socialism requires public ownership of strategic sectors, social ownership, worker control, co-operative development, democratic planning, developmental finance, and production for social and environmental needs rather than private profit.

The Conference affirms that the struggle for working-class and popular power cannot avoid the question of state power. The working class must organise in society, workplaces and communities, but it must also contest the direction, character and class content of the state. The state must be transformed from an instrument too often subordinated to capital into a democratic instrument of development, redistribution, public ownership, social protection, land justice, peace and socialist transformation.

The Left gathers because the crisis has reached a point where protest alone is not enough. The working class and progressive forces must build the capacity to govern, plan, allocate resources, transform property relations, defend public institutions, exercise democratic control and lead society in a new direction.

The Conference affirms the leading role of the working class. The working class is not one

constituency among many. It is the decisive social force capable of confronting monopoly capitalism, reorganising production, defending democratic gains and leading society towards a socialist future.

The widest unity of the oppressed and exploited is necessary, but it must be anchored in working-class leadership. This leadership must be built through organisation, political education, unity in action, workplace power, community organisation, and the mobilisation of the unemployed, informal workers, women, youth, students, the rural poor, people with disabilities, LGBTQI+ people, and all oppressed communities as part of one broad working-class movement.

The Conference affirms mass action as a necessary instrument of struggle. Campaigns, demonstrations, pickets, workplace actions, community mobilisation, boycotts, and strikes by trade unions and communities must be supported where they advance the demands of workers and the poor. Mass action must be disciplined, democratic, non-sectarian, rooted in organisation and linked to a clear programme of transformation.

The Left must become a force capable of organising society, not merely commenting on society.

“The Conference calls for a public-led programme of employment and production, driven by public investment, democratic planning and state-led industrialisation.”

3. Economic transformation and an alternative economic plan

The Conference declares that the right to work and the right to a livelihood are central demands of the working class. South Africa cannot accept mass unemployment as normal. Unemployment is not the failure of individuals. It is the failure of an economy organised around profit rather than human need.

The Conference calls for a public-led programme of employment and production, driven by public investment, democratic planning and state-led industrialisation. This must include public employment, care work, environmental rehabilitation, township and village production,

food production, worker co-operatives, youth brigades, student work opportunities, local manufacturing and community-based productive activity. The unemployed must be organised as a conscious political force capable of demanding work, shaping policy and participating directly in new forms of production and social ownership.

Outsourcing, labour broking and casualisation are instruments of class power. They fragment the working class, weaken unions, lower wages and turn public services into private profit streams. The Conference supports national insourcing legislation and calls for the progressive abolition of outsourcing in permanent, routine and core public functions.

South Africa requires a new programme of state-led industrialisation. We cannot overcome unemployment through imports, deindustrialisation, financial speculation and low-wage service work. Public investment, democratic

planning, localisation and decent work must drive manufacturing, agro-processing, renewable energy components, public transport, rail, steel, clothing and textiles, pharmaceuticals, food production, housing materials and community-based industrial hubs.

The Conference affirms the building of a strong democratic co-operative movement from the ground up. Co-operatives must not be treated as marginal projects or poverty relief schemes. They must become part of a wider strategy for social ownership, local production, democratic control, decent livelihoods and popular economic power. This includes worker co-operatives, consumer co-operatives, village agricultural co-operatives, co-operative financial institutions, secondary co-operative structures and solidarity economy networks rooted in communities, workplaces, villages and townships.

The financial sector is a central site of class power. South Africa cannot build a developmental, employment-creating and socially owned economy

while finance is dominated by banks, asset managers, speculative capital and debt-driven accumulation. The Conference rejects austerity and financialisation. It calls for the nationalisation of the South African Reserve Bank and a fundamental review of its mandate, ownership, governance and accountability. Monetary policy must serve employment, industrialisation, developmental finance, public investment, transformation and the needs of the working class and poor.

The Conference calls for a review of the 1996 Constitution from the standpoint of the unfinished national democratic and socialist tasks, including land, property relations, the role of the state in the economy, social rights, public ownership, participatory democracy and the transformation of state power in favour of the working class and poor.

The Conference declares that the Left must move from critique to the construction of a credible alternative economic plan. This plan must include fiscal policy, monetary policy, industrial policy, trade policy, public investment, ownership and control of strategic sectors, developmental finance, democratic planning, and resource allocation towards employment, production, public services and social ownership.

The Council of the Left must establish the research, policy, organising, communication and implementation capacity required to develop and popularise this plan, and resources must be allocated to this work.

South Africa's trade policy must serve industrialisation, employment, sovereignty and social needs. Any proposed trade agreement must be subjected to full parliamentary scrutiny, public disclosure, democratic debate and consultation with workers, communities and affected sectors. The same applies to foreign loans, investment arrangements and financing agreements. No loan, trade agreement or investment arrangement must be allowed to undermine sovereignty, industrial policy, public procurement, food sovereignty, labour rights, environmental standards,

democratic planning or the developmental role of the state.

South Africa's critical minerals must be used strategically for industrialisation, not merely exported as raw materials for foreign corporations and imperialist supply chains. Minerals must support beneficiation, public and social ownership, local manufacturing, energy sovereignty, rail and infrastructure development, technology transfer, skills development, worker rights and decent work. The mineral wealth beneath our soil must serve the people.

The Conference rejects the false choice between corruption and privatisation. Corruption, maladministration, looting and elite impunity must be confronted decisively. But handing over electricity, rail, ports, water systems, spectrum, public health, public transport and other strategic network industries to private profiteers is not a solution. It is the continuation of the neoliberal offensive under another name.

The Conference opposes the privatisation and fragmentation of strategic network industries. These sectors must remain under public ownership and democratic control and must serve industrialisation, employment, service delivery, national sovereignty and the needs of the people. The Conference further resolves that corruption and abuse of public trust, including unresolved scandals such as Phala Phala, must not be suppressed or normalised. The Council of the Left must explore appropriate political, parliamentary, legal and mass action avenues to ensure accountability, transparency and public truth.

4. Social needs, land and local democratic economies

The Conference declares the cost of living a central terrain of class struggle. Food prices, electricity tariffs, transport costs, fuel, rent, water charges and basic goods are shaped by monopoly

“The Conference supports the abolition of student debt and the creation of pathways to education, skills, work and dignity for young people.”

control, profiteering, weak public regulation, financialisation, austerity and private profit.

The Conference commits to a common front against the rising cost of living. It calls for price regulation, action against price fixing and profiteering, stronger measures against monopoly control over essential goods, and the defence of affordable basic services as a right. Food, energy, water, sanitation, healthcare, education, housing and transport must be treated as public goods, not commodities.

The Conference opposes privatisation, prepaid exclusion, water and electricity disconnections, and the transfer of the capitalist crisis onto working-class households. It supports a permanent universal basic income grant set at a level that sustains dignity, financed through redistributive taxation on wealth, concentrated capital and financial speculation, as part of comprehensive social security.

The current Social Relief of Distress grant is inadequate and falls far below what is required for a dignified life. The Conference notes that millions who require income support remain excluded through restrictive criteria, administrative barriers and underfunding. The struggle for a universal basic income grant must therefore be linked to expanded social protection, redistribution of wealth, land justice, and the construction of economic alternatives that place human need before profit.

The Conference supports the abolition of student debt and the creation of pathways to education, skills, work and dignity for young people. Students are not a separate question from the working class. They are part of the struggle for a society that gives young people a future.

The Conference affirms that social protection must include the unemployed, students, pensioners, people with disabilities, caregivers, children and all vulnerable sectors of the working class and poor.

“The Conference resolves to establish a Council of the Left as a standing instrument of coordination.”

Public services, workplaces, education institutions, transport systems, housing, communication platforms and political organisations must be accessible, inclusive and accountable to people with disabilities.

The Conference affirms the dignity, equality and full democratic rights of LGBTQI+ people. The Left rejects all forms of discrimination, violence, exclusion, humiliation and reactionary scapegoating directed against LGBTQI+ people. The struggle for socialism must be a struggle for the liberation of all oppressed and exploited people, including those oppressed on the basis of gender identity, sexual orientation or bodily autonomy.

Health is a right, not a commodity. The Conference commits to defending a fully funded National Health Insurance system against the private health industry, medical aid monopolies, pharmaceutical profiteering and all capitalist interests that seek to weaken, delay, distort or capture NHI for private gain. NHI must not become a mechanism for funding the privatisation of healthcare or subsidising private providers at public expense. It must be part of the wider struggle for redistribution, public provision, equality, social rights and the decommodification of healthcare.

The Conference calls for the rebuilding of the public health system, insourcing of health support workers, expansion of community healthcare, public pharmaceutical capacity, democratic accountability and international cooperation in health, including with Cuba.

The land question remains central to transformation. Land stolen through colonialism, apartheid and capitalist accumulation must be returned to the people. Restitution must be coupled with redistribution so that land reform does not only address individual or community claims but also transforms the wider pattern of land ownership and land use in South Africa.

The Conference stands for restitution,

redistribution, security of tenure, and the expropriation of land without compensation. Land reform must restore dignity, advance equality, expand democratic access to land, and place land in the hands of those who work it and live on it.

The Conference supports anti-eviction legislation to protect vulnerable land occupiers, tenants, farm dwellers, homeless communities and working-class households from unjust, unlawful, illegal and arbitrary evictions. Such legislation must uphold the right to adequate housing, protect security of tenure, provide relief on rent arrears and mortgage distress, ensure alternative accommodation where required, outlaw brutal eviction practices, and advance land justice.

The Conference affirms three immediate demands:

security of tenure, transfer of land rights to the people, and rent reduction. The broader aim is to overcome landlord domination, restore land to those from whom it was stolen, and build democratic, public, community and co-operative forms of land use and development.

“The Conference expresses solidarity with the oppressed masses of the world, including the peoples of Palestine, Cuba, Venezuela, Iran, Western Sahara and the Sahel.”

The Conference supports village agricultural co-operatives, household production, communal production, food sovereignty, agro-processing, local markets and community-owned value chains. Municipalities must be rebuilt as organs of democratic development, public service, local economic planning and popular participation, not as sites of patronage, tender corruption and private extraction.

5. Social violence, community safety, migration and climate justice

The Conference declares that social violence is a central question of working-class life and struggle. Violence in our communities is produced and intensified by unemployment, poverty, inequality, patriarchal power, spatial apartheid, weakened

public services, organised criminal networks, weakened community institutions, alcohol and substance abuse, gambling addiction, political intimidation, and the daily violence of an economy that abandons millions to insecurity and despair.

The working class lives with gender-based violence, violence against children, organised crime, extortion, substance abuse, political intimidation, violence against activists and community leaders, xenophobic attacks, vigilantism, unsafe transport, unsafe streets, unsafe schools, unsafe workplaces, and abandonment by the state.

The Conference condemns the role of capital in profiting from social misery through industries and practices that deepen alcohol abuse, substance dependency, gambling addiction, debt, family

breakdown and community insecurity. The Left must confront not only the symptoms of social violence but also the profit systems that feed on despair.

The Conference rejects both the neglect of working-class communities and narrow law-and-order politics that treats the poor as the enemy. Community safety is a

democratic right. It must be built through organised social power: democratic policing accountable to communities, functioning public services, street and section committees, women-led safety structures, youth programmes, rehabilitation services, local economic development, and the protection of activists, organisers and community leaders.

The Conference declares that illegal migration is a matter of serious concern and must be addressed through lawful, humane, rights-based and effective regulation consistent with African solidarity. Migration must not be used to generate Afrophobia, xenophobia or hatred against African and other migrant communities.

The crisis was not created by migrants. At the same time, the Conference condemns the use of

migrant workers as cheap labour by employers who exploit weak labour enforcement to undercut wages, divide workers and weaken unions.

The answer is not scapegoating. The answer is effective border management, proper documentation systems, strong labour inspection, enforcement of minimum wages and labour rights, action against exploitative employers, and the organisation of all workers into common struggle. The anger of the working class must be directed against capital, exploitation, corruption, unemployment, poverty wages and the systems that divide the oppressed.

The Conference declares that climate justice is a class question. The climate crisis is not separate from capitalism. Its consequences fall most heavily on workers, the poor, rural communities, mining-affected communities, informal settlements, women and young people.

The Conference supports a just energy transition that is worker-led, publicly planned, socially owned and based on South Africa's developmental needs. The transition must not become a new accumulation strategy for private capital.

The energy path must be sequenced at a pace the country can afford while protecting workers, communities, energy security, industrialisation and the environment. South Africa must use an appropriate energy mix, including renewable energy, coal and nuclear, under public ownership and democratic planning, while investing in cleaner technologies, environmental rehabilitation, local manufacturing and decent work.

The Conference rejects externally imposed transition models that destroy livelihoods, weaken sovereignty, deepen energy insecurity, or turn the climate crisis into a new market for private profit.

6. Internationalism, Pan-Africanism, peace and anti-imperialist solidarity

The Conference affirms progressive internationalism and radical Pan-Africanism as strategic principles of the Left. Our struggle is part of a wider world struggle against capitalism, neo-

colonialism, imperialism, racism, patriarchy, war, occupation, sanctions and economic domination.

The Conference stands for peace, against war, against militarism, and against imperialist aggression. The struggle for peace is inseparable from the struggle against imperialism, occupation, sanctions, resource plunder and the domination of weaker nations by powerful states.

Africa remains trapped in systems of dependency created and reproduced by imperialism: debt dependency, unequal trade, extractive export structures, foreign control of strategic resources, currency vulnerability, illicit financial flows, and dependence on institutions that discipline sovereign development.

The task is not isolation from the world. The task is strategic delinking from imperialist dependency while deepening integration within Africa and the Global South. The Conference calls for continental economic integration based on industrialisation, food sovereignty, public control over strategic resources, regional value chains, shared infrastructure, technology transfer, and cooperation among workers, peasants, women, youth and progressive states.

The Conference supports alternative finance systems that reduce dependence on imperialist-dominated financial institutions and speculative capital: public and development banks, community and co-operative banking, regional payment and settlement systems, use of local and regional currencies where appropriate, debt audits, measures against illicit financial flows, and finance directed towards production, employment, industrialisation and social ownership.

Africa's integration must not reproduce neo-colonial extraction under a new name. It must be people-centred, worker-conscious, sovereign, developmental and directed towards liberation from capitalism, neo-colonialism and imperialism. The Conference expresses solidarity with the oppressed masses of the world, including the peoples of Palestine, Cuba, Venezuela, Iran, Western Sahara and the Sahel. It supports the right of oppressed peoples to sovereignty, self-

determination, dignity, liberation and peaceful development.

The Conference supports South Africa's case at the International Court of Justice against Israel under the Genocide Convention and calls for intensified solidarity with the Palestinian people, including public mobilisation, boycotts, divestment, sanctions, legal accountability and the isolation of institutions complicit in apartheid, occupation and genocide.

The Conference expresses unwavering solidarity with Cuba and calls for a South African Cuba Solidarity and Anti-Blockade Bill. It rejects threats of war, destabilisation and the use of unilateral sanctions against Cuba and other sovereign nations as instruments to provoke hardship, weaken sovereignty and impose regime change. The Conference affirms the right of the Cuban people to determine their own future free from imperialist interference.

The Conference supports the liberation and self-determination of the people of Western Sahara. It further expresses solidarity with the peoples of the Sahel in their struggle against neo-colonial domination, foreign military control, resource extraction, destabilisation and dependency.

The Conference expresses solidarity with the people of Iran against imperialist aggression, unilateral sanctions, military threats, regime-change operations and violations of national sovereignty. It affirms the right of all nations to sovereignty, self-determination, peaceful development and equal treatment under international law. Solidarity with Iran against imperialism does not mean silence on the struggles of workers, women, youth and popular forces inside any society.

The Conference supports de-dollarisation, strengthened Global South cooperation, sovereign development paths, public control over strategic resources, regional industrialisation and continental solidarity against imperialism.

7. Council of the Left, programme of action and discipline of unity

The Conference resolves to establish a Council of the Left as a standing instrument of coordination. The Council is not a new party. It will not contest elections in its own name. It will not replace existing formations or override their autonomy.

The Council must be based on equality among participating organisations. No single formation shall dominate the Council. Political parties, trade unions, community movements, youth and women's formations, co-operative and solidarity economy structures, student organisations, faith and religious formations, traditional leadership structures, progressive intellectuals and international solidarity formations shall participate on the basis of mutual respect, democratic engagement and unity in action.

Its purpose is to coordinate joint campaigns, shared political education, continuity between conferences, collective intervention, and unity in action. It must be democratic, accountable, transparent and rooted in working-class and popular formations. The first meeting must take place within six weeks of the close of this Conference.

Eight-point programme of action clusters

The Conference adopts a first-phase programme of action organised around eight strategic clusters. These clusters provide the basis for coordinated campaigns, political education, mass mobilisation, policy development, research, implementation and reporting.



1. Economic transformation, work and livelihoods
 This cluster includes the right to work, insourcing, public employment, state-led industrialisation, democratic trade policy, regulation of foreign loans, strategic use of critical minerals, fiscal and monetary policy, public investment, developmental finance, public banking, co-operative finance, and the alternative economic plan.



2. Cost of living, public services and social protection
 This cluster includes food prices, electricity, water, transport, housing, education, social grants, the universal basic income grant, abolition of student debt, the social wage, price regulation, anti-profiteering action, and the defence of affordable public services.



3. Land, restitution, redistribution and local democratic economies
 This cluster includes land restitution, redistribution, expropriation of land without compensation, security of tenure, anti-eviction legislation, rent reduction, food sovereignty, village agricultural co-operatives, household and communal production, agro-processing, local markets, township and village economies, and democratic local government.



4. Public health, NHI and social reproduction
 This cluster includes the defence of NHI from private capitalist capture, rebuilding the public health system, public pharmaceutical capacity, community healthcare, insourcing of health workers, care work, women's unpaid labour, disability inclusion, LGBTQI+ equality, and the wider crisis of social reproduction.



5. Social violence, community safety and working-class unity
 This cluster includes gender-based violence, violence against children, organised crime, extortion, alcohol and substance abuse, gambling harms, political intimidation, violence against activists, migration regulation without Afrophobia, anti-xenophobia work, democratic policing, street and section committees, women-led safety structures, youth programmes and the right to live without fear.



6. Climate justice, energy sovereignty and the just transition
 This cluster includes a worker-led and publicly planned just transition, energy sovereignty, a sequenced energy path the country can afford, an appropriate energy mix including renewables, coal and nuclear under public ownership and democratic planning, mining-affected communities, local manufacturing, environmental rehabilitation, climate adaptation and protection of workers and communities.

7. Internationalism, Pan-Africanism, peace and anti-imperialist solidarity
 This cluster includes solidarity with oppressed peoples across the world, including Palestine, Cuba, Venezuela, Iran, Western Sahara and the Sahel; opposition to war, militarism, occupation, sanctions and regime-change operations; support for South Africa's ICJ case against Israel under the Genocide Convention; strategic delinking from imperialist dependency; African continental integration; alternative finance systems; de-dollarisation; and sovereign development paths.

8. Review of the 1996 Constitution, state power and democratic transformation
 This cluster includes a review of the 1996 Constitution from the standpoint of unfinished national democratic and socialist tasks, including land, property relations, public ownership, social rights, participatory democracy, the role of the state in the economy, transformation of state power, democratic planning, accountability, and the capacity of the state to serve the working class and poor.



Each cluster must have a working group, responsible formations, clear timelines, allocated resources and twelve-month measurable outcomes. The Council of the Left must ensure that the programme of action becomes a living instrument of struggle rather than a conference document.

The Left cannot rebuild working-class power through declarations alone. It must build the capacity to organise, educate, mobilise, strike, campaign, negotiate, research, communicate and implement.

Unity is not silence. Unity is not the erasure of difference. Unity is not surrendering political identity. Unity means acting together where we agree, debating honestly where we differ, and refusing to allow our differences to be used by capital, reaction and imperialism to weaken the people.

The Conference resolves to adopt this Declaration; establish the Council of the Left; develop an alternative economic plan; support campaigns, mass action and strikes by trade unions and communities; campaign for the right to work, insourcing, state-led industrialisation, developmental finance, democratic oversight of trade agreements and foreign loans, strategic use of critical minerals, food security, public services, local government accountability, public ownership, social ownership, worker ownership, co-operative ownership and community ownership; defend and protect NHI from private capitalist capture; develop and campaign for a Cuba Solidarity and Anti-Blockade Bill; campaign for strategic delinking from imperialist dependency while deepening African integration and alternative finance systems; coordinate solidarity actions with oppressed peoples across the world; establish social violence and community safety as a central terrain of Left organising; rebuild political education; and affirm the leading role of the working class in socialist transformation.

8. Call to action

The Conference leaves with a responsibility to the millions who are not in this hall: the unemployed worker, the young person denied a future, the student crushed by debt and exclusion, the woman who fears violence, the person with a disability excluded from full participation, the LGBTIQI+ person facing discrimination, the family crushed

by the cost of living, the migrant scapegoated for a crisis they did not create, the farm worker, the mineworker, the informal trader, the pensioner, the nurse, the teacher, the cleaner, the security worker, the shack dweller and the rural poor.

They did not send us here to perform our divisions. They are entitled to expect that the Left and progressive forces can unite in action, name the system that oppresses them, contest state power, transform society and fight for a future based on dignity, equality, peace, land, work, public ownership and socialism.

The Conference calls on the working class to assume its historic leadership role: to unite the oppressed, organise the unorganised, lead the struggles of communities and workplaces, and become the decisive force for socialist transformation in South Africa.

The future will not be given to us. It must be organised. The Conference of the Left begins this work. It does not end the work.

Forward to working-class leadership in the struggle for popular power!

Forward to unity in action!

Forward against capitalism, neo-colonialism and imperialism!

Forward to land restitution, redistribution and expropriation without compensation!

Forward to public, social, worker, co-operative and community ownership!

Forward to the right to live without fear!

Forward to peace and international solidarity!

Forward to a society organised around social and environmental need, not private profit!



CONFERENCE OF THE LEFT

Revolutionary unity unleashed



The South African Left has emerged stronger, more coordinated, and battle-ready.

Key points

- **Historic CoL unites South Africa’s left under working-class banner**
- **Declaration and Programme of Action adopted across eight strategic clusters**
- **Council of the Left established to coordinate struggle and mobilisation**



AVIWE RAPELANG MOHAPI

In a powerful demonstration of revolutionary will, the Conference of the Left has struck a mighty blow against the forces of capitalism, neo-colonialism and division.

Convened under the auspices of the SACP from 29 to 31 May in Boksburg under the banner “Building a Left Movement for Working-Class and Popular Power,” this historic gathering

has emerged as a turning point in the South African revolution. What began as a bold call for unity has culminated in the adoption of a fighting “Declaration for working-class and popular power” and a Programme of Action. The South African Left is rising – united, organised and ready to confront monopoly capital head-on!

Delegates from across the broad spectrum of progressive forces – political parties, trade unions and federations, community and social movements, co-operatives, youth and women’s structures, students, faith-based groups, traditional leaders, progressive intellectuals, and internationalist activists – converged in a historic display of revolutionary unity and purpose.

This was no mere talk shop. This was the working class and its allies declaring: Enough! We will not manage the crisis – we will overthrow its causes.

Revolutionary voices ignite the struggle

The opening session on 29 May thundered with ideological clarity and unyielding commitment. SACP General Secretary Cde Solly Mapaila, chairing the multiorganisational steering committee, delivered a powerful political address that cut through the illusions of neoliberalism.

Diagnosing the structural crisis – mass unemployment, grinding inequality, financial domination, deindustrialisation and the unfinished 1994 settlement – he called for principled unity rooted in class struggle. “We are the builders of a political direction, a reorganisation of the working class for a new revolution in this country. There is no going back!”

Cde Julius Malema of the EFF brought revolutionary fire, fiercely critiquing global capitalism and the country’s neoliberal drift, while defending African migrants against Afrophobia and demanding land expropriation, nationalisation of the commanding heights, and unbreakable Pan-African solidarity.

“This was no mere talk shop. This was the working class and its allies declaring: Enough!”

Cde Tony Yengeni, Deputy President of the uMkhonto weSizwe Party, called for unity to seize power, proposed a revolutionary council, and placed land return and economic freedom at the centre of the struggle. He dedicated the gathering to those who sacrificed for freedom and emphasised honouring their legacy through action.

Strong revolutionary inputs followed from Azapo (President Cde Nelvis Qekema and the Azapo Women’s League), the PAC and its militant youth wing (Payco/Paso), Sopa, AAPRP, BCMU, and other organisations such as Cde Ace Magashule of ACT, all stressing the urgency of left unity and radical economic transformation.

These contributions powerfully reinforced the traditions of Black Consciousness and its

progression to non-racialism, Pan-Africanism, and scientific socialism, reaffirming the centrality of working-class leadership. The Azapo Women’s League added a vital perspective on the intersection of class, race, and gender oppression, calling for the full emancipation of women within the broader struggle for working-class power and highlighting the role of women in community organising and revolutionary leadership.

Numsa General Secretary Cde Irvin Jim tabled a clear minimum programme: state-led development, nationalisation of mines, banks, land and the Reserve Bank, industrialisation, full employment, and free quality social services.

Cosatu, represented by First Deputy President Cde Mike Shingange, exposed imperialist aggressions and reaffirmed the fight to advance the National Democratic Revolution against austerity.

Commissions forge the way forward

Day two’s thematic commissions on political economy and global context, balance of forces and strategy, and Economic Transformation, Environment, and Left structures turned revolutionary analysis into concrete strategy, identifying contradictions and mapping the path to popular power.

Historic Declaration and Programme of Action adopted

The climax came on 31 May with the unanimous adoption of the Declaration for working-class and popular power - a fighting document that will echo through the townships, factories, mines and villages of our country (see the Conference Declaration in this issue).

The Conference established the Council of the Left – a broad, democratic, non-sectarian platform for coordination, political education, mass mobilisation and unity in action. It is not a new party, but a weapon of the working class.

A first-phase Programme of Action, organised around eight key clusters: economic transformation; cost of living and social protection; land and local economies; public health and NHI; social violence

and safety; climate justice; internationalism; and constitutional review. Each cluster will have working groups with clear targets, clear timelines, and measurable outcomes.

The Declaration rings out like a battle cry: “We did not gather to lament this crisis. We gathered to organise against it... The future will not be given to us. It must be organised!”

“We will not manage the crisis – we will overthrow its causes.”

A new chapter in the South African revolution

The breadth and depth of participation – spanning the SACP, the YLCSA and its allies Cosatu, Sanco, the Progressive Youth Alliance and the Progressive Women’s Movement, the EFF, Azapo (and its leagues), the PAC and its youth organisation, SOPA, AAPRP, BCMU, MK Party, ACT, major trade

unions, faith-based organisations, shack dwellers, students, and internationalist comrades have shown that historical differences can and must be subordinated to the urgent demands of class struggle.

The Conference of the Left reaffirmed that the working class, led by its most advanced detachments, is the motive force of genuine liberation. The SACP will continue to play its vanguard role in deepening this unity, guided by Marxism-Leninism and the National Democratic Revolution.

The South African Left has emerged stronger, more coordinated, and battle-ready. The foundations for popular power have been laid. Now is the time to organise, mobilise, and strike!

Forward to Working-Class Unity and Socialism!
Long live the Conference of the Left!

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

PEOPLE’S RED CARAVAN

A great symbol of the Party’s independence



Poster for the May 2026 round of the People’s Red Caravan.

- Key points**
- PRC advances community self-reliance
 - Co-operatives, water access and markets built across multiple provinces
 - PRC grows SACP branches and builds cadres of a new type
 - GBV confronted directly, with measurable results



SEITEBALENG DIKOLE

On 26 June, we will be celebrating the 71st anniversary of the Freedom Charter. The PRC is an important framework and practical example for reporting on the progressive movement’s achievements since the 1994 democratic breakthrough, whilst also making deeper reflections on the Freedom Charter.

The overarching principle of the PRC is self-reliance of communities: being their own liberators without dependence on the government. This also derives inspiration from the Chinese Revolution, with a particular focus on Yan’an. When the Red Army entered Yan’an in 1937, it found abject poverty and horrible conditions faced by the Chinese people. Chairman Mao and the Red Army assisted the community to develop co-operatives and also gave instructions to the government in Beijing to provide funding for co-operative development.

The critical challenge for the SACP is to develop a monitoring and evaluation system that will be responsible for the PRC. After that, the SACP, through its legal unit, must develop a patent right to protect the SACP’s full legal right in ownership of the PRC. The reality of the matter is that the PRC is a new model of development under the leadership of the SACP as a vanguard of the working class.

Grounding the SACP in communities

Arguably, it is through the PRC that the SACP must start to characterise itself as a vanguard of community development through self-reliance. The PRC is creating cadres of a special type in the Party so that its structures can mobilise communities

in the new approach of development, having the PRC as a platform for mobilising, educating and organising communities. Motlhabe Village in the North West, for instance, became an important platform wherein people were mobilised, educated and organised in the Communist Party.

Each PRC is also used to build SACP branches where PRC takes place. In another paradigm, it serves as a melting pot that is intended to renew the SACP within the existing material conditions. The materiality of the PRC is based on respect for human dignity and human values across all spectrums.

The general commodification of activism within the Congress Movement needs a serious rollback through the political leadership of the SACP. The PRC has exposed the bourgeois mentality of turning community participation and community members into mere voting fodder during elections.

Community development and self-reliance

Each PRC that has taken place in all our provinces has been able to determine a niche for community development under SACP leadership. Motlhabe was a launching pad for the coordination of many activities. It is where we learned that development is possible under the auspices of the SACP. It is also about putting the self-reliance of communities into action under the guidance of the SACP. In Matibidi, the PRC helped establish co-operatives and the market for selling produce.

Each and every PRC recognises and cements a relationship with traditional leadership in all areas.

In Mqhekezweni, the PRC helped the community to access water through borehole drilling. When water came out, the community was overwhelmed with excitement. The traditional leaders declared publicly that their dreams and aspirations had finally come true.

What remains important is for the SACP to coordinate and lead socialist markets that will advance development. The centrality of the PRC is more about building a people's economy wherein there are no bourgeois speculators but a promotion of production by people themselves within their established market. The people must not rely on the parasitic tendering system.

PRC and community safety

In Mqhekezweni Village in the Eastern Cape, the struggle against GBV was intensified. Prior to the launching of the PRC, it was normal to rape women in the village by well-known criminals. The SACP took it upon itself to confront persistent rape of women by the local criminals. The government entered the fray after the SACP had escalated the matter with relevant ministries.

The community is happy that GBV instances have subsided, and the SACP structure is consistently monitoring the situation together with relevant stakeholders.

Cde Seitebaleng Dikole is the SACP's Second Deputy Provincial Secretary, Moses Kotane Province

PEOPLE'S RED CARAVAN

Sechaba se itshebetsang: self-sustenance and self-resilience through the PRC



The People's Red Caravan took place in Gladstone, Free State, 12 - 17 May. This info poster explains the different activities covered during the PRC. The community of Gladstone has established community food gardens and a cooperative store.

Key points

- PRC counters dependency cycles by building community self-reliance
- Gladstone established food gardens and a co-operative store through PRC
- Communities are active agents of development, not passive aid recipients
- Long-term capacity-building, not relief, breaks structural vulnerability



SARAH MOKWEDO

The 6th PRC was held in Gladstone, Free State, 12-17 May.

As you drive into Gladstone from the nearby town of Thaba Nchu – no matter which local untarred route you use – you drive over either one of their two small bridge structures whose only real purpose, at best, is to allow community members to walk above the stream flowing

underneath it. But only when the weather permits. This is precisely why the People’s Red Caravan Unprecedented levels of rain in this era of and its emphasis on self-sustenance and self-increasing rates of climate change could potentially cut off that close-knit village from the rest of the greater Mangaung area, forcing the community to wait for aid from outside - whether from the state or non-state actors - to reconnect them to their small town and surrounding areas in order to be able to, at the very least, earn a living and continue their livelihoods.

“Communities are forced into a position where survival becomes dependent on waiting - waiting for government intervention, waiting for NGOs, waiting for donors, and waiting for external actors...”

resilience becomes an important intervention within communities such as Gladstone. Whilst the state carries an undeniable responsibility to provide infrastructure and services for instance, communities themselves-in collaboration with the PRC, must also be empowered and organised in ways that strengthen their ability to withstand and respond to crises.

And whilst they are cut off, depending on the amount of time they would have to wait until they receive help, they may find themselves experiencing food shortages, limited access to healthcare services, interrupted schooling, and the complete disruption of everyday life. What begins as heavy rainfall can quickly evolve into a reminder of the deep infrastructural inequalities and deficiencies that continue to define many rural communities in South Africa.

Neglect

But perhaps the greatest issue is not the poor state of the bridge itself. Rather, it is the cycle of dependency that emerges every time disaster or disruption occurs in communities such as Gladstone.

“Food parcels may temporarily alleviate hunger, but they do not eliminate the structural conditions that create vulnerability in the first place.”

Communities are forced into a position where survival becomes dependent on waiting - waiting for government intervention, waiting for NGOs, waiting for donors, and waiting for external actors to restore a sense of normality. In many instances, by the time assistance arrives, families have already suffered significant economic and social losses.

Self-resilience is fundamentally about ensuring that communities possess the collective capacity to survive disruption without completely collapsing. It is about building systems within communities that allow people to continue functioning even under difficult circumstances. Through the PRC, the community of Gladstone has established community food gardens and a cooperative store which will ensure that households maintain access to food even during periods of isolation and crisis.

The PRC moves beyond the idea of temporary relief. Instead, it promotes long-term community capacity-building. Relief alone cannot sustain communities indefinitely. Food parcels may

temporarily alleviate hunger, but they do not eliminate the structural conditions that create vulnerability in the first place. Self-sustenance requires communities to actively participate in shaping their own economic and social realities.

Against passivity

Equally important is the issue of dignity. Rural and working-class communities are often spoken about only within the language of poverty and need, reducing people to passive recipients of assistance. However, these communities possess



PRC activists prepare to plant spinach seedlings in the Gladstone food garden.

“Resilience can no longer be treated as an abstract concept discussed only within policy documents and conferences...”

social knowledge, survival mechanisms, and collective strength that are too often ignored in development discourse.

The PRC acknowledges that communities themselves are not merely beneficiaries of development, but active agents within it. This becomes especially important within the broader context, where inequality, unemployment and uneven development continue to disproportionately affect rural areas and townships across the country. Infrastructure remains unreliable and climate-related disasters such as flooding increasingly expose the vulnerability of poor communities.

Under these conditions, resilience can no longer be treated as an abstract concept discussed only within policy documents and conferences. It must become a lived and practical reality.

The PRC’s emphasis on mobilisation and collective participation therefore becomes critical. Community resilience cannot be built in isolation by individuals acting alone. It requires organisation, cooperation and shared responsibility. It requires communities to identify their own challenges collectively and develop sustainable solutions that are rooted within their own lived experiences.

Ultimately, the story of Gladstone is not simply about a bridge. The bridge merely represents a broader reality experienced by countless communities across South Africa- communities that remain one heavy rainfall, one service delivery failure, or one economic shock away from complete disruption.

Community empowerment

The question, therefore, is not whether disasters

and disruptions will continue to occur. They inevitably will. The real question is whether communities will forever remain trapped in cycles of vulnerability and dependency whenever they do.

Through its focus on self-sustenance and self-resilience, the PRC presents an attempt to answer that question differently. It suggests that the long-

term strength of communities lies not only in the assistance they receive from outside or from the government, but also in their ability to organise, produce, sustain and protect themselves from within.

Sarah Mokwebo is a member of the 6th National Committee of the YCLSA

REFLECTING ON JUNE 16 – 50th ANNIVERSARY

When the educated fail to read the moment – the painful contradiction in the South Africa we are becoming

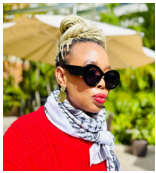


To commemorate 50 years of June 16 is to honour a generation that turned education into consciousness and fear into resistance. Photo: Ihsaan Haffejee /GroundUp

Key points

- 1976 youth grasped oppression as a system — many today do not
- Afrophobia misdirects legitimate anger away from capitalism’s real causes
- Neo-nationalism poses as patriotism but has no economic justice programme

- Fragmentation agendas echo apartheid’s Bantustan logic of divide and rule
- South Africa’s moral authority on Palestine depends on remaining united
- June 16’s true legacy is clarity, solidarity and naming the real enemy



THABILE LENKWANE

We are preparing to mark 50 years since the June 16 uprising, yet our streets are increasingly filled with suspicion, anger and exclusion. We praise the youth of 1976 for confronting apartheid education, but many today appear unable to read the political classroom in front of them. We celebrate a generation that understood oppression as a system, while parts of our society now reduce complex social crises to the presence of foreign African bodies.

The youth of 1976 fought because apartheid education was never only about language. Afrikaans was the spark, but Bantu Education was the structure. It was designed to produce a Black child who would obey, not question; serve, not lead; work, not own; survive, not imagine. The apartheid state understood that if you control what people are taught, you control what they believe is possible.

That is why June 16 was not merely a student protest. It was an uprising of consciousness.

Those young people understood something many with formal education today seem unable to grasp: oppression has an architecture. Poverty has planners. Division has beneficiaries. A society does not simply collapse. It is made fragile by systems, interests and choices.

Cascading crises

This is what makes the current xenophobic and Afrophobic moment so dangerous. The anger is real, but the direction is politically convenient. Communities are angry about unemployment, crime, collapsing clinics, overcrowded schools, poor housing, undocumented migration and the visible absence of the state. These frustrations cannot be dismissed. Ordinary people are living inside a social crisis they did not create.

But the question is: who is teaching them how to understand that crisis?

When a young South African cannot find work, who benefits when they blame a Zimbabwean vendor

instead of an economy built to exclude the Black majority? When hospitals are overwhelmed, who benefits when anger is directed at a Mozambican mother instead of a state that has underfunded public healthcare? When crime rises, who benefits when entire African nationalities are criminalised while organised networks, corrupt officials and economic desperation remain untouched?

The poor are being taught to fight the poor.

“June 16 was not merely a student protest. It was an uprising of consciousness”

That is the oldest trick of a system in crisis. When those at the bottom begin to ask dangerous questions, reactionary politics offers them a softer target. Do not look at capital. Do not look at land. Do not look at austerity. Do not look at corruption. Do not look at the unfinished transformation of the economy. Look there, at the foreigner. Look there, at another African. Look there, at the person with even less protection than you.

Reactionary diversion

This is how neo-nationalism grows. It dresses itself as patriotism, but it has no programme for economic justice. It speaks loudly about borders but quietly about ownership. It shouts about migrants but whispers around monopoly capital. It mobilises the unemployed, but not against the system that produces unemployment. It claims to defend the nation while weakening the very social fabric that makes a nation possible.

Afrophobia is not a revolutionary answer to state failure. It is a reactionary diversion from it.

And it becomes even more dangerous when an invisible hand begins to move around these wounds. We must ask uncomfortable questions. Who funds these movements? Who amplifies them? Who gives them language, platforms and protection? Why does their anger always travel downward, towards the vulnerable, and not upward, towards the powerful? Why do they speak

of foreign nationals with such violence, but rarely speak with the same force about employers who exploit undocumented workers to drive down wages?

No serious political movement fears scrutiny of its funding. No serious patriotism hides its sponsors. If these formations are truly organic expressions of community anger, let the money trail be opened. Let South Africans know who pays, who organises, who advises and who benefits.

Moral authority

This is especially important because South Africa is not acting in isolation. Its decision to

it cannot be easily disciplined. A united South Africa frightens reactionary forces because it can still speak with moral weight on the global stage. South Africa is wounded, unequal and often badly governed, but it remains symbolically dangerous because it carries the memory of apartheid's defeat. When it speaks against occupation, racial domination and genocide, the world listens differently.

That is why fragmentation is not a harmless idea.

From the Zionist-apartheid playbook

Grant Arthur Gochin's article in *The Times of Israel*, titled "Africa Must Fragment, South Africa First,"

argues that South Africa should be broken into smaller sovereign entities, including along ethnic and regional lines. It proposes referendum-based independence for groups such as Zulu, Xhosa, Tswana, Sotho, Venda and Tsonga peoples, as well as for the Western Cape.

We must read that carefully. This is not simply a criticism of the ANC. This is not a call for better governance. It is an argument for the end of South Africa as a united country.

It takes real failures and uses them to reach a dangerous conclusion: that South Africa must be broken.

We have heard this logic before.

Apartheid also spoke the language of separate development. It told Black people that they were Zulu, Xhosa, Tswana, Sotho, Venda, Tsonga, Pedi



Fight back against Afrophobia. A united South Africa frightens reactionary forces because it can still speak with moral weight on the global stage.

take Israel to the International Court of Justice over the genocide in Gaza placed this country on the side of Palestine, international law and anti-apartheid memory. South Africa's action gave legal expression to a historical truth: those who know apartheid have a duty to stand against apartheid wherever it appears.

A united Africa frightens imperial power because

“When a young South African cannot find work, who benefits when they blame a Zimbabwean vendor instead of an economy built to exclude the Black majority?”

and Ndebele before they were South African. It created Bantustans not to liberate African people, but to deny them citizenship, land, political power and economic claim over the country of their birth. Fragmentation was never innocent. It was a governing strategy.

So when today’s neo-nationalists attack African migrants, and when external voices call for South Africa to be broken into ethnic and regional pieces, we must ask whether these are separate events or parts of the same political weather.

Systemic enemy

First, teach people to hate the foreign African. Then teach them to fear the province next door. Then teach them to retreat into tribe, language and region. Eventually, the nation itself becomes negotiable. This is how consciousness is weakened before borders are redrawn.

The youth of 1976 fought against a system that wanted Black children to think small. They refused. They saw through the classroom and identified the state behind it. They understood that their

enemy was not the child sitting next to them, but the machinery standing over them.

Can we say the same today?

South Africa needs a migration policy. It needs documentation systems that work. Borders must be managed. Corruption at Home Affairs must be confronted. Employers who exploit migrants must be punished. Communities must be safe. Public services must function.

But none of this requires Afrophobia.

“To commemorate 50 years of June 16 is to honour a generation that turned education into consciousness and fear into resistance.”

To commemorate 50 years of June 16 is to honour a generation that turned education into consciousness and fear into resistance. They fought so that Black children could think, question and become fully human in a country that denied their humanity. We honour them not by repeating their names in speeches, but by refusing to become instruments of the very logic they rose against. Fifty years later, the tribute we owe the youth of 1976 is not an empty memory. It is clarity. It is solidarity. It is the courage to know who the real enemy is.

Cde Thabile Lenkwane a National Committee member of the YCLSA

REFLECTING ON JUNE 16 – 50th ANNIVERSARY

A new flavour of the same oppression



Key points

- Neoliberalism reproduces apartheid education’s inequality through market logic rather than racial law
- The system’s power makes structural oppression feel like personal failure
- Post-1994 adoption of the Washington Consensus transferred costs onto the same people apartheid harmed
- The 1976 generation’s legacy is self-organised resistance — not waiting for permission to name injustice

Neoliberalism is an ideology that advocates for control of the economy to be placed in the hands of the private sector, with limited interference from government regulations, such as labour laws, ethical business standards or state ownership.

Neoliberals do believe the government has a role: to act as a social safety net for the vulnerable and, more importantly, to reduce or eliminate barriers to the free market. To make it easier for businesses to operate. Whatever benefits the private sector, the government must support.

The desire for a thriving private sector is not something anyone — including the SACP — should oppose in principle. But businesses, by their very nature, have one primary goal: to maximise profit. And that goal leads them toward decisions that serve their interests while disregarding the consequences for people like you and me.



EXLIRA GIOSE DAVIDS

Perhaps we are all tired of the SACP’s rhetoric, “End Neoliberalism”, mostly because we don’t understand what it means. And that confusion is not accidental.

“Neoliberalism presents itself as the natural order of life, as simply how things are, to the point where most of us do not understand why we are suffering”

Disregarding workers. Disregarding the poor. This is the behaviour the SACP seeks to end, and it is worth understanding before dismissing the slogan.

Invisibility

Maybe the worst part about neoliberalism is how invisible it is. It presents itself as the natural order of life, as simply how things are, to the point where most of us do not understand why we are suffering, and do not think to ask whether neoliberalism might be the cause. The system does not announce itself. It just makes you feel like you are not trying hard enough.

The June 16th uprising of 1976 was a rebellion against an educational system engineered to reproduce inequality. Through language — Afrikaans imposed as the medium of instruction on Black students — through deliberately inferior curricula, through funding disparities that saw the state spend nearly ten times more per white student than per Black student, through career exclusion that locked Black graduates out of entire professions by law, the apartheid government built an education system whose true purpose was not to educate but to contain.

Today, we have a system with the same goal, but a different means and a more palatable justification.

Neoliberal South Africa does not use race to determine who receives a quality education and who does not. It uses money. It uses geography. It uses the logic of the market, which tells us that access to good schools, to universities, to skilled employment, should go to those who can afford it or who were lucky enough to inherit proximity to it. The private sector decides who gets educated. The private sector decides who gets employed. The state steps aside and calls it freedom.

Apartheid mirror

This is why the irony of June 16th 2026 is almost

unbearable. I genuinely do not know which moment in history — 1976 or now — presents the harsher conditions for a young South African. In many ways the two dates mirror each other. A few liberties cannot overshadow the fact that a government we elected is facilitating our oppression through economic policies imported from the West, implemented by institutions like the IMF and World Bank, that have long believed they know what is best for the African child.

Post-apartheid South Africa adopted the Washington Consensus — privatisation, deregulation, reduced public spending — and called it progress. The people who bore the cost of that progress were the same people who bore the cost of everything that came before.

The end goal of apartheid was a racially stratified society in which Black South Africans were locked out of economic participation and dignity. That goal was not defeated in 1994. It was achieved through different means. We now have economic oppression through education, with a neoliberal flavour. Racial law was replaced by market logic, and the outcome, for most young Black South Africans, looks remarkably familiar.

I have no good news. This government and its policies are not good enough for us. They have not honoured the lives lost on June 16th. They will not honour them by continuing on this path.

But there is something worth holding onto, and it is not a party or a leader. It is the fact that the students of 1976 did not wait for permission. They did not wait to be told their conditions were unjust. They named it themselves, they organised, and they changed the course of history at an enormous personal cost. That inheritance belongs to us.

Cde Exlira Giose Davids is a member of the YCLSA National Committee

XENOPHOBIA

**“Abahambe!”
- a quick fix to the
multifaceted
immigration issue**



The foreign national has become the visible scapegoat for the country’s underlying systemic issues.

Key points

- “Abahambe” populism scapegoats migrants while evading systemic causes
- No evidence links immigrant presence directly to South African unemployment
- Capitalist exploitation of undocumented workers predates current anti-migration movements
- Porous borders reflect state failure, not a problem migrants themselves created



SINOXOLO ODIDI MAHLATSHANA

“Abahambe!” A populist anti-migration war cry. The populist slogan has become almost omnipresent, permeating every corner of our mass and modern media. However, behind it lies a much more complex and polarising discourse around illegal immigration in South Africa.

Over the past few months, we have witnessed the growing momentum of anti-immigration civic movements, at the centre of it – the March and March movement – calling for the deportation of illegal foreign nationals.

The convenient emergence of these movements has been in response to the not-so-sudden influx of illegal immigrants who have desperately identified South Africa as an economically ideal destination and a haven away from their birth country’s civil strife, political instability, economic and environmental conditions, which have rendered them destitute.

Ironically, their presence in South Africa has been framed as a major threat to the social and economic life of the country, transforming it into a battlefield of our already “over-burdened” and “over-stretched” state resources.

Given the aforementioned, the foreign national has become the visible scapegoat for the country’s underlying systemic issues; our evidently gross inequality defined by an uneven distribution of wealth and our rising unemployment, which reflects through abject poverty, a lack of adequate resources and an escalating crime rate fuelling drug-trafficking syndicates.

Vigilantism

It is these myriad social factors that continue to be utilised by populist movements to mobilise gullible and frustrated ordinary citizens behind moral rhetoric, exceptionalism and at worst, ethnicism.

One of the most common psychological ways in which these movements have successfully employed their populism and hidden vigilantism is through driving public discourse using an interplay of fable and fiction.

They pose the composition of the immigrant into the South African labour market as a precursor of the unemployment rate, leading to sentiments about immigrants “stealing” South African jobs.

This is besides the stark evidence which shows no direct link between the presence of immigrants and the national employment rate. In addition to this, immigrants and ordinary South Africans do not compete for similar jobs as they (the immigrants) mostly participate in “lower” standard jobs with poor working conditions in the face of excessive hours.

In fact, the employment patterns of illegal immigrants in our labour market highlight the legacy of apartheid and capitalism. Both continue to reflect through the economic exploitation of immigrants, a product of the “two-gate” policy, which, amongst its features, included the employment of undocumented foreign nationals to perform cheap labour in South Africa.

It is therefore problematic to naively protest (both literally and figuratively) against illegal immigration without taking into cognisance the capitalist exploitation that makes these very immigrants’ ideal candidates for non-unionised labour and meagre wages. As Oupa Lehurele so eloquently states, “As the sure as the day follows night, the movement of people will always follow the movement of capital.”

“The employment patterns of illegal immigrants in our labour market highlight the legacy of apartheid and capitalism”

But it is perhaps much more convenient for these anti-immigration movements to divert attention away from systemic problems such as the rampant

maladministration in our state departments. It is easier not to boldly highlight our disintegrated border management system and the lack of financial allocation, which has culminated in porous borders, a threat to our national sovereignty.

It is easier to jump on the populist bandwagon of vigilantism; to chant slogans devoid of ideological grounding and to build antagonistic relations that paint the immigrant as a monstrous threat.

Intimidation

We continue to tragically observe the ethically and morally questionable tactics employed by these movements through the use of fear and driving

resentment. We continue to witness the disruptive behaviour, the intimidation towards school pupils and parents, the physical confrontation towards those who are suspected of being foreign and undocumented by pseudo-immigration inspectorates.

We witness the carrying of weapons and the retrogressive derogatory terms: “AmaShangaani”, “Kwere Kwere” and “Jollofina”. All of which speak to the stripping of people’s human dignity; an infringement on our constitutional principles.

We continue to witness an illegal immigration discourse that immortalises romantic relationships with foreign nationals, one that shames and fuels xenophobic elements through the spreading of superstitious, diabolical hearsay and yet, those who are at the forefront of these movements brazenly deny the xenophobic chauvinism that underpins everything they stand for.

Now, of course, addressing the issue of illegal immigration within these grey areas instantly makes one an ally for illegality and criminality. To be identified as a true patriot, you need to apply a binary oppositional lens and refrain from calling out reactive interventions that do not culminate in reformed policies that influence socio-economic development.

But it is important to note that in this era of globalisation, where capital transcends porous borders, migration will continue to shape our social and economic landscape. As such, we cannot deny that there is a need to drive for constructive social change that is not underpinned by what Dr Mbuyiseni Ndlozi refers to as “lumpen radicalism.”

Sinoxolo Odidi Mahlatshana is a Media Studies Lecturer

POLITICAL EDUCATION

Empowering minds: the role of night schools in shaping revolutionary activism



Key points

- Communist-run night schools forged revolutionary consciousness among Black workers and veterans
- Kena’s wartime encounter with the Springbok Legion ignited his lifelong communist commitment
- Kotane rose from farmworker to SACP General Secretary through night school political education
- Political and economic liberation were inseparable in the night schools’ revolutionary tradition



HLENGIWE NKONYANE

Night schools played a crucial role in the ideological development of workers, particularly in the mines. They provided essential political education for understanding the interconnectedness of their struggles and the realities of capitalist oppression – laying the groundwork for a generation of activists in the fight for liberation.

Historically, participants in communist-run schools were often afforded opportunities to study in the Soviet Union, where they could immerse themselves in Marxist theory and

revolutionary strategy. Commitment to education was mirrored in the armed liberation movements, where ideological training was integral during the underground years.

The impact of comrades Kena and Kotane

Cde Mokhafisi Jacob Kena, affectionately known as “Ntate Kena”, was the founding member and longest-serving general secretary of the Communist Party of Lesotho. He exemplified the transformative power of political education. His experiences in the night schools in the mines not only shaped his convictions but also equipped him with the tools necessary to lead the struggle in Lesotho.

Cde Moses Mauane Kotane, lovingly referred to as “Malome Kotane”, had a path influenced by his education in the night schools in the trade union movement. His journey from a humble worker to a prominent leader underscores the essential role that ideological training played in his commitment to the liberation movement.

Together, these comrades embody the profound impact that night schools had on the ideological development of activists, illustrating how education cultivated their leadership and dedication to the fight against oppression.

From soldier to revolutionary leader

In the shadow of the Second World War, a profound bond was formed among soldiers from different backgrounds, united by a common purpose: to fight against fascism. Among those brave individuals was Cde Mokhafisi Jacob Kena, a young man from Lesotho who would later become a pivotal figure in the struggle for social justice in Southern Africa.

His story intertwines the threads of war, unity, and ideological awakening, culminating in his encounters with the Springbok Legion, an

organisation that was dedicated to fighting for the rights of soldiers and advocating against fascism, and the enduring legacy of the SACP.

As the world plunged into chaos in 1939, Ntate Kena answered the call to serve. He joined the ranks of those who stood against the tyranny of Adolf Hitler and the fascist regimes in Europe. It was in the trenches and battlefields that Ntate Kena first encountered the seeds of communism as he fought alongside his comrades, some of whom were white South African communists from the Springbok Legion.

The Springbok Legion, formed in 1941, became a beacon of hope for many soldiers returning from the war. Its mission was to unite both Black and White servicepersons in a struggle for equality and justice, promoting progressive ideas amidst a backdrop of racial tension and oppression. The Legion sought to educate its members on the principles of trade unionism, socialism, and the importance of mutual respect across racial lines.

Upon returning to South Africa as a mine worker, Ntate Kena found himself drawn to the vibrant discussions at the night schools established by the Springbok Legion. Those institutions were not just educational facilities; they were sanctuaries of revolutionary thought, where veterans gathered to explore the writings of Marx, Lenin, and other socialist theorists, igniting a passion for change and social justice.

The Communist Party’s night schools within the Springbok Legion were instrumental in cultivating a generation of leaders committed to the struggle for liberation. They provided a safe space for discussions, fostering a sense of solidarity among comrades who understood that their battles were interconnected.



Cde Moses Kotane (left) and Cde Mokhafisi Jacob Kena – prime movers in developing night schools for workers. Cde Kena, wears an SACP Moses Kotane t-shirt, which he had asked for in memory of the working relationship he had with Kotane.

“The Communist Party’s night schools within the Springbok Legion were instrumental in cultivating a generation of leaders committed to the struggle for liberation.”

As the fight against apartheid intensified, the night schools continued to shape the strategies of the SACP and the broader liberation movement. The connections forged between ex-servicemen and the working class created a united front against oppression, laying the groundwork for future struggles.

The awakening of a revolutionary mind

Born in 1905, Malome Kotane came from humble beginnings and received little formal education. He was a farmworker, domestic servant, and baker’s assistant. It was during his time in the African Bakers’ Union that he first encountered the ideas of communism. The union, influenced by the Communist Party, opened the door to a world of political thought that Kotane had never known.

Motivated by a desire to improve his circumstances as a working class and broaden his understanding of political ideology, Kotane enrolled in the night schools in Johannesburg. They became his gateway to understanding complex political theories and improved his grasp of the complex political language. He absorbed the teachings of Marxism, engaging with difficult concepts and learning to

articulate them to his fellow workers. His passion for knowledge and his commitment to social justice propelled him to become an interpreter of Marxism, advocating for the rights of workers and the marginalised.

As his understanding deepened, Kotane became actively involved in the publication of Umsebenzi, the Party’s newspaper, where he helped disseminate revolutionary ideas and galvanise the working class. His dedication and intellect did not go unnoticed; he rose through the Party ranks, eventually becoming general secretary.

Kotane’s journey from a lowly worker to a prominent leader exemplifies the transformative power of political and ideological training.

The legacy of communist-run night schools

Ntate Kena, Malome Kotane, and their comrades understood that the fight for political freedom was incomplete without economic liberation. They understood that true emancipation could only be achieved through a collective struggle against the forces of capitalism and imperialism.

Reflecting on the legacies of Cde Kena and Cde Kotane reminds us that the struggle for freedom is an ongoing journey. The lessons learned in the night schools and the unity forged in the fires of war continue to resonate with us today.

We must reaffirm our commitment to the principles of solidarity and justice that have guided our forebears.

Cde Hlengiwe Nkonyane is an SACP activist based in Gauteng

INTERNATIONAL NURSES DAY

Honouring the dedication and sacrifices of nurses



For this year's International Nurses Day, Nehawu adopted the slogan Stop Budget Cuts, Fill Vacancies and Empower Nurses for a Functional NHI.

Key Points

- Nurses embody Red May values of sacrifice, solidarity and defence of human dignity
- Demands: stop that budget cuts, fill vacancies, boost NHI
- Staff shortages, burnout and inadequate pay undermine nurses’ ability to deliver care
- Nurses are healthcare workers, community advocates and social justice defenders combined

worldwide. They provide essential services in hospitals, clinics, schools, rehabilitation centres, and community healthcare programmes. In many instances, nurses are the primary point of contact between patients and healthcare institutions. Their responsibilities include administering treatment, monitoring patient progress, educating communities about healthy practices, and offering psychological and emotional support to patients and their families.

Improve support for nurses

The nursing profession requires not only technical competence but also empathy, patience, and resilience. Nurses frequently work long hours in high-pressure environments where they must make critical decisions while maintaining professionalism and compassion. During global crises such as pandemics, natural disasters, and humanitarian emergencies, nurses consistently place themselves at the forefront of care delivery, often risking their own well-being in service to others.

“The Red May theme emphasises values associated with sacrifice, solidarity, and the defence of life and human dignity”

The Red May theme emphasises values associated with sacrifice, solidarity, and the defence of life and human dignity. These principles are reflected in the daily experiences of nurses. The symbolic association of the colour red with compassion and life resonates strongly with the nursing profession, as nurses dedicate themselves to preserving and improving human life.

Nurses’ multiple social roles to reinforce dignity

Nurses embody the ideals of Red May through their unwavering commitment to patient care, regardless of social, economic, racial, or cultural differences. Their work promotes equality in



SANELISIWE NGUBANE

International Nurses Day is celebrated annually on 12 May to honour the dedication, compassion, and invaluable contributions of nurses around the world. This global observance recognises the vital role nurses play within healthcare systems and society. It serves as a reminder that nurses are not only healthcare professionals but also guardians of life and pillars of their communities, whose commitment and service remain indispensable to humanity.

Nursing values

International Nurses Day not only honours the dedication and sacrifices of nurses but also highlights the critical role they play in promoting health, preventing disease, and caring for patients in diverse healthcare settings.

Within the context of the Red May theme, International Nurses Day carries profound significance. Red May symbolises sacrifice, resilience, courage, solidarity, and service to humanity. These values closely align with the nursing profession, as nurses continuously demonstrate compassion and commitment while working under demanding and often challenging conditions. Their contributions extend beyond clinical care to include emotional support, advocacy, education, and the preservation of human dignity.

Nurses form the backbone of healthcare systems

healthcare access and reinforces the principle that every human life deserves care, respect, and dignity. In this regard, nurses serve not only as healthcare providers but also as advocates for social justice and human welfare.

Furthermore, the Red May theme encourages society to acknowledge the sacrifices made by healthcare professionals. Many nurses work under conditions characterised by staff shortages, inadequate resources, emotional exhaustion, and increasing healthcare demands. Despite these challenges, they continue to demonstrate exceptional resilience and dedication to their profession.

Importance of organised labour

Every year, the National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union (Nehawu) adopts a theme for International Nurses Day that focuses on important issues affecting nurses and healthcare systems around the world. These themes seek to raise awareness, promote improved working conditions, and emphasise the critical role nurses play in providing high-quality healthcare and improving patient outcomes.

For this year's International Nurses Day, Nehawu adopted the theme "Stop Budget Cuts, Fill Vacancies and Empower Nurses for a Functional NHI". The focus is on building a strong and functional National Health Insurance system by investing in nurses, filling vacant posts, and providing the resources necessary to deliver quality healthcare services. The aim is to recognise and appreciate the critical role of nurses as the backbone of the healthcare system and the important contribution they make towards promoting the health and well-being of communities.

Nurses' rights are workers' rights

Although nurses play an indispensable role in healthcare systems, the profession continues to face numerous challenges globally. These include insufficient staffing levels, workplace stress, inadequate remuneration, limited professional support, and occupational burnout. Particularly in developing countries, healthcare institutions often struggle with shortages of medical equipment and personnel, thereby increasing the burden placed upon nurses. Despite these challenges, nurses continue to go beyond the call of duty to deliver quality care.

The emotional demands of nursing also contribute significantly to mental and physical exhaustion. Nurses regularly encounter suffering, trauma, and death experiences that can negatively affect their psychological well-being. Consequently, there is an increasing need for governments and healthcare organisations to prioritise the welfare of nurses through improved working conditions, fair compensation, mental health support, and opportunities for professional development.

"Recognise and appreciate the critical role of nurses as the backbone of the healthcare system"

International Nurses Day activities also aim to promote dialogue and action on gender equality, leadership and innovation in nursing education and practice. As society commemorates International Nurses Day, it is essential not only to recognise the dedication of nurses but also to advocate for policies and practices that support their professional and personal well-being.

Nurses are more than healthcare workers; they are guardians of life, symbols of compassion, and pillars of society whose service remains indispensable to humanity.

Cde Sanelisiwe Ngubane is a media intern at the SACP head office

UNEMPLOYMENT

Class struggle and alienation



Key points

- Unemployment reflects structural capitalist design, not economic misfortune
- Reindustrialisation into labour-intensive sectors is urgently needed over market reliance
- Illicit financial flows, casualisation and labour broking deepen the reserve army of labour
- Social reproduction must be collectivised to free workers, especially women, for production

LUKHANYO "BHANDA" MTSHINGANA

The latest Quarterly Labour Force Survey, released by Statistics South Africa on 12 May, revealed that unemployment had increased by 1.3% to reach 32.7% in the first quarter of 2026. A total of 301,000 individuals have lost their jobs, and the unemployment rate has remained consistently above 30% for the past five years. This places South Africa among the countries with the highest unemployment rates internationally.

These statistics came just a few days after the International May Day celebrations.

Unemployment under capitalism

Lenin argued that the working class is characterised by its particular structural position within capitalist relations of production rather than just by poverty or manual labour. To survive, workers sell their labour power to the capitalist since they lack any means of production, including factories, land, machinery and tools.

On class struggle and alienation, the unemployed and discouraged in SA were given a number; among available job seekers, discouraged work seekers increased by 187,000 since the last quarter, to 3.9 million. This shows the total number of workers who have given up looking for employment. They have been deprived of social recognition and self-realisation through employment since they are unable to sell their labour power.

The 49,000 unavailable job-seekers, which constitutes individuals who desire employment but are unable to accept it due to issues like childcare, transportation, or health, suffer from structural alienation brought on by the capitalist system's failure to provide the necessary social conditions for employment.

We are reminded of Leon Trotsky, the leader of the Red Army after the 1917 Russian Revolution, who wanted to create a centralised, ideologically motivated force to defend and propagate a socialist revolution through mobilising the working class in large numbers. Trotsky maintained that unemployment under capitalism was a structural instrument used to control wages and punish people rather than a result of a natural lack of employment in the economy.

Urgent need for reindustrialisation

There should be a rejection of reformist solutions. The South African government is not disrupting capitalist property relations. The fact that unemployment is still among the worst in the world should be clear evidence of the need for a worker-controlled production. Relying on market forces as the only way to eliminate unemployment is not sufficient.

Instead of just capital-intensive industries (chemicals, advanced car manufacturing), South Africa requires the redevelopment and improvement of labour-intensive industries (agro-processing, textiles, furniture and metal fabrication). These can be located in Special Economic Zones (SEZs) with dependable electricity and simplified regulations and also investigate challenges with SEZs and how to address those challenges.

There must be a sense of urgency in reindustrialising the economy to promote large-scale employment in manufacturing, transportation and construction. Manufacturing has significant forward and backward links, unlike sectors in the service industry, like finance, and automobile factories generate jobs in steel, plastics, electronics, transportation and retail. Industrialisation alone will not work without investments in skills and capabilities from the technical and vocational education that are directly related to manufacturing employment.

There will be no industrialisation in a country dominated by crime and corruption, with common crimes like extortion in logistics and contractual work for infrastructure development and construction.

Combat crime, corruption and hoarding

We need to have a favourable exchange rate that

“There must be a sense of urgency in reindustrialising the economy to promote large-scale employment in manufacturing, transportation and construction”

does not affect our people but improves an export-orientated approach in trade through favourable interest rates.

The capitalists hoard profits or ship them overseas (illicit financial flows), which splits the working class, lowers wages and increases the precariat without reducing the reserve army. The capitalist system trains workers for jobs that do not exist since capital purposefully suppresses the demand for labour and transfers state funding to capitalists for employment that is frequently transient and does not generate permanent roles.

End casualisation and improve services

We need to eliminate all precarious contracts and labour brokering to force capital to bear the

entire cost of social reproduction and reduce the disposable nature of labour. In South Africa, the reproduction domain has to be socialised with free high-quality childcare, free healthcare, affordable housing and public transportation to free the black working class and women in particular from unpaid domestic work to enable them to fully participate in socially organised production.

Cde Lukhanyo "Bhanda" Mtshingana is a PhD student at Peking University in National Development Studies in China, and is also a YCLSA Eastern Cape PEC member

The revolutionary life and times of Cde Joe Slovo



Joe Slovo (left), Chris Hani (centre) & Joe Modise (right) were all key leaders of uMkhonto weSizwe.

Key points

- Slovo’s genius was in dialectically uniting national and class struggle
- Marxism-Leninism provides a framework, not a formula — theory must meet conditions
- Slovo defended socialism’s humane core while honestly confronting its historical distortions
- SACP’s 2026 election participation honours Slovo’s vision of contesting state power directly



LEHLOHONOLO KENNEDY MAHLATSI

This year marks the centenary of the birth of Cde Joe Slovo.

Born Yossel Mashel Slovo in Lithuania on 23 May 1926, Cde Joe Slovo came to South Africa in 1934 at the age of eight when his family emigrated to escape the anti-Semitism then rampant in Europe. They settled in Johannesburg, where his father worked as a driver.

He joined the Communist Party at 15. As a young

worker, he became involved in the trade union movement in the early 1940s and led a strike at the pharmaceutical distribution company where he was a shop steward. In the 1950s he was a defence lawyer in many political trials, and in December 1956 he was one of the 156 charged in the notorious Treason Trial.

Umkhonto WeSizwe

He was the founding co-commander of Umkhonto weSizwe with Nelson Mandela. He was out of the country on a mission when his comrades were arrested in 1963 at Rivonia. During his 27 years in exile, he rose to the rank of Chief of Staff in Umkhonto weSizwe. His role in the Special Operations Unit earned him distinction in the armed struggle.

“What made Slovo one of the greatest communist activists was his meticulous formulation of and response to the vexing questions of the time”

In 1985 he became the first white person to be elected to the ANC’s National Executive Committee. He was elected as SACP National Chairperson in 1985 and served as General Secretary from 1987 to 1991 before returning as Chairperson from 1991 until his death in 1995.

Slovo used Marxist tools of analysis and applied them in our conditions. He triumphantly observed that objective conditions in South Africa forced the Party to add some paragraphs to the communist book, to enrich the storehouse of Marxism, which is situated in the growth and development of revolutionary struggle and not in university libraries. He believed that idealism suits those who rule, because people’s minds are diverted from the real conditions of life, which call for radical change. For him, a worker in the factory was more receptive to ideas of revolutionary social change than the middle-class shopkeeper. This is because no person is born with the thoughts of a shopkeeper since their consciousness reflects

their material existence, the way they make their living.

Slovo warned that without a profound grasp of all the essentials of the scientific approach to history, the political leader will sway with the wind, lose faith in the possibility of ultimate victory and fall prey to ideas and courses of conduct which hamper rather than advance the struggle. He stressed that the theory of Marxism-Leninism does not pretend to supply a ready-made formula for the solution of every problem, nor does it pretend to forecast in every detail the future course of events. However, it provides the only correct framework in which serious revolutionaries can approach the problem of leading their people against all forms of oppression.

A practical revolutionary

Slovo was pragmatic and acknowledged a major convergence between the ethical content of Marxism and all that is best in the world’s religion. He conceded that in the name of both Marxism and religion great damage had been done to the human condition. Both ideologies had produced martyrs in the cause of liberation and tyrants in the cause of oppression. He warned Marxists not to allow distortions committed in the name of socialism to blind their understanding of the basic objectives of socialism and the calibre of its true adherents. He was convinced that among those who could be trusted as liberators from all that is evil in the human condition are the true communists and true believers.

The over-simplified phrase that religion is “the opiate of the people” dominated the perceptions of most Communist revolutionary activists. Failing to draw a distinction between the practice of institutionalised religion and the moral potential of Christian teachings, the communists saw religion as nothing more than an instrument of capitalism. By so doing, communists alienated all believers to the other side and invited their hostility by the way in which believers and their institutions were treated in the socialist countries.

Slovo believed that the praxis of Marxism, in all its essential respects, remains valid and provides an indispensable theoretical guide to achieve a society

free of all forms of exploitation of one by another. He maintained that the major weaknesses which emerged in the practice of socialism were the results of distortions and misapplications. They did not flow naturally from the basic concepts of Marxism, whose core is essentially humane and democratic and projects a social order with an economic potential vastly superior to that of capitalism.

Relationship between the class struggle and national struggle

What made Slovo one of the greatest communist activists was his meticulous formulation of and response to the vexing questions of the time. His genius was to grasp the laws of history very rapidly and apply them in the right place, at the right time, in the right amount, following the right way, turning impossible dreams of ordinary people into reality. He advised that the first milestone on the path to the discovery of knowledge is asking of the right question. If you start by asking whether we face a class struggle or a national struggle, you will find yourself swimming in a sea of thick intellectual syrup.

The real question to ask is “What is the relationship between these two ingredients which are so inextricably and dialectically bound up?” Failure to understand the class content of the national struggle and the national content of the class struggle in existing conditions can hold back the advance of both the democratic and socialist transformations which we seek. When the police shoot black workers who are engaged in a strike, and they shoot down black children who are demonstrating against inferior education, the one bullet is not marked “class struggle”, and the other bullet is not marked “national struggle”. The students and the workers face a common foe.

Even though the main content of this stage, as Slovo stated, is the fight for a national democratic revolution, this does not mean that the problem of social emancipation is something that will be

postponed until some vague form of people’s power has been achieved. He stressed that the Party stood for a continuing revolution.

Communists’ role in the national movement

Paying homage to the late SACP General Secretary, Cde Moses Mabhida, Slovo said that it was no accident that working-class and communist leaders also became outstanding figures in the national movement. For them, liberation was much more than the raising of a new flag, the singing of a new anthem and the allocation of fat political jobs to a small group of exploiters with black faces. They believed that there could be no real liberation without a return of our country’s wealth to the people.

“The fight for a national democratic revolution does not mean that the problem of social emancipation will be postponed until people’s power has been achieved”

Slovo was adamant that the alliance between the SACP and the ANC had no secret clauses. It was always based on a complete respect for the independence and integrity of the internal democratic process of both organisations;

hence, the Alliance has continued to flourish despite unending onslaughts against it from many quarters.

The historically evolved connection between capitalist exploitation and racial domination in South Africa created a natural link between national liberation and social emancipation. Slovo stood for national liberation, which would provide a launching pad for the creation of conditions for a socialist future.

Forward to the 2026 elections

The decision of the SACP to contest the forthcoming local government elections is consistent with the tenets of Marxism-Leninism and teachings of pioneers of the Communist Party. Slovo contemplated the watershed moment where the SACP would contest state power independently. At the 70th anniversary of the Party in 1991, he said:

“The connection between capitalist exploitation and racial domination in South Africa created a natural link between national liberation and social emancipation”

“If and when elections come, we as a Party will certainly participate. Whether we do so as part of an existing alliance, or a broader patriotic front, or a coalition, or on a completely

independent platform, depends on many variables, including the specifics of a future electoral system.”

Thanks to Cde Joe Slovo’s teachings and guidance, the SACP has become a huge contingent fighting for socialism, worthy of being the vanguard of the working class and the poor. In honour of his living memory, we must strive towards a glittering success for the SACP in the local government elections on 4 November 2026.

Cde Lehlohonolo Kennedy Mahlatsi is a PEC Member of the SACP in Free State

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

Glimpses of the trade union movement in South Sudan



Workers’ power: participants from government and civil society at a forum organised in January by the South Sudan Workers’ Trade Union Federation on embedding migrant worker protection within national trade union structures.

Key points

- British colonialism created South Sudan’s working class through wage labour and forced work
- Southern workers faced deliberate wage discrimination compared to Northern Sudanese counterparts
- The 1948 strike — demanding dignity and decent wages — was South Sudan’s first organised labour action
- Oil dependency and austerity after 2011 drove university workers to strike over unpaid salaries

South Sudan at a glance

South Sudan became the world’s newest country on 9 July 2011, following decades of civil war and a landmark independence referendum. The South had long been in conflict with the North over resources, religion and political marginalisation. Independence brought hope, but was quickly followed by a devastating internal conflict from 2013, pitting factions along ethnic lines. A fragile peace agreement signed in 2018 remains only partially implemented.

ADDISON JOSEPH GARANG

Although South Sudanese society is historically rural and tribal—dominated by traditional relations of a kinship and ethnic nature, where a communal economy based on subsistence farming, herding, and hunting formed the material basis—the introduction of a monetary economy and wage labour under British colonialism created new types of livelihoods.

These were linked to entirely different interest-based relations, founded on collective action and solidarity (strikes, demonstrations, and sit-ins) to secure legitimate rights from employers, in contrast to the forms of protection previously provided by traditional spears and arrows.

To manage the state apparatus efficiently, colonialism established an education system designed to serve the colonial administration in the South. This involved opening schools for elementary certificates to prepare junior clerks and accountants for civil government departments, as hiring from abroad was too costly.

Additionally, it established river, air, and rail transport, as well as telecommunications, and developed trade through imported goods. Furthermore, the Nzara Cotton project was established for cotton cultivation, ginning, and weaving, integrating cotton into the traditional cycle of the Zande society, which was accompanied by the emergence of labour relations based on a contractual basis.

The early days of trade unionism in the South

The economy established by colonialism in the South—based on the service sector, civil service, and the Nzara Cotton Scheme—formed the material basis for the emergence of a South Sudanese working class. This class consisted of

professionals and labourers working in these institutions alongside British supervisors and workers/professionals from Northern Sudan.

It is noteworthy that the colonial administration first exploited the labour of Southerners through forced labour (corvée) for tasks like road construction, later shifting this to a forced wage system within English institutions under poor conditions and low wages that were insufficient to meet basic needs. Southerners were integrated into the labour market under a system of discrimination in wages and service terms compared to workers from Northern Sudan, despite sharing the same offices and tasks.

For housing, during the British colonial period, the “Number Three” neighbourhood in Juba was established as a residential area for Southern employees; its houses had thatched roofs, while the nearby neighbourhood for Northern porters had better infrastructure. Colonialism intentionally undervalued the labour of Southern workers to exploit them, paying a pittance for long hours without social care.

Frustrated by these “subsistence wage” policies, the vanguard of Southern workers and employees organised themselves into union-like forms to demand better pay. This led to the formation of the Southern Officials Welfare Committee, an organisation close to a trade union concerned with the interests of its members.

The Southern Officials Welfare Committee executed the first strike in Southern Sudan in 1948, rejecting the conditions of injustice and ill-treatment. The primary demand was a wage increase. A memo submitted to the governor of Equatoria Province stated:

“We need to educate our children, we need to eat good food, live in a furnished house... In other words, we need a shelter where we

“Frustrated by these “subsistence wage” policies, the vanguard of Southern workers and employees organised themselves into union-like forms to demand better pay”

can enjoy true happiness. But with our current salaries, we cannot obtain even some of the necessities required by human beings.”

The skyrocketing price of corn (maize) in Juba was the spark that ignited the strikes, which spread to all government facilities in major urban centres such as Juba, Tonj, Rumbek, Torit, and Aweil. Solidarity strikes also broke out in Wau. This movement contributed to a relative improvement in the wage system toward a degree of equality.

Sudan’s independence

After Sudan gained independence in 1956, trade union activity continued in the South. Some were professional/cadre-based, such as the teachers’ and accountants’ unions, while others were labour-based in sectors like mechanical transport and public works. Demands centred on improving working conditions, compensation for work injuries, and paid holidays.

The trade union movement in the state of South Sudan

Following the establishment of the state of South Sudan in 2011, the movement took a different turn. The government’s total reliance on oil created instability in salary payments due to global oil price fluctuations and the absence of productive alternatives.

Key challenges included the halt of oil exports and the subsequent drop in global prices, leading the

government to adopt austerity measures. These resulted in the withholding of portions of civil servants’ and university professors’ earnings. This was accompanied by the government’s reneging on its wage obligations, rising prices, and high inflation.

The “social wages” of University of Juba professors, such as housing allowances, were among the primary victims of austerity. This led the professors to hold a general strike in 2015 to demand the allowances deducted since 2012. The movement continued, and in May 2016, faculty bodies at the state universities (Juba, Bahr el Ghazal, Upper Nile, John Garang, and Rumbek) organised a strike demanding three months of salary arrears, health insurance, and pay adjustments.

Consequently, the government responded to some demands, paying three-month arrears and promising the rest in instalments, which ended the strike.

While South Sudan has not witnessed a massive, wide-scale labour movement, these limited union actions have contributed to achieving specific demands, raising awareness of labour relations, and forming a cornerstone for the accumulation of trade union action toward achieving decent wages.

Cde Addison Joseph Garang is an independent researcher in trade union affairs



URGENT DONATIONS FOR CUBA

Cuba is facing a **critical shortage** of food, medicine, and electricity. After consultations with the Cuban Ambassador we are responding to the call: **We aim to send a shipping container full of solar systems, including inverters and batteries to Havana. We are also asking supporters to donate money, medicine and dry food stuffs like rice, sugar, and tin foods that we will also include in the container.**



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INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

US aggression deepens humanitarian crises from Cuba to West Asia

FLASH

CARLOS FERNÁNDEZ DE COSSÍO ON FULL MEASURE

Cuba's Deputy Foreign Minister, **Carlos Fernández de Cossío**, spoke with journalist Sharyl Attkisson of the U.S. news program, *Full Measure*, about the current tensions between Cuba and the United States.



CARLOS FERNÁNDEZ DE COSSÍO
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Cuba

FERNÁNDEZ DE COSSÍO'S MAIN POINTS:



DIALOGUE VS. HOSTILITY:

Cuba accepted a communication channel proposed by the United States because it defends dialogue as an alternative to conflict. However, he warned that this channel contrasts with the hostile measures that Washington adopts week after week against the island.



CUBA IS NOT AN ENEMY OF THE U.S.:

The direct message to Trump was clear: Cuba desires a constructive, even friendly, relationship based on respect, without foreign interference in its internal affairs.



NOT ASKING FOR FINANCING, BUT FOR THE RIGHT TO TRADE:

Cuba is not asking the U.S. to finance it. What it demands is to be allowed to trade, to engage with U.S. companies and the rest of the world, without sanctions or extraterritorial persecution.



THE ENERGY BLOCKADE IS A MAJOR FORM OF AGGRESSION:

The U.S. is trying to prevent Cuba from importing fuel from any country, which exacerbates blackouts, transportation problems, food shortages, disruptions to hospitals and schools, and disruptions to daily life.



NO CUBAN MILITARY THREAT AGAINST THE U.S.:

He rejected accusations about alleged Chinese bases or security threats, and reiterated that the only foreign military base in Cuba is the U.S. base at Guantánamo.



MILITARY ACTION WOULD CAUSE DEATH AND DESTRUCTION:

He warned that some sectors are fabricating pretexts to justify aggression, even though these threats have not been proven and do not represent the interests of the majority of the American people.



CUBA WILL NOT NEGOTIATE ITS POLITICAL SYSTEM OR CONSTITUTION:

The deputy minister emphasized that no country negotiates with another how to organize itself internally, and that this demand cannot be made of Cuba.



ON THE ACCUSATION AGAINST GENERAL RAÚL CASTRO:

He stated that it is an opportunistic political maneuver, without legal or moral basis, and recalled the repeated violations of Cuban airspace by Brothers to the Rescue between 1994 and 1996.



Cuba is open to dialogue, but will not accept threats, blockades, military intervention, or impositions on its sovereignty.



Link to the video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TkvR3ePUEx8>

Key points

- Six decades of US blockade have inflicted a deliberate humanitarian crisis on ordinary Cubans
- Even US Senator Van Hollen admits the blockade's only real achievement is mass civilian suffering
- Cuba's resilience shows that economic warfare is as destructive as military aggression
- The same imperial forces besieging Cuba drive aggression against Palestine, Lebanon and Iran

UMSEBENZI ONLINE

Recent remarks by US Democratic Senator Chris Van Hollen during a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing have exposed growing divisions within the US political establishment over Washington's increasingly reckless foreign policy.

In a sharp critique directed at US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Van Hollen highlighted the devastating consequences of American military interventions, economic coercion and regime-change policies. While much attention has focused on the United States and Israel's aggression against Iran, Palestine and Lebanon, the senator also drew attention to the ongoing suffering imposed on the people of Cuba.

A region destabilised by war

Van Hollen's criticism came amid escalating instability across West Asia. Referring to the recent war against Iran, he stated: "This is your first public hearing since President Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu launched an illegal war against Iran. Netanyahu said he's been waiting 40 years to do this. Turns out he finally found a President who was both stupid and reckless enough to join him."

The senator pointed to the human and economic

costs of the conflict, noting that it had claimed the lives of American service personnel while killing thousands of civilians and worsening living conditions for ordinary people. "The war has killed 14 American service members, wounded hundreds more, and killed thousands of civilians. It's driving up the price of gas, food, and much more."

These remarks underscore a broader reality. For decades, US imperialism and Israeli militarism have fuelled instability across West Asia. Palestine continues to endure occupation, dispossession and relentless bombardment. Lebanon has repeatedly been subjected to Israeli military attacks. Iran remains the target of sanctions, threats and military aggression designed to secure regional dominance rather than peace. While Western governments often speak the language of democracy and human rights, their actions frequently produce destruction, displacement and suffering.

Van Hollen questioned the strategic purpose of these policies. "And all for what?" he asked. "The President told us 91 days ago that we had 'Won the war in Iran.' Last year, he told the country that Iran's key enrichment facilities had been completely and totally obliterated. Was that false? Let's face it, Mr Secretary, the Trump foreign policy has become a dumpster fire."

Cuba: a long-standing target of US policy

Yet beyond the battlefields of West Asia lies another victim of US hostility: Cuba. For more than six decades, Cuba has been subjected to an economic blockade designed explicitly to undermine its sovereignty and force political change. Despite near-universal international condemnation of the blockade, successive US administrations have maintained and intensified these punitive measures. The result has been severe hardship for ordinary Cubans, affecting access to fuel, food, medicines and essential services.

It was on this issue that Van Hollen delivered one of his most important criticisms of Rubio. Addressing the Secretary of State directly, he stated: "The stated goal is to change the government there,

but the only real change is a humanitarian crisis inflicted on millions of people”.

The contradictions of US humanitarian rhetoric

This statement exposes a fundamental contradiction in US policy. Washington claims to support freedom and democracy, yet it punishes entire populations in pursuit of enforcing its political objectives. It condemns humanitarian crises while actively contributing to their creation through sanctions and economic warfare.

Van Hollen further criticised what he described as selective and discriminatory refugee policies. He noted that while refugee admissions had been reduced to historically low levels, preference had been given overwhelmingly to white South Africans. “Meanwhile, while Senator Rubio once proclaimed that the U.S. must, ‘Work to ensure that refugees who flee war, torture, and persecution are provided safe environments to live and thrive in,’ now as Secretary of State in this administration, you have capped refugees at a record low of 17,500, and white South Africans, Afrikaners, have comprised roughly 99% of those slots, Mr. Secretary, a race-based refugee system.”

Such policies reveal the political calculations that often lie behind humanitarian rhetoric. Refugees are welcomed when it serves strategic interests and excluded when it does not. Sanctions are justified in the name of democracy, while collective punishment is inflicted on millions.

International solidarity against imperialism

For progressive and working-class movements around the world, including in South Africa, these developments offer important lessons. The struggle against imperialism cannot be separated into isolated issues. The same forces that support Israeli aggression against Palestine and Lebanon, that threaten Iran, and that seek regime change in sovereign nations, also sustain the economic siege against Cuba.

“For more than six decades, Cuba has been subjected to an economic blockade designed explicitly to undermine its sovereignty and force political change.”

The Cuban people have demonstrated extraordinary resilience in the face of relentless pressure. Despite decades of blockade and external hostility, Cuba continues to defend its sovereignty and pursue a path independent of US domination. Their experience

highlights that economic warfare is no less damaging than military aggression. Both are instruments of coercion. Both undermine nations’ rights to determine their own futures.

“The Cuban people have demonstrated extraordinary resilience in the face of relentless pressure.”

As Van Hollen’s intervention demonstrates, even within the United States, there is growing recognition that these policies have failed. They have not delivered peace, stability or democracy. Instead, they have produced war, humanitarian crises and deepening global insecurity.

The task of progressive forces internationally remains to strengthen solidarity with Cuba, Palestine, Lebanon and all peoples resisting imperial domination and defending their right to self-determination.

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

Palestine: Israel’s use of rape and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence



Israel’s policy of rape and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence against the Palestinian people is long-standing, well-documented, and organised crime.

Key points

- The UN reports that Israel is guilty of rape and sexual violence against Palestinians.
- The aim of these crimes is to terrorise, humiliate and destroy Palestinian society.
- Israeli officials, parliament and courts support and protect the people who commit these crimes.
- Countries must impose sanctions, pursue those who are guilty of crimes and demand the release of Palestinians held hostage in prison.

Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the State of Palestine.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the State of Palestine welcomes the report by the United Nations Secretary-General on “Conflict-related sexual violence”, listing Israel on the list of State parties committing or being responsible for patterns of rape or other forms of sexual violence in situations of armed conflict and against Palestinian children, women, and men.

The ministry recalls that Israel’s policy of rape and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence

against the Palestinian people is long-standing, well-documented, and organised crime. These policies are aimed at terrorising the Palestinian people, perpetuating a system of oppression and apartheid, entrenching Israel’s unlawful presence, denying the Palestinian people their right to self-determination, with the objective to accelerate their ethnic cleansing and expel them from their land.

“The frequency, prevalence and severity of sexual and gender-based crimes committed by Israel and its forces are one of the most outrageous sexual crimes committed in modern history”

Component of genocide

Israel’s use of rape and sexual violence is intended not only to humiliate, punish and intimidate the individual Palestinians but also to inflict severe, lasting physical and psychological harm, including injuries that cause permanent disability, to destroy the whole of the Palestinian society.

The frequency, prevalence and severity of sexual and gender-based crimes committed by Israel and its forces are one of the most outrageous sexual crimes committed in modern history. While the report details 31 cases of Israel’s employment of rape, including with objects, gang rape, attempted rape, physical violence to the genitals, instances of targeted shooting of the genitals, touching of breasts and genitals, strip and cavity searches conducted without apparent security justification, forced nudity and threats of rape, the ministry recalls that there are thousands of Palestinian victims who remain unlawfully languishing in Israeli detention centres, raped and denied access to international organisations, and their right to justice.

Rape and sexual violence by Israel is not limited to its occupation forces. Israeli settlers are

frequently using sexual violence and rape to terrorise Palestinian communities and displace them from their homes, communities, villages, and cities, including sexualised insults and gestures, indecent exposure, intimidation, threats of sexual violence, and surveillance of intimate spaces. The Ministry calls on the United Nations Secretary-General to also investigate sexual violence and rape by settlers and settler groups, and ensure their inclusion on the list.

Call to action

All these crimes are occurring within an institutionalised environment of genocide, apartheid, and illegal occupation, and persistent impunity, by the executive, legislative, and judiciary. Israeli officials have championed and protected rapists; Israeli Knesset members have debated whether raping detainees was legitimate, as if there was a right to rape; and Israeli courts have facilitated, legitimised, and protected rapists.

“States must demand international protection for the Palestinian people, place sanctions on Israel and pursue accountability, including in their domestic and international courts.”

The listing of Israel as responsible for patterns of rape or other forms of sexual violence in situations of armed conflict reports must prompt the international community to immediately take urgent action to protect the rights of Palestinian children, women, and men, especially in detention centres, and demand their release.

States must demand international protection for the Palestinian people, place sanctions on Israel and pursue accountability, including in their domestic and international courts. The ministry calls on the United Nations and international organisations to establish comprehensive medical, psychological and social treatment programmes for survivors.



**STOP the rape and torture
of Palestinian women, children
& men in Israeli detention.
End genocide & complicity.**

BOYCOTT ISRAEL



BOYCOTT TARGETS

THE PALESTINIAN CALL FOR BDS

The Palestinian-led Boycott movement mobilises consumers to **withdraw support from Israel's apartheid regime and the complicit institutions and companies** that uphold violations of Palestinian human rights. By **strategically focusing on carefully selected companies and products**, we have the **potential for maximum impact**. We target companies with a clear and direct role in Israel's crimes against Palestinians and where there is real potential for winning.



The iconic U.S. brand gave free food to the IOF.



Manufactures in the illegal settlement of Atarot. Local Israeli franchise consortium owns Clover.



Israeli pharmaceutical company directly imports into South Africa.



Sub products of Coca Cola include: Fanta, Sprite, Schwepps, Valpre, Stony, Appeltiz, Charged, Costa Coffee, Bon Aqua, Cappy, Sparletta and Powerade



Rents out holiday properties in illegal Israeli settlements built on stolen Palestinian land.



Lists holiday rentals in Israeli illegal settlements and occupied Palestinian land.



Main distributor for Israel's Hishtil Farms in Western Cape and Limpopo.



Owner, Philip Krawitz, raises money for the Israeli war fund and sits on the board of one of the founding organisations of Zionist settlements.



Sponsor of the Israeli Football Association.



Sells properties in illegal Israeli settlements built on occupied Palestinian land.



Sells properties in illegal Israeli settlements built on Occupied Palestinian land.



Provides the IOF with the AI cloud storage platform for large-scale data on Palestinians used to train AI weapon systems.



Naqab factory displaces indigenous Bedouin-Palestinian citizens of Israel. Ongoing mistreatment and discrimination of Palestinian workers.



Provides Israel's Population and Immigration Authority with servers enabling system of racial segregation and apartheid against Palestinian citizens of Israel.



STOP SOUTH AFRICAN COAL EXPORTS TO ISRAEL.

South African coal is used to
make bombs to **kill**
Palestinian children.

Read the BDS Coalition report:

<https://www.sabdscoalition.org/>



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