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LET'S TALK POLITICS

STRATEGY & TACTICS





UMRABULO was a word used to inspire political discussion and debate on Robben Island. This concept was revived in 1996 when the ANC published the first edition of *Umrabulo*. The journal's mission is to encourage debate and rigorous discussions at all levels of the movement.

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Umrabulo welcomes contributions from readers. Contributions may be in response to previous articles or may raise new issues. Contributions must be sent to the address below.

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EDITORIAL COMMENT

By **JP Louw**

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REGARDED as one of the greatest strategist and philosophers who possessed timeless wisdom, Sun Tzu is quoted stating that *“Strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory. Tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat”*.

The words, *“unity”, “renewal”* and *“radical socio-economic transformation”* have become synonymous with the kind of character the ANC and its alliance partners of today aspire. This can be discerned through a cursory observations of themes, speeches and resolutions of gatherings such the ANC’s 54th National Conference, 108th January 8th ANC birthday celebrations, COSATU’s 13th National Congress and SACP 4th Special National Congress. These expressions are an indication of an outcome these progressive forces wish to attain in relation to both their respective standing as well as impact they aspire onto South African society.

Borrowing from Sun Tzu, the critical question then becomes one of the type of strategy and tactics required to emerge victorious in this course towards unity, renewal and socio-economic transformation. This edition of *Umrabulo*, themed **Strategy and Tactics**, applies itself to these very questions.

Reneva Fourie’s **Suicidal Fault Lines In Our Strategy and Tactics** lays a crisp and informative foundation to this edition’s theme as it provides background about the concept *“strategy”* and *“tactics”*. This is defined both as a concern in the corporate world and with a distinction of its use by the revolutionary movement. Landing itself in Sun Tzu’s warning about why the importance of strategy and tactics, members of the ANC are cautioned to be disciplined, or else risk causing the organisation’s combat abilities to become redundant. The article pointedly states that *“We will perpetually*

be caught in a paralysis of analysis; and when we do act, the actions will be flawed because the base that informs it is wrong.”

In Wide-Reaching Growth of Laager Mentalities’ Impact On The S&T

Dr Oscar van Heerden’s draws attention to results of the 2019 National General Elections as he questions what this means for balance of forces in South Africa.

Through an analysis of the results he argues that *“in line with global right-wing trends, meaning, ultra-right, narrow nationalist and anti-immigrant approaches, we see that in South Africa, voters too are adhering to inward looking and protectionist trends.”*

Malusi Gigaba’s **At The Root of Capital’s Strategies & Tactics For Power And Control** provocatively looks at the role capital has played in shaping, delivering and holding on to the South Africa we are experiencing today. Amongst assertions made is that the nature of capital is such that it would never leave things to chance. Instead it will seek and has ensured direct presence within planning and discussion sessions of the governing party.

Dr Yacoob Abba Omar’s **Strategy and Tactics In A Digital Era** is a rather self-explanatory headline. The article is best explained through its expressions that *“Given the extent to which we feel overwhelmed by the tsunami of technological changes that confronts us, there is a temptation to simply submit... Perhaps the starting point would be inserting the potential role of digital media into the perennial debate on the modernisation of the ANC. This should impact on the very DNA of the ANC’s approach to organisational form, internal democracy and campaigning.”*

Focused on balance of forces on the global stage and whether the ANC have applied itself correctly to this is Thato Magogodi’s **Is Today’s A**

World of Unipolarity or Multipolarity or Bipolarity. Have we got the definitions correct about the world we live in? Or have we handed ourselves the short end of the stick? Meaning our analysis of balance of forces could be questionable. And therefore so too our strategy and tactics.

In **Encountering ‘The People’ in Public Decision Spaces**, Professor Muxe Nkondo makes a case for “*the people*” as the sole enablers of true radical economic transformation. He straddles through definitions of “*the people*” and what their appropriate location should be in the planning and execution of solutions orientated programmes

The next edition of *Umrabulo* is themed “**Economic Transformation**” and if keen to submit an article than please contact the Editor. Articles must preferably be about 2 000 words long, but not longer than 3 000.

Happy Reading.

In the words of the revolutionary Thomas Isidore Noël Sankara, “*Without patriotic political education, a soldier is only a potential criminal*”. Therefore, amass yourself in the articles published in this edition and share in discourse within your locality around the critical subject matter of **Strategy and Tactics**.



Strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory.

Tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat.

Sun Tzu (The Art of War)



SUICIDAL FAULT LINES IN OUR STRATEGY AND TACTICS

- *Understanding our revolution's strategic objective; analysing domestic and international balance of forces in order to determine the best tactics to advance our strategy and which alliances to forge in that process; and knowing our history is absolutely essential for every member of a liberation movement. However, if members of the ANC fail to adhere to the basics such as organisational discipline then our combat capabilities become redundant. We will perpetually be caught in a paralysis of analysis; and when we do act, the actions will be flawed because the base that informs it is wrong.*

By **RENEVA FOURIE**

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IN THE corporate world, a strategy is the long-term plan to realise an organisation's vision based on its core values. The tactics reflect the high level methodology to achieve the goals related to that vision. The contents of the strategy and tactics are usually informed by a variety of analytical exercises such as a SWOT analysis that is an assessment of the organisation's internal (micro) strengths and weaknesses, as well as external (macro) opportunities and threats. The external opportunities and threats are informed by an analysis of political, economic, socio-cultural and technological environmental factors. Other aspects for consideration include organisational capacity, alliances and partnerships, and finances.

While the terminology in a liberation movement is not necessarily the same as those in the corporate world, the tools are similar. In the ANC, our vision is the cre-



ation of a united, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous South Africa. Our strategy is the national democratic revolution:

National-infusing a sense of national identity and cohesive national sovereignty;

Democratic-creating a society of the people, by the people, for the people; and

Revolution-effecting radical structural change to state, economic, ideological, community,

and international relations.

We term our analysis "an assessment of the balance of forces". This usually informs what we describe as "the character of our revolution", which in the past was expressed as "colonialism of a special type". This analysis also informs our tactics, which is determined at national conference, specified in the January 8 Speech. And because we are the governing party, it finds practical expression in the President's State of the Nation Address.

Solidifying the basics

Understanding our revolution's strategic objective; analysing domestic and international balance of forces in order to determine the best tactics to advance our strategy and which alliances to forge in that process; and knowing our history is absolutely essential for every member of a liberation movement. However, if members of the ANC fail to adhere to the basics such as organisational discipline, then our combat capabilities become redundant. We will perpetually be caught in a paralysis of analysis; and when we do act, the actions will be flawed because the base that informs it is wrong.

There are three prevalent ideological deviations, which are current organisational weaknesses. These are the de-emphasis on the African working class as a motive force; non-racialism (a rise in narrow African nationalism); and factionalism and division in the movement. The deviations can be managed by elevating the values in the constitution and entrenching it (the constitution) as a political and ideological document to guide members and to unite our organisation. With the foundation of organisational discipline solidified, principles such as democratic centralism can then be enforced.

Democratic centralism implies that the individual is subordinate to the collective, while the collective respects the individual. The minority has to sub-ordinate to the majority, while the majority respects the minority. The lower level structures sub-ordinate to the higher level structures and leading organs listen to and respect the lower levels. The NEC should sub-ordinate itself to the national conference and the entire organisation should sub-ordinate itself to the constitution.

The enforcement of democratic centralism does not only imply adherence to policy and programmatic resolutions. It also implies respect for elected leadership. While recognising that there are flaws in the leadership electoral processes and that some leaders accordingly might not be deserving of their positions; emphasis should be on fixing the systemic weaknesses rather than disrespecting its outcomes. Leaders can always be developed and guided; organisational ill-discipline, however, is the breeding ground of factionalism, chaos, and eventually organisational collapse.

We will never all have the leaders of our choice. The ANC has almost a million members, each with its own leadership preferences. But once a leadership collective has been elected, they should be allowed to serve their term (unless they violated the constitution or its code of conduct) and be supported in implementing the resolutions. The cycle of purging has to end. So too, the practice of senior leaders of our movement criticising the organisation externally in the guise of intellectual engagement or transparency, has to end.

From resistance to reconstruction

Elevating the centrality of the constitution and enforcing organisational discipline, will assist us to take ownership of our responsibilities as the governing party. There has been a tactical shift in the NDR from resistance to reconstruction¹. Recognising this shift makes defending our sovereignty one of our primary goals. If we lose state power, the NDR will not only be derailed; all our gains will be reversed.

Some elements of defence entail meeting the service delivery needs of our people, while including them in the process; as well as being vigilant of threats. Accordingly, we can no longer blame and complain; and problems can no longer be permanently diagnosed and explained. We are expected to provide the solutions. As the governing party, we are expected to use our power to make government work.

South Africa has highly qualified, well paid, competent public servants. Our performance and financial accountability mechanisms are world-class. What is missing is consequence management. The Labour Relations Act should not be used as an excuse for protecting non-performers as it does not promote incompetence. Public servants and public representatives who fail to perform should be dismissed. Regarding theft or abuse of public resources, there are enough bodies that investigate corruption; what we now require is a special court for processing cases of corruption to ensure speedy punishment of the guilty and relief for the innocent.

No matter the challenges, our people count on us, as their liberation movement, to exercise the authority bestowed upon us through their votes, to lead in building a capable, effective, stable and safe, developmental state. In order to meet the governance expectations of our people, unity of purpose, collective leadership, organisational discipline and upholding revolutionary morality within the ANC, and the Alliance as a whole, is imperative.

The ANC has more than enough enemies

In assessing the balance of forces, we have to be conscious of the threats facing our revolution. Three reasons for South Africa being a country of strategic interest are its location, its ideology and its resources.

Our location on the tip of Africa, bordered by both the Indian and Atlantic Oceans makes us important for trade and defence. Our firm verbosity on international affairs and active support for countries such as Venezuela, Cuba, Nicaragua and Palestine; make us an ideological nightmare for the West, particularly the USA.

Likewise, though the political stances of individual BRICS countries vacillate, the collective endeavours to delink from the dollar and swift systems, as well as efforts to create a fairer global trading system are significant. Lastly, given the global shift towards greener, and technologically based production methods, the fact that South Africa possesses the highest levels of chromium and Platinum Group Metals in the world, 72.4 percent and 87.7 percent respectively, significantly impacts on international interests in our resources.

In lieu of our vulnerability, internal squabbles, corruption and non-delivery on our electoral promises pose strategic risks. The ANC has more than enough enemies that would like to see it lose state power. We therefore have to be exceptionally vigilant with regards to the threat of regime-change. The dominant form of warfare now is non-kinetic in nature ie psychological: using informational, diplomatic, economic, ideological and technological means to persuade, coerce, shape and impair the national will of a target state, through exploiting and deepening existing instabilities or weaknesses and creating internal implosion. General fault lines that are elevated are corruption and the inability of governments to constantly deliver in economically challenging times. South African specific weaknesses include racism, xenophobia and crime.

Recently we witnessed the arrest of right wing extremists who were plotting to violently overthrow our government. This group has, amongst others, been capitalising on farm killings and magnifying it to represent white genocide. This has not only created feelings of insecurity and displacement amongst white South Africans. It has also allowed for the consolidation of relations with right wing networks outside of South Africa. During a recent visit to Holland, a historical ally of the ANC, the misperception of white genocide in South Africa was so deeply instilled that much effort was required to convince anti-apartheid stalwarts that the ANC has not abandoned its principle of non-racialism.

South Africa, and particularly the ANC, is increasingly isolated from our historical allies on the continent due to xenophobic attacks. While these are very serious and fortunately are receiving priority attention at all levels, the amounts of fake news in this regard and the fallibilities of even senior leaders on the continent to untruths are alarming.

Then of course, we are ranked as the crime capital of the world. Indeed, our high crime levels are unacceptable, particularly violent crimes against women and children as well as gang-related wars. However, are domestic violence, rape, and the killing and abuse of women and children exclusively South African phenomena? What is spurring these alarming incidents of gang-related deaths? Are we truly the most dangerous country in the world?

One also has to question the high levels of disillusionment and despondency within our movement and amongst South Africans in general. An objective assessment of developments since the Nasrec Conference should have bolstered confidence in the ANC. The actions taken against corruption are unprecedented. Senior public servants have been removed; board members have been replaced; criminal investigations are underway and arrests have been made - yet there is little jubilation on these matters. Likewise, we have made so many interventions to stabilise our economy, yet it continues to ail and bleed; weakened further by threats of disinvestment for failing to embrace neo-liberal economic policy interventions.

When analysing the domestic and international threats to our revolution, we acknowledge that the genesis of all our challenges and vulnerabilities can be traced to the crises in capitalism and social reproduction.

The theory and linkages of which are expounded upon in other literature².

Also, we cannot transfer responsibility for its resolution to external forces. In fact, we must ensure that these weaknesses are addressed and contained as a matter of urgency. However, we should not be blind to the objective reality that external forces might be deliberately exacerbating and amplifying our weaknesses with the intent of systematically and over time turn, not just South Africans, but the world against the ANC.

The whole intent of non-kinetic warfare or psychological operations (psyops) is to collapse the state through impairment of the will of both the leadership and nation, in the hope that the electorate will vote the governing party out of power. But should a change in government through the ballot fail, then by laying the foundation, all that will be required will be the slight

The ANC has more than enough enemies that would like to see it lose state power. We therefore have to be exceptionally vigilant with regards to the threat of regime-change.

deepening of a fault line or a well-timed provocation and our malaises will gain momentums of their own. And should the state respond with violent repression, it will be exactly the fuel desired to ignite an uncontrollable counter-revolution and inevitable regime-change.

United we stand, divided we fall

In conclusion, the ANC is not an island that is immune to external threats. A number of countries have become victims of non-kinetic warfare and we are not being spared. This necessitates that our defence of our revolution be broadened beyond the borders of South Africa. We have to appreciate that imperialism is a global phenomenon that will require co-ordinated action from progressive, peace-loving nations if its adverse impacts are going to be challenged. South Africa, as led by the ANC, has an important contribution to make, but it is not going to happen if the thinking of members of the ANC is parochial.

Solidifying the basics then becomes important. The infighting must stop. Putting personal interests above that of the organisation must stop. Undermining organisational structures must stop. Elevating the constitution to be the political and ideological document that guides and unites our organisation so that we can drive its

The need for unity, discipline and pro-poor policy hegemony within the ANC is being emphasised perpetually, because the ANC as the vehicle that must drive the NDR, cannot be faulty.

strategy and tactics becomes an imperative. Furthermore, understanding and appreciating the constitution of the ANC, and our responsibilities as members imply that we have a key role to play in implementing ANC policies and programs. We are not permitted to sit on the sidelines and criticise. Likewise, our diplomatic relations both as a party and a government have to be far more strategic. We must not assume that the new charm of the West carries

positive intent. It is a fact that diplomacy has become a core instrument of non-kinetic warfare.

The need for unity, discipline and pro-poor policy hegemony within the ANC is being emphasised perpetually, because the ANC as the vehicle that must drive the NDR, cannot be faulty. Furthermore, we must promote clean, efficient and effective governance; and contribute to the creation of a conscious, cohesive, active, and responsible citizenry. This will assist to reduce our internal fault lines to the minimum and increase the capacity of our revolution to sustain shocks. Let's embed and encourage all South Africans to embrace the slogan that rallied us during our struggle against apartheid – **United we stand. Divided we fall!**

Reneva Fourie is a SACP Central Committee Member and Policy Analyst. She writes in her personal capacity.

NOTES

1. The extent to which this should be a strategic shift to laying the foundations for socialism as we enter the second more radical phase of our transition is a point of ideological contestation.
- 2 See the SACP 2019 Special National Congress documents on www.sacp.org.za.

WIDE-REACHING

Growth of Laager Mentalities'

IMPACT ON THE S&T

- *What we have seems to be growing and stronger laagers amongst the South African electorate. There is greater polarisation – defined by religious and racial/ ethnic identity. Much like the laagers of the Great Trek (an encampment formed by a circle of wagons), keeping “us” inside the circle and “them” (the others). Smaller parties are inward looking; defining their membership by cultural attributes and not by the battle of ideas. These are parties that have grown in the last five years.*

They are contrary to the ideals of the South African constitution which saw South Africa as a melting pot of racial, linguistic and religious identities – unified in our diversity. This posits a real threat to our democracy.

By **DR OSCAR VAN HEERDEN**

THE ANC has to pose and find answers to questions about its own long-term evolution as an organisation, its core vision and the capacity to pursue it. This depends on the balance of forces.

There was progress in the forging a sense of nationhood and some measure of acculturation. But spa-



tial dynamics and the socio-economic disparities that reflected apartheid racial patterns conspired to undermine this. Added to this is the issue of the dominant societal value system and frame of ideological discourse which encourages greed, crass materialism and conspicuous consumption.

By 2007 balance of forces had shifted in favour of the forces of change,

creating a platform to speed up programmes of social transformation. Yet the question was posed then whether society was mobilised for faster progress; and whether the liberation movement had the corps of cadres to lead such change!

Accordingly, we must ask ourselves whether the goals of the ANC, the kind of society (i.e. National Democratic Society) we want to build is captured correctly in our Strategy and Tactics document? After all, the goal of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) is to build a united, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and more prosperous nation. Our vision of a national democratic society can only be achieved through the best attributes of a developmental state with progressive elements of social democracy.

A Developmental state is a capable and responsive state that (1) steers economic development and (2) mobilises all the resources in the country, the state, business, the citizenry and civil society, for the development of the people. Progressive features of social democracy include:

- a system which places the needs of the poor and social issues such as health care, education and a social safety net at the top of the national agenda;
- intense role of the state in economic life;
- pursuit of full employment;
- quest for equality;
- strong partnership with the trade union movement; and
- promotion of international solidarity.

What then do the general election outcomes tell us about the balance of forces in South Africa?

Domestic Analysis:

General Elections 2019

The ANC is a ‘political party’ which led the struggle against apartheid colonialism and is at the forefront of programmes of social transformation. Its status in this regard is dependent on whether it musters the strategic and organisational capacity to continue playing this role. The government is a political entity formed by the victorious party, mandated to carry out its programmes. It is obliged to serve all South Africans as decreed in the Constitution and relevant legislation; but it derives its mandate and legitimacy from electoral outcomes. The state is a non-partisan instrument of the people as a whole which derives its mandate from the Constitution. Its actions are informed in part by the mandate accorded the ruling party (and thus the social forces committed to fundamental transformation). But it has cohesive and coercive tasks that transcend the party-political realm, as the custodian of South African sov-

ereignty and legality.

It is important to note some of the huge positives of this 2019 elections. It was free and fair and without any major incidents. The management and roll out of the elections process must be commended bar one or two hick ups at some polling stations. A job well done nonetheless by our Independent Electoral Commission. Another general election that clearly says to the continent and the world that South Africa’s democracy is alive and well and that we have yet again for the fifth time, changed our President in the last 25 years. And finally, voting as a right is understood and exercised by our people, hence their varied choices with regards to political parties and affiliations.

One lesson coming from this election is that parties have to fear losing power in order to constantly renew and adapt to the changing conditions in the country. You’ve got to fear to lose to stay accountable. When you get to comfortable in your skins that’s when you lose elections. And as we’ve now observed, the ANC is much closer to such a reality than previously anticipated.

Looking at the global neo liberal capitalist system, the fear of the outsider (anti-immigrant) is widespread throughout Europe. Old parties of the centre right and the centre left that have governed Europe since the war have been marginalised. Bigotry, racism and xenophobia are on the rise and countries in the west and the north are looking inward at the expense of inclusiveness. One can thus talk of a sequential order that refer to Corbyn, Brexit, Trump, and Macron as the same bag of populist insurgency against the old order happening everywhere. Fascist and ultra-right parties are emerging from the wood works. Why wouldn’t it happen in South Africa?

A cursory look at the election results suggest that the centre is not holding (the centre being the ANC & the DA). It also suggests strongly, that in line with global right-wing trends, meaning, ultra-right, narrow nationalist and anti-immigrant approaches, we see that in South Africa, voters too are adhering to inward looking and protectionist trends.

One may for the sake of argument want to see the big three – EFF, ANC and DA – as representing the left, slightly left of centre and right of economics; with each roughly representing liberal capitalism, inclusive growth, and socialism respectively.

However, underlying the big three parties are issues of identity and the fear of the outsider just like in Europe and elsewhere in the world.

The ANC’s inclusive growth reflects its broad nature, encompassing its alliance partners of the SACP and COSATU, putting the poor and working class at the centre of its pro-poor policies for a prosperous South Africa. The ANC has had non-racialism as a founding principle for many decades. However, recently there were growing concerns about increasing African nationalism, with a specific focus on Zulu identity.

The DA on the other hand has struggled to shake its white -party identity. Although its campaign slogan of “One South Africa for all”, this seemed to be an attempt to make racial minorities feel welcome and part of South Africa. It is also noteworthy that the DA is experiencing serious identity issues. They cannot decide whether they are a majority black party or not which decision will be alienating their traditional white supporters and members, which have already began shifting towards the Freedom Front Plus. In addition, the DA have not resolved on their ideological orientation - are they indeed still a liberal party, are they a social democratic party or as some have called them the ANC-lite?

The EFF may be branded as Black African (with a new Pan African slant; and apparent intolerance of other black minorities), but it continues to attract young black voters. The question is whether it will be able to sustain itself as a sophisticated political party and continue to receive funds to financially maintain the party’s national footprint?

EFF cannot rely on unlawful funding from the likes of criminals in the illicit tobacco industry or the VBS bank heist saga. Already we have seen members splintering amongst each other and infighting beginning. These

can only increase once the EFF become more and more involved in actual governance of the state. Since the proof is in the pudding, once EFF gets its hands on the purse strings of government, will it be tempted into taking a bite of the poison apple?

When one looks across the other smaller parties – those that have managed to secure at least one seat in the National Assembly – we see a similar trend with citizens increasingly voting according to identity politics. This table below shows the growth from 2014 to 2019 in several parties that are primarily defined by religion, ethnicity or race.

Overtly religious parties have secured 250,000 (quarter of a million) votes. All of them ACDP, Aljama and ATM have grown since the last national election.

Parties with clear race/ethnicity appeal (EFF, FF+, IFP) have secured 2.9 million votes. Amongst these – and often put on either end of a political spectrum is the EFF (1.8 million) and FF+ (almost 600 thousand), These are not in fact polar opposites but the same ideology in different hues – with both sharing intolerance for racial diversity. As for the IFP and the FF+, these are traditional nationalist parties who cater for their members who are narrow tribalists and coalesce around culture, language and traditions at the expense of the rest of society.

Looking across all the smaller parties – those that are defined by religion and or by race/ethnicity – we see a significant increase in the proportions of South Africans who have given them their support. Whereas in 2014 these parties represented 10% of our counted

PARTY	2014	2019	Percentage growth from 2014 to 2019	Identity
ACDP	104 039	146 262	+41%	Christian
Aljama	25 976	31 468	+21%	Muslim
ATM	0	76830	+100%	Christian churches
EFF	1 169 259	1 881 521	+61%	Black African (not 'coloured'/Indian)
IFP	441 854	588 839	+33%	Black Zulu
FF+	165 715	414864	+150%	White
Total	1 906 843	3 139 784	+65%	
Total voters	18 402 497	17 436 144	-5%	
Percentage of all voters	10%	18%	+74%	

votes, in 2019 this had risen to 18%. Nearly 1 in 5 South Africans who voted, voted for a party that defines itself primarily by identity.

What we have seems to be growing and stronger laagers amongst the South African electorate. There is greater polarisation – defined by religious and racial/ethnic identity. Much like the laagers of the Great Trek (an encampment formed by a circle of wagons), keeping “us” inside the circle and “them” (the others). Smaller parties are inward looking; defining their membership by cultural attributes and not by the battle of ideas. These are parties that have grown in the last five years.

They are contrary to the ideals of the South African constitution which saw South Africa as a melting pot of racial, linguistic and religious identities – unified in our diversity. This posits a real threat to our democracy.

Global Analysis:

Concerns from around the World

Concerns around the rise of far-right parties across the continent, make these issues only become more pressing. Former President Mbeki made the observation that *“this tendency has grown, so now even countries like Sweden has got a big Swedish Democrats party which actually right wing, anti-migration and racist.”*

What does that mean for us? What is its implication in terms of our relations with all of these countries in Europe who are our biggest trading partners?

Mbeki continued, *“Just look at the continent. Let’s take just the security element on the continent. I don’t know what, as a country, we are doing to address that matter. I really don’t know what our policy positions are about that matter.”*

He flagged the Sahel as an area of particular concern. *“It’s a belt of conflict, which includes Islamic jihadists. It includes very complicated issues and a number of these countries in the Sabel, they share the Fulani population, which you’ll find in Nigeria and other parts of the Sabel. I’m mentioning that because part of what’s happened — because of that conflict in the Sabel — some of these terrorist groups have focused on the Fulani population in terms of arming that population. And so, you get that population group being drawn into the conflict as a factor for destabilization. What does our country think about that? What are we doing about it?”*

Mbeki is also very worried about South Sudan, where South Africa has unsuccessfully tried to act as a peace broker and in Ethiopia, which is experiencing high levels of communal violence in the wake of Nobel peace

prize-winning Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed’s efforts to open up society.

“I’m mentioning Ethiopia because it’s a very important African country - The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. The federated people are ethnic groups, so it’s a federation of the Amhara, Oromos, Tigrayans, Somalis, and so on ... It might have been necessary in 1990 or thereabouts to organise Ethiopia in that way, but today that has resulted in ethnic conflict in Ethiopia. It’s a very important country and historically we have very good relations with Ethiopia, but what are we doing about it? It’s in a region – the horn of Africa – which has lots of challenges anyway. It’s an important policy challenge, for us as a country.”

On the international stage, he said not enough attention is paid what are the effect of global issues such as the trade war between the United States and China, or the setbacks suffered recently by leftist leaders in Latin America on South Africa and the continent. He was referring to the right-wing governments that are taking over the once left leaning governments. Eva Morales from Bolivia have been forced to resign amid a military coup. Bolsonaro is doing more damage than good in Brazil after it transpired that former President Lula was unlawfully arrested and now subsequently released from prison. Venezuela is in complete turmoil as well and the recent protests action we observed in Chile is also worrying.

About United States President Donald Trump, Mbeki asked *“What is the meaning of that kind of politics, that direction, which is represented by President Trump? What impact does it have on us? Not just South Africa, but about the continent. And what do we do about it? Clearly it’s not anything that we can ignore, because whether we like it or not, the policies of the United States will have implications for us here as well.”*

He argues that South Africa must again assume its role in terms of helping to fashion a better world around the globe. And that a better world, and a better Africa require better policies. The ongoing Brexit debacle between the UK and the EU further fuel the already uncertain world order, with many countries not sure when there would be an end to this situation. Such are the balance of forces globally.

These posits a real threat to our democracy. These growth of laager mentalities – inward looking homogenous groups who are resistant to new ideas, intolerant of difference, and fundamentally conservative. And its playing out in global affairs as well.

Now, among the major issues that have been thrown up by developments in the past few years and the ongoing discourse in society, we need the following:

- We require an active leadership by a capable developmental state;
- The National Development Plan (NDP) calls for an active citizenry; but most critically that the various social partners should work together to realise Vision 2030. What is required in this regard is a social compact of common and varied programmes to realise the objectives of the NDP.
- Social compacting should be founded on an appreciation that there is serious intent on the part of the state and the business community to deal with the root causes of poverty and inequality.
- Given the paucity of resources available in the fiscus – in this current period of low economic growth

and a huge budget deficit – it will be necessary to ensure proper prioritisation and sequencing of state interventions. It is necessary to find creative ways of drawing in the private sector in realising some of the objectives such as urgent infrastructure projects.

- Most of the challenges with regard to the intensification of the programme to provide basic social services do not derive from the availability of resources.

Our Strategy and Tactics must be informed by the above analysis in order to ensure that we coordinate our collective efforts to a comprehensive plan going forward.

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AT THE ROOT OF CAPITAL'S STRATEGIES & TACTICS FOR POWER AND CONTROL

■ *“WMC (white monopoly capital) sought an elite pact between the ANC and NP that would guarantee minority rights and achieve power-sharing between the blacks and whites....*

Paying lip service to the role of WMC helps them to evade scrutiny not merely in relation to their role in propping up apartheid capitalism, but above all in relation to their class interests and how these were secured during negotiations as well as during democracy... It is both unthinkable and irrational to expect that WMC, that class which was the principal driving force of racial supremacy, could suddenly disappear simply because there was now democratic rule in South Africa.”

By **MALUSI GIGABA**

THE UNFOLDING process of struggle in our country has raised serious questions about the ability of the national liberation movement to complete the NDR (National Democratic Revolution).

If the understanding still prevails that victory had to embrace more than formal political democracy, therefore the historical task of the NDR would not merely be to content itself with tinkering with the colonial framework of racialised economic ownership. What Slovo¹ referred to as “de-raced capitalism”, where the working class would not insist on the inclusion of radical social measures as part of the immediate agenda. It is to fundamentally alter the existing colonial social and economic relations.



The colonial state

Mbeki² reminds us that all societies, of necessity, bear the birth-marks of their own past. Accordingly, it stands to reason that the colonial state laid its imprint on the post-independence state.

Guy Martin³ argues that in indigenous societies, “the process towards the development of ‘national’ capitalism was arrested when these countries came into contact with advanced capitalism. Hence

the ‘underdeveloped’ nature of the contemporary African bourgeoisie.”

The colonising forces “broke up the natural economy and social systems of the indigenous people”⁴, and expropriated their lands and natural resources, as well as their labour power. They superimposed on an underde-

veloped indigenous political and social system the advanced state and social system of the colonising country. They would thus only allow the bourgeois class to be comprised of the colonising peoples.

Ultimately, white supremacy was not merely a racist political system. It was a socio-economic programme – a racialised bourgeois system – spawned by the urgency to extend capitalist mode of production to shores beyond Europe. This would be achieved through conquering foreign lands, subjecting their peoples to foreign rule, seizing their natural resources and labour and imposing by brutal force, the social system of the motherland on the primitive systems of the newly-conquered colonies.

In the colonies, black people were not regarded as humans. But rather as repositories “of the commodity labour power, which can and must be quantified in a profit and loss account to the point of the very ‘negation of life itself.’”⁵ Their dehumanisation thus became the modus operandi of the colonial system through which capital was accumulated and profits maximised. Here, both capital and labour assumed a racial profile, with white labour offered material incentives in order to buy their allegiance to white capital⁶.

The existence of white capital has its origins in the colonial system, and they have linked their economic interests and political influence to the perpetuation of the racial policy, overtly or covertly, which ensures the dominance of the white group. Owing to how it came about, this class did not owe its origins in and allegiance to the indigenous political and economic system. This is evidenced by the ease with which it can delist in the countries of existence to list in foreign stock exchanges and its lack of desire to support a genuine socio-economic programme that empowers the indigenous populations and creates a native middle-class. Its approach to the independent country remains that of a colonising foreign force. Tentative and hell-bent on economic plunder and exploitation of the labour of the indigenous populations.

In light of the above, Alavi⁷ observes that the bourgeois revolution in the colony accomplishes two tasks. Firstly, to impose colonial rule by the metropolitan bourgeoisie. And secondly, to create a state apparatus through which it could exercise dominion over all indigenous classes in the colony.

It was in pursuing this task of creating a state apparatus through which it could exercise dominion over all indigenous classes in the colony that the colonial system showed its real and raw cruelty. According to Mbeki⁸, the methods of primitive accumulation which represented a transitional phase in the development of capital in Europe acquired a fixity characteristic of feudal

society, legitimised by the use of force and sanctified by a supposedly Calvinistic Christianity. The capitalist system in the colony put on a racial character, with race constituting a “*justification, an attempt to rationalise, to make acceptable the enslavement and expropriation of the black people by the white.*”

By sticking to the methods of primitive accumulation, the colonial system retards the progressive development of the capitalist system prevalent in colonial mother-countries. It makes it inevitable that the struggle against racial discrimination and political repression must be linked with the working class struggle against economic exploitation, as well as against the gender discrimination of black women.

The limits of post-independence states

The limits of the post-independence state are well articulated by Debray¹⁰ in his argument, in relation to the Latin American petty-bourgeoisie. Debray argues that because “it does not possess an infrastructure of economic power before it wins political power”, it therefore “*transforms the state not only into an instrument of political domination, but also into a source of economic power. The state, culmination of social relations of exploitation in capitalist Europe, becomes in a certain sense the instrument of their installation in these countries.*”

This is important to fully comprehend because the general trend in Europe, as correctly observed in the 2017 ANC Strategy and Tactics¹¹, had been that change in social relations had developed within the womb of the old system, where the political revolution thus came about as a culmination of economic processes that had been under way and hence under new political managers, a new socio-economic system would evolve with time.

But, Africa and Latin America generally were exceptions to this where the political revolution preceded the economic revolution. This has led to Uncle Jack Simons¹² arguing that the transfer of power in many African countries does not mean they have carried out a social revolution, and the “*tendency in many African countries has been to maintain the old economic as well as political system. There has been continuity but not revolution.*” Accordingly, power has effectively remained in the hands of the minority that, with their international allies and collusion from certain elements drawn from the ranks of the indigenous peoples, ensured that they maintained the status quo in terms of property and production relations.

As the wave of political independence commenced, imperialist countries contrived of new schemes to

maintain their economic stranglehold over the newly-independent countries, using international institutions – Brettonwoods Institutions and multinational companies – to spearhead and impose neo-liberal policies on these states. Newly-independent states found themselves encircled within an inextricable web of policies, institutions and agencies that ensured their continued subjugation.

This period of neo-colonialism witnessed a severe attack on the state in developing countries through privatisation, liberalisation and other policies which affirmed the supremacy of the market. Developing countries were told to privatise public sector-driven programmes as well as their state-owned enterprises, in order to generate revenues and boost business confidence about their commitment to efficiency, transparency and good governance.

Accordingly, Bayliss and Fine¹³ argue that private ownership became the default position; the public sector was held responsible for all that was wrong in developing countries and “public enterprises were considered to be at the heart of the region’s economic problems.”¹⁴

Brettonwoods Institutions have thus played a major role. Not only in weakening the post-independence African State, but above all else in buttressing the neo-colonial agenda in Africa. This attack on the post-independence African State precluded it from accomplishing the revolutionary tasks for which it had in the first instance been established. Which is fundamentally to transform colonial social and economic relations and structures of production.

Besides the state, the national middle-class finds itself without access to capital and requisite advanced industrial technology and thus having to turn to the metropolitan or neo-colonial bourgeoisie for collaboration on terms which hamstringing their own independent future development and political outlook¹⁵. This collaboration is “unequal and hierarchical, because the native bourgeoisie of a post-colonial society assumes a subordinate, client status in the structure of its relationship with the metropolitan bourgeoisie”¹⁶, and even with the neo-colonial bourgeoisie. In the South African context, the domestic variant of the neo-colonial bourgeois class is white monopoly capital which has tentacles and allies in international capital represented by multinational companies and multilateral development banks.

The major achievement of the post-colonial Asian State was to free their native bourgeoisie from this dependence, or clientelism, and thus to give it free reign and access to requisite advanced industrial technology and other economic sectors.

The attack on the post-independence state was not an accident, but by design. Ultimately, neoliberalism was not merely an economic policy but was, at the same time, a political ploy to keep developing countries as junior partners in global affairs. This was to ensure they do not ever regain control of their natural and economic resources and assets and permanently remain in colonial status. This, they achieved by promoting in developing countries policies which they had themselves not followed during the early stages of their own development.¹⁷

“...neoliberalism was not merely an economic policy but was, at the same time, a political ploy to keep developing countries as junior partners in global affairs.”

Actually, Alavi¹⁸ says additionally that, “The essential problem about the state in post-colonial societies stems from the fact that it is not established by the ascendant bourgeoisie but instead by a foreign imperialist bourgeoisie. At independence, however, direct command of the latter over the colonial state is ended. But, by the same token, its influence over it is by no means brought to an end. The metropolitan bourgeoisie, now joined by other neo-colonialist bourgeoisies, is present in the colonial society.

Together they constitute a powerful element in its class structure.”

It is precisely this condition in the post-independence society that undermines the pursuit of genuine national liberation, which is described by Cabral¹⁹ as a negation of the historical process which resulted in the violent usurpation of the freedom of development of the national development forces.

The weakness of the national middle-class

It stands to reason that post-independence, the national democratic revolution must not forget its historical mission and conduct itself as the mere overseer of the *status quo*.

An essential part of this requires that it must consciously seek to create a vast property-owning national middle-class rooted in the anti-colonial struggle that will owe its allegiance to and have the political outlook

consistent with the goal of total emancipation. This national middle-class must meaningfully be empowered in relation to the means of production and state apparatus, and in relation to their white counterparts. It must develop the capacity of the post-independence state to be compatible with the development of indigenous classes and their independent political agenda.

As argued above, the colonial powers destroyed the indigenous productive system existing in the colonised countries and imposed on them the superior systems of the colonising countries, but within a colonial framework. They allowed the bourgeois class to be composed exclusively of the colonising peoples. They entrenched and protected the material interests of this colonial bourgeoisie even post-independence, ensuring that the post-independence dispensation did not threaten to expropriate them of their ill-gotten gains.

Therefore, the post-independence national middle-class literally had no power, could not develop independently on their own in a manner that would enable them to forge an independent political and economic agenda. Their emergence depends either on the state, in which case they emerged as a bureaucratic class. Alternatively on the neo-colonial bourgeoisie, in which case they became a compradore class described by Amilcar Cabral²⁰ as a pseudo-bourgeoisie controlled by the ruling class of the dominating country. This split the national middle-class into different factions, both of which are powerless and dependent.

Turok²¹ argues that,

“Without firm, independent roots in economic and even political processes, [the Third World bourgeoisie] is unable to wield its political power to its own and the country’s advantage effectively. Its interventions in the economy are tentative, often ambiguous and vacillating.”

That is why Fanon²² was scathing of this emerging class, saying that its mission *“has nothing to do with transforming the nation; it consists, prosaically, of being the transmission line between the nation and a capitalism, rampant though camouflaged, which today puts on the masque of neo-colonialism.”* He says that, because of its severe incapacities, its ambitions which are unrelated to the national vision and interest, and because of its ties to the neo-colonial and international bourgeoisie, *“the national middle class will have nothing better to do than to take on the role of manager of Western enterprise, and it will in practice set up its country as the brothel of Europe.”*

Its compradore nature renders it incapable of being consistently progressive and of developing and possessing independent views. Whilst given birth to, coincidentally, by the success of the struggle led by the NLM (National Liberation Movement), out of immediate self-interest, it finds it cannot consistently align itself

with this movement and always attaches their interests and views with those of the neo-colonial bourgeoisie to which it depends for access to business. In a way, given its origins, its ties and ambitions, it takes a reactionary posture and, through it, the neo-colonial bourgeoisie – WMC – seeks to penetrate the ranks of the NLM and crack its unity, as well as that of the nation as a whole²³.

Evidence of the above argument lies strewn in recent events in our country. Driven by self-interest, the national middle-class has been blindly following the agenda of white monopoly capital, scared to break ranks with it in pursuit of their own selfish agenda.

During the early years of our democracy, they were conspicuous by their silence during major debates about issues affecting the life and destiny of the nation post-independence. In contemporary times, buoyed by the co-option of some among them, including many prominent cadres of the NLM, into the ranks of big business, they have become emboldened to support right wing, conservative economic policies and political ideas which detract from the historical perspectives of the NDR.

Those among them who are more independent-thinking and dissenting have been marginalised both in business and within business organisations, and their opinions are ridiculed and trivialised. The confidence boldly to articulate their own views depends on the support they will get from the democratic government for their economic aspirations.

The post-independence national middle-class literally has no power, cannot develop on their own independent from the neo-colonial bourgeoisie. This is a major limitation for the post-independence social system which prohibits it from evolving into total emancipation.

The agenda of white monopoly capital in South Africa to derail the NDR

In the mid-eighties, WMC (White Monopoly Capital) concluded once and for all that they had no future under PW Botha and Nationalist Party leadership. They knew they could make no more profits under that system to which he was so stubbornly committed, against all contrary evidence.

They resolved to dispose of him and initiate a reform process. They hatched a plan that involved replacing him with FW De Klerk and initiated direct negotiations with the ANC. They sought an elite pact between the ANC and NP that would guarantee minority rights

and grant minimal political reforms that would involve some concessions to the black majority without completely surrendering political and economic power to the latter.

Paying lip service to the role of WMC helps them to evade scrutiny not merely in relation to their role in propping up apartheid capitalism, but above all in relation to their class interests and how these were secured during negotiations as well as during democracy.

It is both unthinkable and irrational to expect that WMC, that class which was the principal driving force of racial supremacy, could suddenly disappear simply because there was now democratic rule in South Africa. It is untheoretical and downright naïve to argue that WMC has become “non-racial” merely because a trifle of black people have recently joined the ranks of business. Meanwhile, the white minority continues to have exclusive monopoly of power and control over all productive sectors and even to decide whom among black people are they comfortable to invite onto the table of privilege.

To start with, the concept, “white monopoly capital” is not insulting. It is merely in reference to that racialised and patriarchal portion of capital in our country that is monopolistic or even oligopolistic. That is most connected to the transnational and imperialistic economy and that dominates, both economically and even politically, our country. Through their exclusive control of the undiversified media, including marketing and advertising, they assert their agenda and views as the views and agenda of the nation.

As part of the settlement, concessions would be made, to some acceptable extent, not only to then existing black entrepreneurs, but in the main from the new political elite drawn from the NLM who enjoyed broad legitimacy among the masses of the oppressed. And who would be enticed (and compromised) with material incentives to find common cause with the erstwhile racial and patriarchal ruling group. In this way, the [capitalist] system would find resonance and its chief defenders among the leading cadres of the NLM.

This has largely been the stratagem of the colonial ruling class in the colonised world. How it has derailed every revolution and blunted revolutionary movements by co-opting some among its senior leaders into its ranks as its ‘legitimisers’, and thus divided these movements that had once advocated for revolutionary change to existing conditions.

What further made this possible was the fact that the NLM was constituted of a broad alliance of social forces who all shared a common objective to defeat colo-

nial rule, broadly speaking, as a minimum programme whilst differing among themselves on the extent of the post-independence social agenda. This is what has been referred to as the broad church.

The NLM’s multiclass character, whilst useful during the struggle’s political phase, has not been a very helpful condition for the development of a radical post-independence programme that would result in the attainment of total emancipation. Whilst some would be content with what Simons referred to as continuity, others would continue to advocate for a revolutionary change to existing socio-economic relations.

Neither the transition nor post-transition processes threatened the class interests of WMC; the political settlement would retain their class interests intact. The post-apartheid settlement has maintained and perpetuated the old economic system.

When WMC initiated political reforms, they were self-serving. Retaining control over the commanding heights of the economy gave them leverage over the new government and ruling party, and handed to them power to influence the post-apartheid settlement. They would even influence appointments into key positions, the main of which were the economic positions, particularly in the Treasury. This way, they knew they had (and still have) the power to derail transformation and ensure they embed their views on government policies.

Capital leaves nothing to chance and to it, everything has a prize. To ensure their interests remain secured, they have thus sought to influence leadership contestations and succession in the ANC, as they had done with the National Party. They would court both the ANC and DA, and thus would do their all to ensure those they do not support or who do not meet their favour are either destroyed or never allowed to emerge in any way.

This situation has created a number of dilemmas for the ANC and the post-apartheid government which were downright dangerous to the transformation project. How to confront the neo-colonial offensive. Our ideological differences and interventions of multilateral development banks and WMC, ensured that our approach to the post-independence settlement was tentative. The notion of total emancipation, which informed the ANC’s strategic position gradually receded into the background.

We have compromised too much, at our own people’s expense, on matters of principle, and often fixed tactical compromises into dogmatic positions as if they were our principled stances from the onset. Furthermore, we voluntarily embraced orthodox economic principles, both in response to the economic malaise

we had inherited from apartheid and in order to attract foreign investors that, like elsewhere, simply have not come in droves as we expected.

WMC and their international allies in the citadels of imperialism were patently aware of the advantaged position they occupied in relation to the rest of the black classes in terms of production and social relations. They knew that to retain their privileged position they had to,

1. first, fight tooth and nail to achieve as the outcome of the negotiated settlement the maintenance of their property ownership and all their material advantages,
2. secondly, use this privileged position of accumulated wealth as a counter-weight with which to bargain with the new government both for the retention of their material privileges as well as implementation of minimal reforms such as would not dare threaten their privileged material position,
3. thirdly, use their wealth to select who amongst the newly aspirant black middle class, political elite and bureaucratic class would be welcome to join them – the white bourgeoisie – at the table of privilege on the basis that they brought alongside with them their political influence and legitimacy that would both entrench and / or advance white material privileges, and
4. fourthly, use their control of the economy to influence the ruling party, both directly or indirectly, so that it implements socio-economic policies that favour their narrow class interests. In this regard, it strives on dividing and co-opting sections of the emerging black middle class, and deploys its massive resources to ensure it achieves influence within the ruling party.

Because the state assumes, as Debray²⁴ has argued, the role of a source of economic power, its control therefore becomes important to the new ruling political elite and a new struggle ensues for such control and factions are forged around it. The national middle class and neo-colonial bourgeoisie do not watch idly as these struggles take place. They also dirty their hands in the battle for its control in pursuit of their material interests.

The neo-colonial bourgeoisie, which is conservative and counter-revolutionary, will ultimately forge common cause with the comprador faction of the national middle-class, which seeks access to wealth without pursuing the fundamental and radical restructuring of the structures, relations and patterns of production and ownership of the economy.

Generally, they take advantage of the dependence of

the emerging national middle class on them for access to business opportunities, management and board positions, capital, technology and value-chains, in an environment where BEE equity schemes have compelled black business to serve as junior partners in the economy. Mere conduits between government and white business seeking to gain more business from government.

Together, the reactionary factions of the bourgeoisie (white monopoly and comprador capital) will seek to capture both the ruling party – the NLM – and state, as well as to alienate the more radical component of the middle class that seeks genuine transformation. Forged in the crucible of a corrupt system, they turn around to utilise their resources accumulated in that system to reinforce and ensconce themselves in power through corruption and patronage.

The 2017 NASREC votes-buying spree, accompanied by the call to change the ANC's nominations and elections procedures and tradition, are aimed precisely at ensuring that the ANC's character is turned from an anti-colonial revolutionary movement into an appendage of WMC and enforcer of their ideas and material interests. It seeks to convert ours into a bourgeois-democratic state that will become an instrument of racialised class rule.

It can be argued with no fear of contradiction that the current divisions within the national movement are sponsored externally by social forces opposed to a far-reaching national democratic revolution, that seek to maintain the status quo of racialised capitalism. The movement is divided along the interests of WMC.

Way forward

The only way forward for the ANC is to reclaim its position as a revolutionary movement as we attempted to do during the 2017 National Conference. To focus the movement on the agenda of radical change. The Conference set the tone in terms of what needs to be done to elaborate the radical socio-economic transformation agenda. The duty of this leadership of the ANC is not to evade these questions.

The ANC's historic duty, as well as that of the democratic state, is not to oversee the status quo, but to hoist it at its own petard. Ultimately, the ANC is a revolutionary movement and not a nicer, blacker, more tasteful and acceptable version of the Democratic Alliance. We must hasten to carry out a social revolution, using all the levers of radical economic transformation at our disposal, in order to accomplish the goal of total emancipation.

The ANC, and the progressive movement in the country, both in order to deepen national liberation and combat the imperialist / neo-colonial offensive, must intensify its efforts to mobilise, conscientise and unite the working class as the primary motive force - the most consistently revolutionary and progressive class of the NDR. It must wage an intensive ideological warfare against right-wing deviation and petty-bourgeois revisionism.

Furthermore, the NLM must deliberately cultivate a progressive national middle class free from foreign domination and dependence.

Finally, the NLM must consciously pursue the unity of the social motive forces of the NDR behind itself, that is, the ANC and the Tripartite Alliance.

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He writes in his personal capacity.

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STRATEGY AND TACTICS IN A DIGITAL ERA

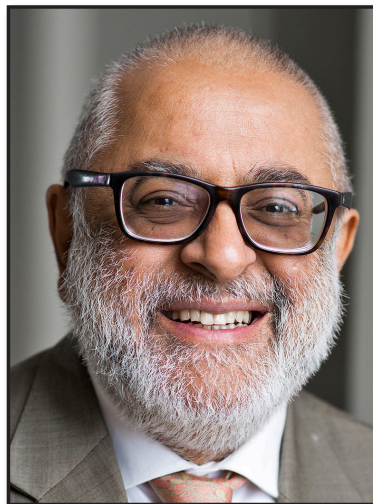
- *Given the extent to which we feel overwhelmed by the tsunami of technological changes that confronts us, there is a temptation to simply submit. Let the algorithms decide what we should wear, what grocery we should order from the store, even who we should date...since our electoral choices can be pre-determined by what we read, or who we keep company with, why not let such digital systems determine the outcome of elections?...*

Perhaps the starting point would be inserting the potential role of digital media into the perennial debate on the modernisation of the ANC. This should impact on the very DNA of the ANC's approach to organisational form, internal democracy and campaigning.

By **DR YACOOB ABBA OMAR**

SOCIAL, political, economic and technological changes we have seen in the past few years recalls Lenin's famous quote "There are decades where nothing happens; and there are weeks where decades happen." As the ANC gears up for its 2020 National General Council, it is required to reflect on the impact these changes have on our organisational form and methods of mobilisation. The impact of increased digitalisation and the platforms which have been made possible as a result is of interest.

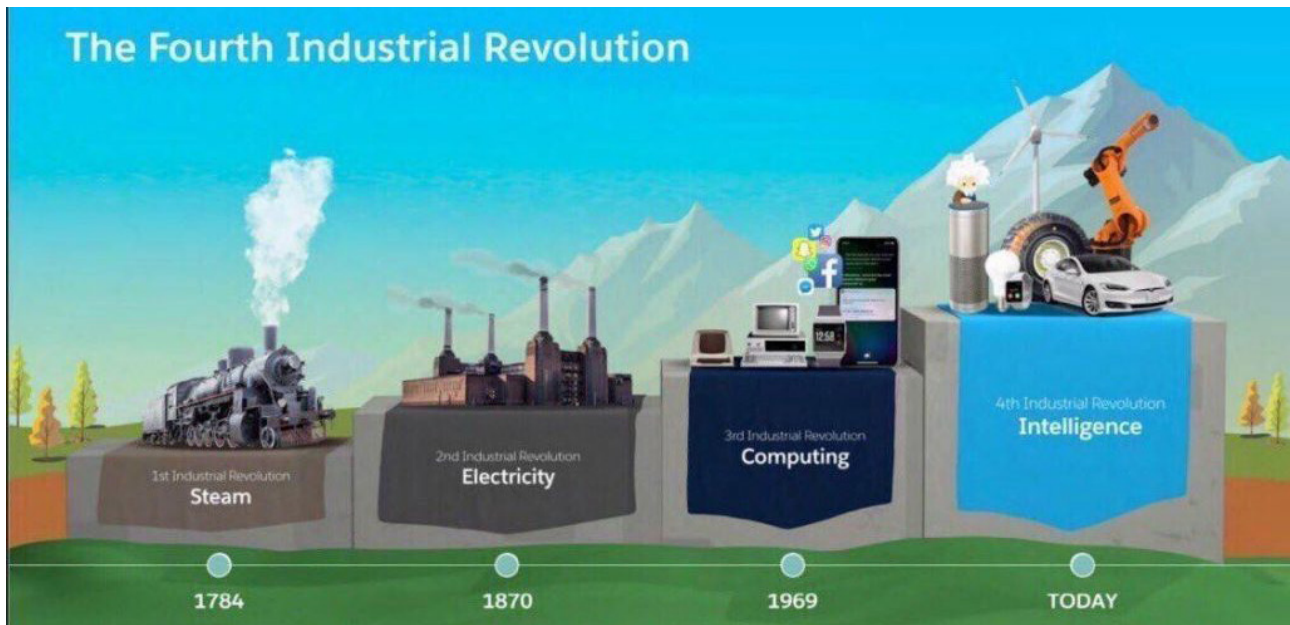
US President, Donald Trump, has come to epitomise the worst excesses of the use of such technologies, whereas a number of movements across the world have shown its potential for the good.



How real is this digital era and where do we stand as South Africans?

Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee's **The Second Machine Age** (2016) writes about how automation overtakes the cognitive requirements of labour, making it unnecessary for humans to engage in certain categories of jobs¹. They believe that machine intelligence and social networks will be the two key drivers defining our

future. Klaus Schwab's **The Fourth Industrial Revolution**, backed by the marketing power of the World Economic Forum, has become the centrepiece of discourse on where we are heading as humanity. It emphasises hyper connectivity, data-science, Artificial Intelligence and robotics as key drivers of productivity².



Some basic facts, according to the **Global Digital Report 2019** titled *We Are Social*.ⁱⁱⁱ

- There are 5.11 billion unique mobile users in the world today, up 100 million (2 percent) in the past year.
- There are 4.39 billion internet users in 2019, an increase of 366 million (9 percent) versus January 2018.
- There are 3.48 billion social media users in 2019, with the worldwide total growing by 288 million (9 percent) since this time last year.
- 3.26 billion people used social media on mobile devices in January 2019, with a growth of 297 million new users representing a year-on-year increase of more than 10 percent.

In North America, by June 2018 more than 95% of the population was online, with EU countries not far behind. Oceania and Latin America stand at over 70% while in Asia the figure is 48%, and in Africa 36%.

While our infrastructure may be regarded as patchy, South Africa has been ranked in Ericsson's *Mobility Report*^{iv} as the most developed digital economy in Africa. Ninety percent of the population already uses mobile phones with almost 70% on smart phones. Internet penetration has risen from 46% in 2015 to 63.8 percent in 2018, projected to grow to 80.8 percent in 2023. South Africa has over 8-million Twitter users^v. Video is also the fastest growing form of rich media content with platforms like IGTV solely dedicated to this form of media.

This article looks at some of the key challenges these developments pose for politics in South Africa generally, and how the African National Congress should be responding. Its looked at under four questions:

- What are the social changes these technological advances are bringing about?
- How do these developments impact on our understanding of the concept of power?
- How have political parties been impacted?
- What are the implications for the ANC's organisational development?

Impact of technology on society

Clement Mabi and Celya Gruson-Daniel (2018) of the French University of Technology of Compiègne argue that “technological solutionism”, where the digital is seen as the answer to the problems of democracy, should be taken with a grain of salt^{vi}.

At a talk at MIT in May, 2018 Brynjolfsson and McAfee suggest that there may even be a push back against the use of technology – a ‘tech-lash’ – due to issues such as cyber-risk and vulnerability to online crime, machines doing low-wage labor, privacy abuse issues, algorithmic bias when machines make decisions based on flawed human decisions and the proliferation of fake news.

Given the extent to which we feel overwhelmed by the tsunami of technological changes that confronts us, there is a temptation to simply submit. Let the algorithms decide what we should wear, what grocery we should order from the store, even who we should date.

As the scandal around Cambridge Analytic has shown, since our electoral choices can be pre-determined by what we read, or who we keep company with, why not let such digital systems determine the outcome of elections?

Or as Giovanni Navarra in *The Networked Citizen*^{vii} says, citizens can be ‘consumers and rightless bits of

exploitable data' or they could be 'indomitable agents of political change' (2:2019). We must feed into this mixture the divide between digital natives, that is young people born into the age of the internet, and digital migrants, the rest of us who grew up on the wireless, TV and Internet.

It is possible to find a middle ground between cyber optimists such as Manuel Castells and cyber-pessimists such as Evgeny Morozov, author of *The Net Delusion*. Mabi and Gruson-Daniel propose a "differentiated" approach which "allows us to apprehend the weight of the sociotechnical environment in the variety of forms of citizen mobilization".

There is no doubt that technological changes have made possible a diverse ways of acting, expressing and creating a sense of community amongst like-minded persons such as the #FeesMustFall movement witnessed in SA, or the Arab Spring, or as seen today, the Hong Kong pro-democracy movement. Such technology allows for new forms of transparency, for greater vigilance of authorities and empowering whistleblowers.

Paulo Gerbaudo (2018) author of *Digital Parties: Political Organisation and Online Democracy*^{xiii}, points out that "Political parties seemed, of all the organisations inherited from modernity, the most impervious to the digital revolution". However, the force of new technologies and ways of organising "has contributed in eroding the competitive advantage of traditional parties".

Gerbaudo calls the new formations "digital parties", or "digital populist" parties because of their conjoining of populist discourse and digital organisational techniques. These include the Pirate Parties which have a presence in about 50 countries, the Five Star Movement of Italy and new left populist movements such as Podemos in Spain and France Insoumise (Rebellious France) in France. He places Momentum, which was key in driving the surge in popularity of Corbyn's Labour Party in the UK, in the same category. Some have enjoyed stunning success such as the Five Star Movement that is now in power in alliance with the right-wing party Lega.

Michal Jacunski (2018)^x, in his study of political parties in the Polish system, highlighted the growing skepticism of traditional parties' ability to represent voters. Coupled with governments creating mechanisms to interact directly with citizens, there is a tendency to bypass the formal representative roles of political parties. The imbizos which the South African government has been using to communicate directly with the citizenry is one such example of direct communications.

Professor of Comparative Politics at the European University Peter Mair (2009)^x argued that political par-

ties have made a u-turn from "representing the interests of the citizens of the state, to representing the interest of the state to its citizens". This relationship between party, state and citizen needs to be further explored by the ANC.

Mabi and Gruson-Daniel remind us that context is important so that "the political scope of digital technologies is taken into account, as well as the heterogeneity of the contexts in which they are embedded. This approach reminds us that digital technologies are only one of the variables to be analyzed in order to grasp the complexity of power relations". This allows us to segue into the question of how do these developments impact on our understanding of power.

Power in the digital era

FH Hinsley (1966:26)^{xi} captured the traditional meaning of sovereignty when he wrote that it is "the idea that there is a final and absolute political authority in the political community... and no final and absolute authority exists elsewhere". How does this notion stand up to the vagaries of transnational cyberspace and the digital era?

Navarria suggests that we rethink the concept of power today where "all actors have one weakness in common: none of them is ever in a position to exercise full control over the networked environment in which they operate... In a digitally networked environment power can therefore be redefined as the ability to achieve a certain goal while all the time being aware that total conquest of opponents is impossible" (6:2019).

Hadrien Macq and Vincent Jacquet's of Liege University, Belgium^{xii}, suggest that we look at two types of activists who impact on power dynamics:

- technical activists who generally come from communities related to the digital world. They seek to improve democracy by using digital tools.
- relational activists who believe their parties, by using the right technologies, can push through an agenda which radically improves democracy and the citizen's place in it through more horizontal interactions.

Mabi and Gruson-Daniel, based on their observation of the operation of several European parties, suggest that "technologies alone are not enough to embody a project of social transformation or democratic renewal". This talks to "the resilience of institutions and their ability to establish themselves as a key player in any social transformation project. In this context, the call for digital technologies and their participatory vocabulary does not, ultimately, challenge any balance of power at its core".

Impact on political parties

Gerbaudo has argued that in the aftermath of the 2008/9 financial crash, “masses of individuals were aggrieved by the economic crisis and felt unrepresented by existing parties”. The latter have seen their membership eroding. This disaffection with the status quo has been fertile ground for the rise of populist movements. Here I want to look at how that has been enabled by developments in technology.

The erosion of the old and rise of the new is seen throughout Europe where traditional social-democratic and conservative parties, such as the SPD and the CDU in Germany, the Socialist Party in France and the Italian Partito Democratico are facing severe challenges.

The social democratic PASOK dropped from 40% in Greek’s 2009 election, to 6% in the 2015 elections. Some refer to this phenomenon as ‘pasokification’ where old social-democratic parties converted to neo-liberal centrism.

The difference between traditional and digital parties can be seen in their platforms, their approach to membership and the forms of internal democracy:

- Digital parties focus on ‘participatory platforms’ or ‘participation portals’ for registered users to participate in discussions about current events; attending online training events; voting in online primaries or on internal officers; and donating money to the movement. Hungary’s *Lehet Más a Politika* (Politics Can Be Different) introduced an interactive function on its website inviting Hungarians to log government cuts.
- There are differences on how membership is seen, with digital parties operating with a free registration model that is very similar to the free sign-up of social media firms, with little information required for the account to be created. This makes it easier for sympathisers to become full members. Digital parties are now among the largest parties in their respective countries, and this fact alone constitutes a major achievement, according to Gerbaudo.
- Decision-making in digital parties is facilitated through polling and rating mechanisms built into the architecture of social media and online platforms more generally. They can extract data about members from their interactions, and adapting to their shifting opinions, similar to digital companies and their data science teams.

The jury is still out on how much more democratic these digital parties really are.

For example, Garbaudo argues that internal consultations take the form of a “reactive democracy”, reminiscent of Facebook reactions, and very limited in terms

of its qualitative intervention on the content of decisions. “Participation ... is often limited to a very small number of participants, an ‘aristocracy of participation’”. He is of the view that “their digital democracy has so far mostly proven a sham, with participatory platforms being used more as a site where the leadership constantly checks and verifies its consensus, rather than a space for authentic decision-making and pluralism”.

Jacunski points out that all the enthusiasm for digital parties has not been reflected in Poland “where the core of the electoral process depends on established parties, rarely bringing unexpected breakthroughs” apart from the 2009 success of the right wing Palikot’s Movement (10:2018).

Jacunski’s research shows that the digital divide is not only along class lines, but also those who oppose modernity in principle, or who lose out because of poor connectivity in rural or remote areas. This could lead to a democratic divide if only digital means are used. His research shows that the most popular forms of communications across all parties were via phone calls, meetings and online chats. Traditional methods such as leaflets, or even social media, were hardly mentioned or not mentioned at all.

Interestingly, members of such tech-savvy parties still regarded meetings highly. The older and mixed parties were found to have more portals than social media sites. He arrives at some key conclusions:

- Organisation inertia by itself may contribute to slowness in adopting digital platforms;
- Attitudes of leadership is critical in pushing along their member’s adoption;
- Digitalisation seems an important opportunity to technically refine party structure, but many fails to provide emotions and a genuine feeling of belonging to an ideological community” (20:2018).

It is intriguing how meetings are still one of the forms of communications even the digital natives preferred. Jacunski draws on the concept of ‘social presence’ enunciated by social psychologists John Short, Ederyn Williams and Bruce Christie in their 1976 book *The Social Psychology of Telecommunications*. They argue that “direct forms of contact within a political party and meetings with politicians lead to an enhanced ‘social presence’ and a sense of political contact with others” (14:2018)^{xiii}.

Implications for the ANC

I would like to conclude this essay by looking at the implications for the ANC. Currently we have a President and many of our leaders who read their speeches from iPads, have twitter accounts, engage in WhatsApp groups and are active on Instagram. As President of the country, Cyril Ramaphosa has placed the Fourth

Industrial Revolution (4IR) at the centre of national discourse.

These developments have also been the subject of the ‘tech lash’ McAfee refers to. In a situation where the economy is not growing, where businesses have to cut overheads by reducing labour and where certain re-trenchments are directly linked to adoptions in technology, it is not surprising that parts of society will stand opposed to such advances.

The ANC’s website has had its ups and downs and hopefully has resolved some of its issues. The problems faced resulted in a long downtime period and the ANC having to register a new address. Those of us requiring access to documents or updated information were unable to do so. The alternative was accessing the website of SA History Online for archival material.

As has been emphasised above, any discussion on the use of technology has to work within the prevailing context. An example of this is the fratricidal battles being fought amongst our leaders through Twitter. Sadly, ANC leaders go against the organisation’s communications policy by attacking each other through social media.

From the party typologies discussed above, it’s clear that the ANC falls into the category of traditional parties. This can be seen for example after the 2017 National Conference, in its Organisational Renewal document, the ANC resolved to establish a one-stop portal infrastructure. It set out what should be contained there as well as the need for a team of dedicated administrators to provide a personalised service to members. The portal is to be used for the quick processing of membership applications.

The ANC also resolved for the establishment of an automated sms system. Concerns with the membership system is indicated by the central role such a portal is supposed to play. It also speaks of the need to use cloud technology to improve monitoring of the elections.

As we move towards the 2020 NGC we need to ask ourselves, how can the advances in technology be used to strengthen the organisation. By this we do not mean the simple increase in membership though, as discussed above about digital parties, new approaches can help widen the ANC membership base – especially amongst the young. Strengthening should also mean increasing the level of participation in policy discussions, sharing of information and even electoral processes.

Perhaps the starting point would be inserting the potential role of digital media into the perennial debate on the modernisation of the ANC. This should impact on the very DNA of the ANC’s approach to organisational form, internal democracy and campaigning.

One of the fears traditional parties have about adopting



digital media more comprehensively is that it opens up membership to all kinds of unsavoury characters. We need to simply look at the fights which occur at every level of our organisation to acknowledge that such unsavoury characters did not need social media for that to happen, get elected onto its various bodies and then use their positions to access or dispense patronage.

Making our organisation easier to access will allow sympathisers as well as former members to stay in touch with the organisation, get news about its events, follow its debates and contribute to its coffers.

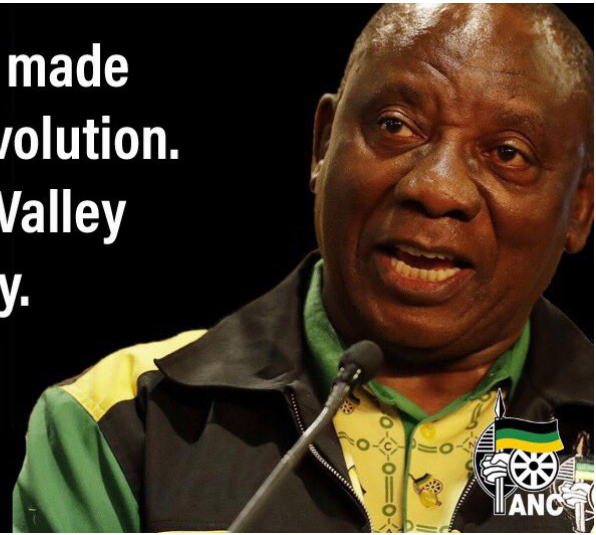
Leadership of the party should be able to access the insights which can be gleaned from such platforms. As South Africa’s Mongezi Mtati founder of WordStart explained “social media platforms give us the ability to research keywords, discussions and hashtags which are clues around what people feel about certain topics” (2019)^{xiv}.

In the corporate world and amongst many of the parties adapting to digital technologies, two positions have become critical:

- the communications function has as a central component social media, and
- organisations are getting experts in analytics and insights. These experts are required to, inter alia, mobilise the power of all manner of research by accessing social media in helping shape the strategies a party should follow.

This does not mean that the ANC relinquishes its vanguard role of the national democratic revolution. Just as, for example, a tourism company would not stop being a tourism company if it uses insights from social media. It is just that in the age of artificial intelligence we have many more tools to understand the needs, aspirations and concerns of our base.

I want our young people to be made ready for the 4th industrial revolution. My dream is to have a Silicon Valley type of situation in our country.



Nor should it mean that individual leaders should not use social media. In fact, Mtati (2019) argues that “having individual voices and responses resonates more with people than media statements and strict, scripted party lines, and the resulting content feels more honest, authentic and transparent”.

But neither should it mean a free for all. The ANC will need to more strictly monitor and sanction trespasses of its communication policies. The vanities of leaders, notwithstanding which part of a house they wish to show off their prowess be it in the bedroom or kitchen, must be harnessed by the overall interest of the organisation and the country.

There is a concern that social media will make our already noisy democracy even noisier. This does not have to be the case. Mtati recommends that political parties could consolidate social media interactions into a single, owned platform that anyone can get access to. Such a ‘microsite’ will ensure you separate yourself from the noise and make content more visible “Your digital team can then curate conversations, Tweets, Instagram images and video content that can be displayed on the site. Some of this content can be referred back to for articles and other content”.

We must not forget the lessons of the European parties which has shown that people still desire meetings or physical contact for the establishment of social presence. However, we need to move away from the traditional setting of ANC meetings where the branch, regional or provincial executives feel that they must sit at the front, and especially on a raised platform.

This ‘cult of the induna’ would have to give way to the needs of the ‘woke generation’ which – young as they may be – profoundly believe that they bring something of value into our ongoing conversations. And they certainly are, keeping in mind that the median age in South

Africa is 26.6 years. Young people are not just the future. They shape contemporary social movements and have the potential to impact on politics in very profound ways.

What are the risks we run if we do not urgently look at the implications of the digital age for the ANC?

- The ANC could fall to ‘pasokification’, seeing its membership and support eroding election after election.
- The ANC policy debates would continue being dominated by the old aristocracy, and hence not capture the dynamism and vigour of open debates.
- It’s renewal project will be stillborn, ensuring that it becomes distanced from the millennials and Generation Z who are the voting base of the future.

So, what is to be done?

Perhaps prior to the 2020 conference the ANC should carry out an audit of its presence in social media and review its online platforms so that a better strategy can be proposed. This must be part of the organisational renewal discussions and processes.

The implications of this audit would need to be spelt out in terms of capacity, resources and organisational structures. Needless to say, much of this can be done online.

The most critical step will have to come from the leadership who should recognise that reading speeches from iPads, while sending the right signals, could also be sending mixed messages entrenching the digital divide reflective of SA’s inequality. It’s a bit like the leadership podium drinking champagne at rallies. They should not stop doing that but should also show their resolve to take the entire country into the digital age.

Furthermore, drumming to the beat of the 4IR is insufficient if it does not have a ruling party which embodies politics in the digital age.

The most important step is to embrace the digital era with the aim of overcoming these divides, of improv-

ing the skills of all South Africans, of reducing the costs and entry barriers to the twenty first century.

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Is Today's **A WORLD OF UNIPOLARITY** *or* **MULTIPOLARITY** *or* **BIPOLARITY?**

■ *For an entire liberation movement which has always prided itself with the correct reading of the balance of forces in an ever-changing environment, this conclusion of primary unipolarity and secondary multipolarity is an unfortunate capitulation to parochial liberal theories which history have proven wrong. When all is said and done, this conclusion means we are falling into the trap of the end of history theory which suggests that Liberalism and Capitalism have won, and therefore they have no potential of being replaced by a more progressive mode of production or outlook in the socio-political system of human development.*

By **THATO MAGOGODI**



READING THESE balance of forces correctly has always given the ANC an upper-hand because it has always known when and how to act under different conditions of struggle with necessary revolutionary timing. Other liberation movements have either suffered from being dismissed by history as adventurist because they applied certain tactics too early. Or as opportunist because they applied those tactics too late without a clear strategy.

If we study the evolution of the Strategy and Tactics (S&T) tomes of the movement hitherto, from Morogoro to Nasrec, we will appreciate that in the third conference (i.e. Durban Conference) ever to discuss this

document, a controversial debate on the international balance of forces arose. The significance of this conference in the history of the movement is that it was the last conference of the ANC before the democratic breakthrough and the first inside the country after its unbanning. In the aftermath of this conference there was a school of thought that contended that the international balance of forces was not adequately discussed, particularly because the document did not sufficiently appreciate the shift of polarity, from a bi-polar to a unipolar world due to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of the United States (US) as a hegemon.

History is repeating itself regarding the debate on the conclusion of the analysis on the international balance

of forces from Nasrec. As a historic recurrence, this time around the international balance of forces analysis does not appreciate the shift of power from one pole to many other poles with the dwindling hegemony of the US. On the contrary, the analysis has produced a shift denialist model of primary unipolarity and secondary multipolarity.

Under the topic “*Assessing the Global Balance of Forces*” it was wrongly resolved that “*the world, currently, is characterized primarily by unipolarity and secondary multipolarity*” (ANC STRATEGY & TACTICS 2017 ; Pg 18). The key motivation for reading global balance of forces this way is that on the one hand Capitalism is the dominant social system with negligible variants. Furthermore, countries propagating an alternative system are involved in a web of mutual dependence with Capitalism. Secondly, the US has uncontested military dominance. All of which crafts the basis to characterize the world as primarily unipolar.

On the other hand, the motivation is that there are other new and emerging points of growth that are beginning to hold their own by distributing substantive global power but not enough to depose the US as a sole superpower. Similar power is also being distributed into the multilateral system through regional blocks or unions serving only as a limited counterweight to US dominance, all of which crafts the basis to characterize the world as secondarily multipolar.

Looking at the four pillars of global state power, this piece will also unpack the role and nature of power in international relations because this is a topic which a lot of political ideologues have not sufficiently invested in but comment on with unfortunate ignorance. David Baldwin says “*there is widespread consensus among international relations scholars on both the necessity of addressing the role of power in international interactions and the unsatisfactory state of knowledge about this topic*” (D.A Baldwin; Handbook of International Relations, Pg 273; 2013).

This is an important debate for any liberation movement, as it invokes a scientific environmental scan. Politico-economic environmental scanning is the process of gathering consequential information that will affect an organization and its objectives as a function of internal and external factors or dynamics. In this regard we focus on the external factors, noting that the internal factors have been sufficiently debated and relatively understood in the ANC of today. In this regard, our angle of externality is specifically couched on the international balance of forces as our area of examination. At all material times, the ANC has to understand how power is distributed internationally, and how it must relate to it without taking its eyes off the historic mission.

THE IDEOLOGY OF HEGEMONY OR PREPONDARANCE

Our simple understanding of the concept of hegemony or preponderance is that it is a state of affairs where a single power has overwhelming influence over others. If this simple understanding is extended to the terrain of inter-state power it will have to grapple with the four key pillars of global state power. These are namely economic, political or ideological, military and cultural power. If a state among many has dominance in three or all of these four ingredients of power concurrently, it is likely to become a superpower.

If there is no other superpower that contests this strength, it is likely to become a hegemonic or preponderant state. In balance of forces terms, this hegemonic state of affairs assumes the character of a unipolar world. This was the case after the Soviet Union collapsed in the early 1990’s when the US was the most dominant in the four ingredients of power. A situation which led the likes of Francis Fukuyama and other parochial scholars to conclude that we had reached the end of history, and that this US hegemony will never be disrupted in these four pillars of global power.

Treating the subject of the weakness of strong states towards the end of the 1980’s, Fukuyama once argued that the other strong states which posed a threat to US dominance were collapsing because they were no longer appealing to their citizens ideologically. As he had put it “*the critical weakness that eventually toppled these strong states was in the last analysis a failure of legitimacy – that is, a crisis on the level of ideas*” (F. Fukuyama, The End of History; Pg 15; 1989). The essence of his argument is that countries like Russia as a leader of the Soviet Union had lost the battle to contest US dominance because their socialist ideas were no longer seen as attractive by the citizenry in the broader Soviet Union and the world at large, which forced Gorbachev to come with his Perestroika and Glasnost Openness Policies leading to a change of ideological outlook in governance. This is Fukuyama’s main argument, which he eventually realized was analytically injudicious.

The fall of the Soviet Union, in retrospect, for everyone who believed otherwise was not a death of the popularity or legitimacy of socialist ideas in the world but just a disruption of an ideological block. Besides Russia, countries like South Korea, Nepal, Nicaragua, Cuba and China still consider themselves as socialist in orientation despite their survival in a Capitalism mode of production. Even though they are involved in a web of mutual dependence with Capitalism as our S&T argues, our theory of revolution teaches us that socialism is just but a deliberate period of transition from capitalism to communism. Furthermore, the fact that a lot of

governments have not pronounced that they are socialist has no bearing on the class reality that the majority of the ordinary citizens of the world who are trapped in poverty because of capitalism have now lost faith in it ideologically and are hoping for alternative paths of development.

From a class perspective, the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci crafted the Marxist concept of hegemony to also explain the idea that the ruling class can manipulate the value system and mores of a society, so that their view becomes or looks like the world view. This manipulation was taken further to denote the politico-military dominance of certain states over others. This is the cardinal point that a younger Fukuyama in 1989 failed to observe and therefore erroneously exaggerated the longevity of US dominance. This is the very point the S&T must never miss in its modeling of the current international balance of forces.

Unlike many who ponder over these complex questions in abstraction, Gramsci is believable because he was both an ideologue and an activist at the same time. He was able to combine theory and practice to actualize what he wrote. He did this because he believed the proletariat needed organic intellectuals who emerged from their ranks, understood their issues conceptually and advanced them with a semblance of revolutionary passion and practical method. He wanted to be an example of these organic intellectuals. So when he crafted the concept of hegemony, amongst others, he was creating theory for the purpose of practice, not theory for the sake of it. Now if we use hegemony to analyze the world we must use it to guide action.

If we say that the US is the current superpower (and every other pole of power is secondary) through the “*primary unipolar-secondary multipolar analysis*” of our S & T document, we must know that we are guiding or misguiding action for the entire liberation movement in pursuit of its historic mission. The direction we take in action must take into account all the hard facts but guided by revolutionary ideology.

Is the World Primarily Unipolar and Secondarily Multipolar?

For an entire liberation movement which has always prided itself with the correct reading of the balance of forces in an ever-changing environment, this conclusion of primary unipolarity and secondary multipolarity is an unfortunate capitulation to parochial liberal theories which history have proven wrong. When all is said and done, this conclusion means we are falling into the trap of the end of history theory which suggests that liberalism and capitalism have won. Therefore they have no potential of being replaced by a more progressive mode of production or outlook in the socio-political system of human development.

To consult the classics, it is perhaps necessary to go back to the outline of the 1845 German Ideology tome, specifically in the Eleventh Theses on Feuerbach in which Karl Marx reminds us that “Philosophers have hitherto only interpreted the world in various ways, the point however is to change it”. In this outline, Marx is trying to break away from abstract theory into radical historicism, which was the basis for crafting his theory of historical materialism. What is important to lift from this citation is that our analysis of international balance of forces must be realistically consistent with how we want to influence the development of history and force it to move towards the improvement of human life in general within the vision of creating a better world and a better Africa in particular. A revolutionary liberation movement such as the ANC must never accept the hegemony of liberal preponderance as a reality that cannot be altered by exaggerating its influence as we do in the ‘primary unipolarity and secondary multipolarity model’.

The cardinal point of reality is that the world cannot be both unipolar and multipolar at the same time because these two cannot co-exist. History teaches us that the world can either only be unipolar, bipolar or multi-polar and not two of these at the same time. This “*primary and secondary polarity concept*” in hegemony is an ahistorical fallacy which will blind any scientific reading of the global balance of forces in an ever-changing environment of global affairs. The world we know has only experienced unipolarity, bipolarity and multipolarity all existing on their own.

The world we live in today by its nature and content is indeed multi-polar given the different pockets of power distribution that exist. Besides the US, China and Russia are powers on their own which have surpassed the US on some of the four pillars of global state hegemony. Multilateral Institutions, multi-national co-operations which influence the policies of other governments are also global pockets of power on their own that qualitatively contest US hegemony.

The four pillars of global state hegemony (Does the US pass the test?)

Looking firstly at economic hegemony: Donald Trump, whose country the power of primary uni-polarity is attributed to, is just but a noisy and empty shark with big teeth that has the airtime through US controlled international media to make empty noise. Other global players like Xi Jinping who is a small-looking cone snail with more dangerous harpoon like teeth can excrete a deadly venom called political conotoxin. This toxin can stop nerve cells from communicating with one another

and thereby causing deadly paralysis, which is what is proverbially happening in the US-China Trade War as an example in modern history.

In this case, the skin of the US economy has been bitten by the cone snail in China and it is reaching a point of paralysis. The US economy is the most indebted economy and most of this debt is owed to China and Japan which is more than one-third of its foreign holdings. In 2011 the US debt to China was 9.1% which amounts to \$1.3 Trillion, but has only been negligibly reduced to 5% which is still huge in economic terms. According to Wikipedia in 2018 China owned \$1.18 Trillion of US debt which makes its economic hold on the US more venomous. To illustrate the point further, there are more wealthy people in China than there are in the US. Put in dollar-millionaire-terms there are more millionaires in China than there are in the US as we speak.

Looking at political or ideological hegemony: Firstly, it is becoming clear that the US influence in multilateral institutions is politically dwindling. The recent most glaring case is when the World Trade Organisation ruled against the US in its tariff dispute with China. The US could not use its historic global political influence to sway the direction of the case. Secondly, as one of the great powers in the world today, Russia convened the most successful Summit between a single North Power and African countries collectively in recent history. This was not just based on the mutual economic interests of all parties, but it was fortified by ideological convergence because Russia is currently generally regarded as a progressive country in global affairs as opposed to the US which is seen as right-wing and anti-African in interest. Based on these cases alone it is not necessary to mention that in the UN the US shares power with other members of the Security Council which are treating it with suspicion given the schizophrenic foreign policy choices of the Trump administration as a result of losing political influence in the world.

Looking at military hegemony: The test of military superiority rests on four key issues which are namely military intelligence, numbers in the land and air forces, the superiority of military technology and military equipment. Whilst we admit that the US has the most powerful defence force because of its investment in military technology, equipment and size of the budget we must note that it is not invincible because, amongst others, of the porousness of its military intelligence which was exposed by 9/11 and continues to be exposed hitherto.

Secondly, The People's Liberation Army Ground Force of China has the world's largest army with more than 1.6 Million troops giving China an added advantage in the number science of warfare. The US in this regard is number three trailing behind India (with less than 1.5

million reserve and active duty troops put together). China as a technology hub in the world is also using this endowment to advance its army for conventional war purposes limiting the superiority of the US army.

Looking at cultural hegemony: In the late 1980s and early 1990's there is no doubt that the US was culturally hegemonic. As an example, the US music industry produced one of the biggest Multiple Grammy Award Winners who was the first and only artist to have five of his solo albums sell over 20 million copies worldwide according to Wikipedia, in the huge name that Michael Jackson was. In the television industry it housed Hollywood, which then and hitherto has the biggest television industry in the world. These two industries, amongst others, connived to give the US mammoth cultural hegemony in the world in terms of global influence in soft-power in the period under discussion. All other continents beyond the Americas saw young people hero-worshipping US stars like Michael Jackson to a point colossal assimilation.

However, when we study the world today, the US cultural hegemony has begun to melt. For instance in the African continent, the ascendance of Presidents like Thabo Mbeki brought back the discourse of the African Renaissance which confronted the cultural identity crisis of the African child to a point on reversing the damage. For instance in South Africa social icons like Bob Mabena, wanted to be called Kgomotso Mabena and no longer Bob Mabena, political icons like Sam Shilowa now wanted to be called Mbazima Shilowa which trend symbolically influenced African consciousness as juxtaposed to Americanism and Euro-centrism. Among many such cultural shift engaging efforts in more recent history – the fallist student movement has also called for the Africanisation of Curriculum in tertiary education.

Both the African and Asian continents now have a huge television and music industry that challenges American cultural hegemony. Big music stars like Beyonce are seen coming to Africa to copy the sounds and dance moves like Pantsula dance which is a sign of cross-pollination of ideas instead of assimilation. The African television industry has grown with the rise of Nollywood and Joziwood, with India in Asia also making its global mark through Bollywood. Vietnam in Asia is able to produce international music stars like Suboi with more than 106k subscribers from all over the world. South Africa in Africa has internationally acclaimed music DJs like Black Coffee who scooped a BET Award in 2016 for the best international act. All of this means the influence of television and music is no longer only coming from the US alone. This cultural reverberation of Africanism and Asianism has begun to fortify alternative belief systems and introduce a signifi-

cant cultural paradigm shift that has reduced American cultural hegemony.

Based on the above we can safely conclude that the world is actually multipolar, as the four pillars of its power have been taken away from the US as disrupted by time and space. Where the world stands today, power is distributed sufficiently in different pockets. These range from the US, other countries like China and Russia, multilateral institutions and multi-national co-operations. In the multilateral arena specifically, beyond the old blocks, the emergence of BRICS serves to shift power from historic pockets giving its member countries a platform to craft their development without the support of the US or the erstwhile all-powerful Bretton Woods institutions.

Conclusion

If the US is not preponderant or hegemonic in three of the four key ingredients of power it cannot be the sole dominant superpower at this current conjuncture of history. Its location in the distribution of power cannot be scientifically described as primary unipolarity, rendering the other poles of power as secondary.

In other words, the US is significantly contested in all four fronts of power pockets except in military power although new military powers are beginning to emerge like China and India with Russia also being an alternative military power.

We must also pre-empt those who may want to abuse the concept of the unity and the struggle of opposites to justify this view (of primary unipolarity and secondary multipolarity) which is a central category in the superior ideological notion of dialectical materialism in Marxism, by firstly clarifying that unipolarity and multipolarity are not necessarily diametric opposites. The point is that these stations (unipolarity as juxtaposed to multipolarity) are not politically situated on the further side of each other when politically analysed from a specified conceptual viewpoint. Put differently they are not the reverse image of each other and therefore to employ them as dialectical opposites is disingenuous to justify their co-existence.

Thato Magogodi is the Former Head of Political Education of the ANC North West. He writes in his personal capacity.

ENCOUNTERING 'THE PEOPLE' IN PUBLIC DECISION SPACES

- *The term 'radical transformation', in the context of inclusive democracy, cannot be understood without decision makers, at all levels, taking an active part in mobilising 'the people' such that they mobilize themselves for fundamental change. Ultimately, then, politics is an active engagement in morality, beyond structure and power. Politics is what we do to alleviate pain wherever we encounter it within and beyond our borders. It is the humanism of the next person that is the ground and measure of political activism.*



By **PROFESSOR MUKE NKONDO**

ATTEMPTS to fuse lived experience, knowledge, politics, public service, and ethics lies behind the need to respond to the following questions:

- What shapes lived experience of 'the people' in South Africa today?
- What processes were followed to interpret the lived experience of the people, and whose criteria were used?
- When ordering social and economic relations, which and whose norms and principles provided the basis for analysis and evaluation?
- Since the adoption of the Constitution in 1996, whose social and economic conditions have been transformed fundamentally?
- Whose desires and interests have been served in the main?
- What accounts for desperate poverty, widening unemployment, and persistent social and economic inequality?
- Under what conditions has private provision of public service been justified and in what ways has it been regulated?
- Admitting that our situation, caught in the global flow of capital, is precarious, what should we do practically to initiate fundamental change?
- Is our ethical and political duty not to just become aware, passively, but to fully assume our collective responsibility?
- Recognizing that poverty, unemployment and socio-economic inequality are made and not found, what in our policy, legislative and regulatory framework accounts for state capture, corruption and systemic violence?
- In what ways can public integrity be taught both at the level of thought, feeling and attitudes?
- Why is there disjuncture between knowledge and action, as well as values and desire?

Encounters with 'the People' in Public Decision Spaces

The last twenty-six years have taught us it is one thing to start a revolution and another to institutionalize it. Translating revolutionary ideas into action and turning aspiration into action, have, of course, been the goals of the African National Congress.

However, radical social and economic transformation has been extremely hard to achieve. The ANC is confronted by a new political and economic basis for policy and strategy development, transformation of the relations between the state and market forces, professionalization of the public sector, democratization of technology, linking diverse democratic struggles, emergence of ethnic nationalism and exploring the link between systemic and subjective violence.

Who are 'the people' in South Africa today? At the moment, the term is vague and indeterminate, as a result, dismissible as mere rhetoric.

Given the fact that 'the people' is a differential social identity, we have to determine the whole within which it is constituted. This is well advised because we are not postulating any necessary structural centre, endowed within a priori determination that constitutes a totalizing horizon. We have to proceed from the interaction of the various and different social struggles and formations.

Throughout the history of the struggle for agency and the sovereignty of 'the people', they have emerged as a political construction defined in terms of democratic social and economic demands, sensitive and resistant to hegemonic power (Laclau, 2005). The demands start as a request, but if nothing is done, they intensify into a claim (as in demanding service delivery or punishment of corrupt leaders).

It is in the escalation of requests to demands that we find the defining feature of 'the people' (demands for land expropriation without compensation, free education for the poor, cognitive freedom, cultural justice, living wage, drinkable water, sanitation, reliable and affordable public transport, jobs, gender justice, xenophobia, and so on). If nothing changes fundamentally, there is an accumulation of unfulfilled demands, an increasing inability of the state system to absorb them, the decline in public trust and confidence, and violence.

This will result in the formation of an internal frontier, a response to the antagonism at the core of our politics, and an equivalent articulation of demands making the emergence of the people's movement possible. This will lead to the unification of the various demands going beyond a vague solidarity, into a stable social and economic force. This results partly from the unavail-

ability of a national anti-status-quo formation in which the 'people' could inscribe their demands (Rudé, 1964).

Private entrepreneurial greed, entrenched interests, racial and ethnic bonds, elitism, and so on, force 'the people' to identify 'oppressors' and 'enemies' and to introduce a discourse of radical transformation, in the process debunking the neoliberal claim that it is a panacea for a fissure less society. Instead, it divides society into two camps, with 'the people' aspiring to be conceived as the only legitimate force.

So 'the people', in South Africa now, are the marginalized, the excluded, the oppressed. This distinction is socially and economically constructed – the relation is an antagonistic one. 'All power to the people', in this context, is not a populist claim. It is a valid, legitimate claim to sovereignty.

However, the two camps, structured around an incompatible neoliberal order, can be negotiated and overcome. Of all the interventions proposed in the literature, none is more persuasive than collaborative and deliberative decision structures and processes.

Public Service: Encounters with the Next Person

It is always helpful to know what the ANC has in mind when it seeks to renew itself as an organization and develop a public service grounded in people-oriented values. What does the ANC need in order to inculcate, in officials and elected representatives, a rigorous values-based public sector? Practical experience and research on public service values yield critical insights.

- a) **Insight One.** Renewal of organizational structures and regulations is not enough. One aspect of coming to terms with 'the next person' in public service spaces can be read is the necessarily clinically working through of the question of difference. This has to do with the next person or the other across differences of all sorts, with one's relation to the next person, and one's responsibility to and for the next person.
- b) **Insight Two.** Following on from this, there is acknowledged here the question of public obligation, an integral part of any philosophical and practical account. The phrase 'the next person' is significant inasmuch as it resists reducing every next person to a generalized manifestation of identity or difference, which occurs perhaps too often in theoretical and political discussions of identity and difference (Foucault, 1981; Levinas, 1990).
- c) **Insight Three.** In attending to the intricate demands of the question of identity and difference, and recognizing the contested conditions of such

responsibility, how might it be possible to consider such questions in the development and management of public service? Where we encounter the national, racial, ethnic, class, gender and sexual orientation other within events, structures, and institutions. Which implicitly rely on a mode or form of life antagonistic or even inimical to our sense of personal responsibility to or for the next person?

- d) **Insight Four.** But the next person can only be experienced, in both public and private spaces, as she enters into our consciousness, that is to say, in the process ceasing to be absolutely different. This at the same time when a process of change, a mutual recognition of transformation in the self under the impact of the encounter with the next person, or our framework of knowing and mutual recognition, are configured, and the next person infringes upon our 'self', occurs in real life. There is no way to exclude any possibility beforehand: this would be to impose a category (such as African, European, black, white, foreigner, coloured, male, female, gay, lesbian, heterosexual, educated, illiterate), upon the next person, and to set limits on the possibility for change, and failing to make full use of the immensity of being.
- e) **Insight Five.** Why is the ANC exploring the possibilities of Batho Pele and Thuma Mina as public policy? Perhaps to understand the genius of Batho Pele and Thuma Mina is to interpret them as the realization that at a certain point one has to trust the goodness of those who will live other lives and develop other theories of public service. A way of acknowledging that every human being is working out of the desire for a wide fellow-feeling and solidarity, and that no such working out gets completed. It cannot get completed because there is nothing to complete, there is only a web of relations to be reworked, a web which time structures and complicates every day (Luthuli, 1962; Rorty, 1989).
- f) **Insight Six.** One way, perhaps the most important way in renewing the ANC and transforming the public service, in which such encounters happen, is through heightened attention to acts of listening, speaking, writing, and reading, experienced as acts of mutual recognition mediated through language and cognition. One has to acknowledge, though, that the changes brought about by welcoming the 'next person,' recognizing our shared humanity, may not be a kind of which you or I, or the public service institution, which governs state-people interactions, would approve. It's a risky business, a raid into otherness – a foreign territory not yet travelled, vulnerable to all sorts of risks, to which *Batho Pele* and *Thuma Mina* values provide an essential frame of reference.
- g) **Insight Seven.** The next person – the other – is always relative to a state or order of things, at a certain time and place, which is described both in social and psychological terms, as Foucault does in *Madness and Civilization*, *The Order of Things*, and *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. In fact, the existing frameworks of understanding and practice, in South Africa, an admixture of nationalism and neoliberal democracy, depend on the exclusion of 'the other' for their untroubled operation. So 'the other' in whom, in the process, we recognize ourselves is not apprehended because it would threaten the status quo, order of things, system, canon, establishment, orthodoxy, hegemony and truth.
- h) **Insight Eight.** There can be no standard pedagogical modes whereby 'the other' can be brought into the field of the apprehended; this is what we mean by calling the next person 'the other.' All the neoliberal pedagogical and epistemological formulas we possess are incapable of producing a version of 'the other.' But we might be able to increase the possibility of comprehending 'the other,' by the attentive listening to the people around us in the public domain. By 'listening,' I mean the process of becoming aware of patterns of silence, rupture, inconsistency, and so on, in the public service field. The O.R. Tambo School of Leadership is one space in which this kind of opening – a truly fresh raid into 'the other' – could be encouraged and sustained (Buber, 1971).
- i) **Insight Nine.** Responsibility to and for the other is an essential prerequisite for public service in *Thuma Mina/Batho Pele* – based public institutions and organizations. Sharing is a human phenomenon, and it is unfortunate that public institutions and organizations so often create barriers that make this impossible, and so weaken the capability of the state to bring about a truly inclusive political, social, and economic system (Deleuze, 1994). A way of saying that these values should be part, not only of public service, but of everyday life, and not mere compliance with audit requirements.
- j) **Insight Ten.** The ANC's programme for organizational renewal is an attempt to unravel these intricate relationships and to provide a new framework for understanding public service as a site for ethical, social, and political education and practice. The question of *Batho Pele* and *Thuma Mina* public service is by definition posed in terms of how we should inhabit the world and care for each other in it – which is completely different from the current neoliberal approach that aims first to divide and enclose what we call 'one of us.' Often, the desire for difference emerges, in modern neoliberal democracies, precisely when people experience intense exclusion. In these conditions, the proclamation of a values-driven public service is desire for mutual rec-

ognition and inclusion. But as we can see from the public service project, the proclamation for public ethics is only a facet of a larger project – the project of a brave new order, freed from the burden of race, ethnicity, sexism, homophobia, elitism, nationality, xenophobia, and systemic violence (Ricouer, 1999).

- k) **Insight Eleven.** Why is it that the South African revolution seems to have failed to create a revolutionary sensibility and moral imagination? Which revolution in post colonies has?

Social Categories to Particular Individuals: **Knowing any Person in Pain**

Knowing any person in pain, and still more so, knowing what it is to know a person in pain, is as much a reflective as about an interactive experience. The significance of allowing oneself to know a person in pain, and coming to recognise this psychological and ethical process, as opposed to conceptualising pain and thinking about an individual as a philosophical category, is perhaps one of the most pressing and fundamental questions for those of us engaged in revolutionary morality. Which gives rise to several interrelated questions.

To what extent can decision makers work with all who live and work in South Africa so as to encourage each other to explore, in practice, the potential for mutual

recognition and obligation, within the discipline of the constitutional order? In what ways, precisely and practically, can you do so? And in what ways can you imagine revolutionary morality as a possibility within thought, imagination, and will that opens you and others to the experience of mutual recognition and obligation? (Caws, 2004)

Attentiveness to the marginalised, the excluded, the unemployed, the landless, the homeless, the hungry, the raped, the abused – people in pain – has to be developed or, then, better, has to be given a chance to develop. This is equivalent to a kind of active learning, to be actively encouraged. Encouraged everywhere in informal settlements, villages, townships, suburbs, schools, hospitals, prisons, stadiums, and so on; it is an open field, and invokes a space for mutual recognition and a wide fellow-feeling. But this is not a Zen consciousness, in which you are open to the world and notice everything on the same level. As a decision maker, you must cause things to happen in the world.

Than how does one begin to encourage actively the mutual recognition that fundamental change requires, without imposing any kind of control? How, for example, might we encourage an awareness of what seems to be at work in the disruption of conventional social attitudes which radical transformation encourages? Decision makers should investigate and nurture radical interpersonal relationships.

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What Decision Makers Should Consider

The emergence of ‘the people’ requires decision makers to monitor the formation of a new political frontier and the establishment of equivalences between a range of demands as a way of augmenting the capability of the state. This would be a fundamental investment in the sovereignty of ‘the people’ and the state. As has become apparent, the paradigmatic role of multi-vocal decision structures is an integral part of a capable and developmental state – that is to say, there will be no radical social and economic transformation without people’s agency. Sovereignty of ‘the people’ is what revolutionary activism means. The consequences for this analysis are deep and far-reaching.

One may ask, what has all this to do with radical transformation? The answer is very simple: everything. Decision Makers have a permanent responsibility to campaign and mobilize for sovereignty of the people as a force for building a capable, developmental state.

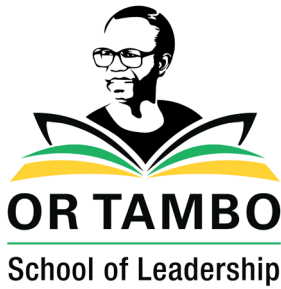
The term ‘radical transformation’, in the context of inclusive democracy, cannot be understood without decision makers, at all levels, taking an active part in mobilising ‘the people’ such that they mobilize themselves for fundamental change. Ultimately, then, politics is an active engagement in morality, beyond structure and power. Politics is what we do to alleviate pain wherever

we encounter it within and beyond our borders. It is the humanism of the next person that is the ground and measure of political activism (Carter, 1991; Biko, 1978; Zuern, 2011; Desai, 2002).

Conclusion

A politics of the lived experience of the poor is inevitably a radical politics. Rather than a check against fundamental change, lived experience of the poor is transformation’s homeland. Understood in this sense, lived experience of the poor is extremely difficult to debunk empirically. There are many examples of political economists who have found in this version of lived experience an invaluable ally. In recent years, it has surfaced as a key term in the vocabulary of the Economic Freedom Fighters, as it did much earlier in the Pan-Africanist and Black Consciousness movements, as it does now in feminist discourses. Understood as a quest for freedom and justice, the lure of intense lived experience of the poor continues to motivate entry into revolutionary activism. There is also the bonding that takes place in the townships, informal settlements, and villages – for solidarity based on common social and economic experience

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Dear Comrade

The OR Tambo School of Leadership is the political school of the ANC, registered to operate as a non-profit organization. The establishment of the school follows the ANC's 54th National Congress resolution.

The school's primary goal is to rollout political education which must ensure cadres are adequately empowered to advance the National Democratic Revolution across state institutions, civic organisations and business sectors.

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OR Tambo School of Leadership is already in the process of implementing a range of programmes aligned to its mandate. These include inductions of ANC Members of Parliament (MP) and Members of Provincial Legislature (MPL), implementation of a Mass Political Education project whose target will include branches, release of various editions of the ANC political education journal, *Umrabulo* and convening **Umrabulo Dialogues** where themes emanating from the *Umrabulo* Journal at that time are discussed.

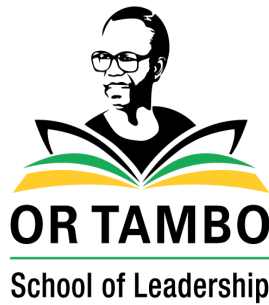
Programs and courses offered by the school are free, meaning alternative means to generate revenue is required. As its immediate beneficiaries, members of the ANC are therefore requested to make contributions within their means towards the school's efforts.

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Kind Regards,

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Given by (name of Accountholder) _____
Address: _____
Bank: _____
Branch and Code: _____
Account Number: _____
Type of Account: Current (cheque) / Savings / Transmission
Amount: R _____ **MONTHLY / ONCE-OFF**
Contact Number: _____

Abbreviated Name as Registered with the Bank: **OR TAMBO**

This signed Authority and Mandate refers to our contract dated _____ ("the Agreement").
I / We hereby authorise you to issue and deliver payment instructions to your Banker for collection against my / our abovementioned account at my / our above-mentioned Bank (or any other bank or branch to which I / we may transfer my / our account) on condition that the sum of such payment instructions will never exceed my / our obligations as agreed to in the Agreement and commencing on _____ **and continuing until this Authority and Mandate is terminated by me / us by giving you notice in writing of not less than 20 ordinary working days and sent by prepaid registered post or delivered to your address and/or email as indicated above.**

The individual payment instructions so authorised to be issued must be issued and delivered as follows: **MONTHLY/ ONCE-OFF.**

In the event that the payment day falls on a Sunday, or recognised South African public holiday, the payment day will automatically be the preceding ordinary business day.

Payment Instructions due in December may be debited against my account on _____

I / We understand that the withdrawals hereby authorized will be processed through a computerized system provided by the South African Banks and I also understand that details of each withdrawal will be printed on my bank statement. Each transaction will contain a number, which must be included in the said payment instruction and if provided to you should enable you to identify the Agreement. A payment reference is added to this form before the issuing of any payment instruction.

Mandate

I / We acknowledge that all payment instructions issued by you shall be treated by my / our above-mentioned Bank as if the instructions have been issued by me/us personally.

Cancellation

I / We agree that although this Authority and Mandate may be cancelled by me / us, such cancellation will not cancel the Agreement. I / We shall not be entitled to any refund of amounts which you have withdrawn while this Authority was in force, if such amounts were legally owing to you.

Assignment

I / We acknowledge that this Authority may be ceded or assigned to a third party if the Agreement is also ceded or assigned to that third party, but in the absence of such assignment of the Agreement, this Authority and Mandate cannot be assigned to any third party.

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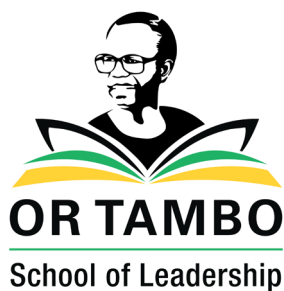
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