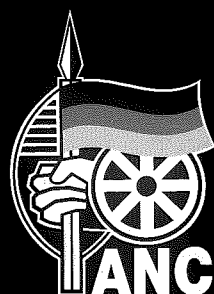
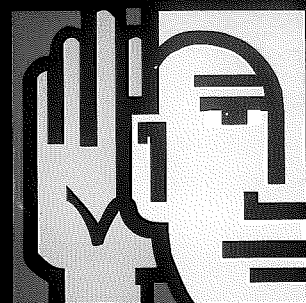


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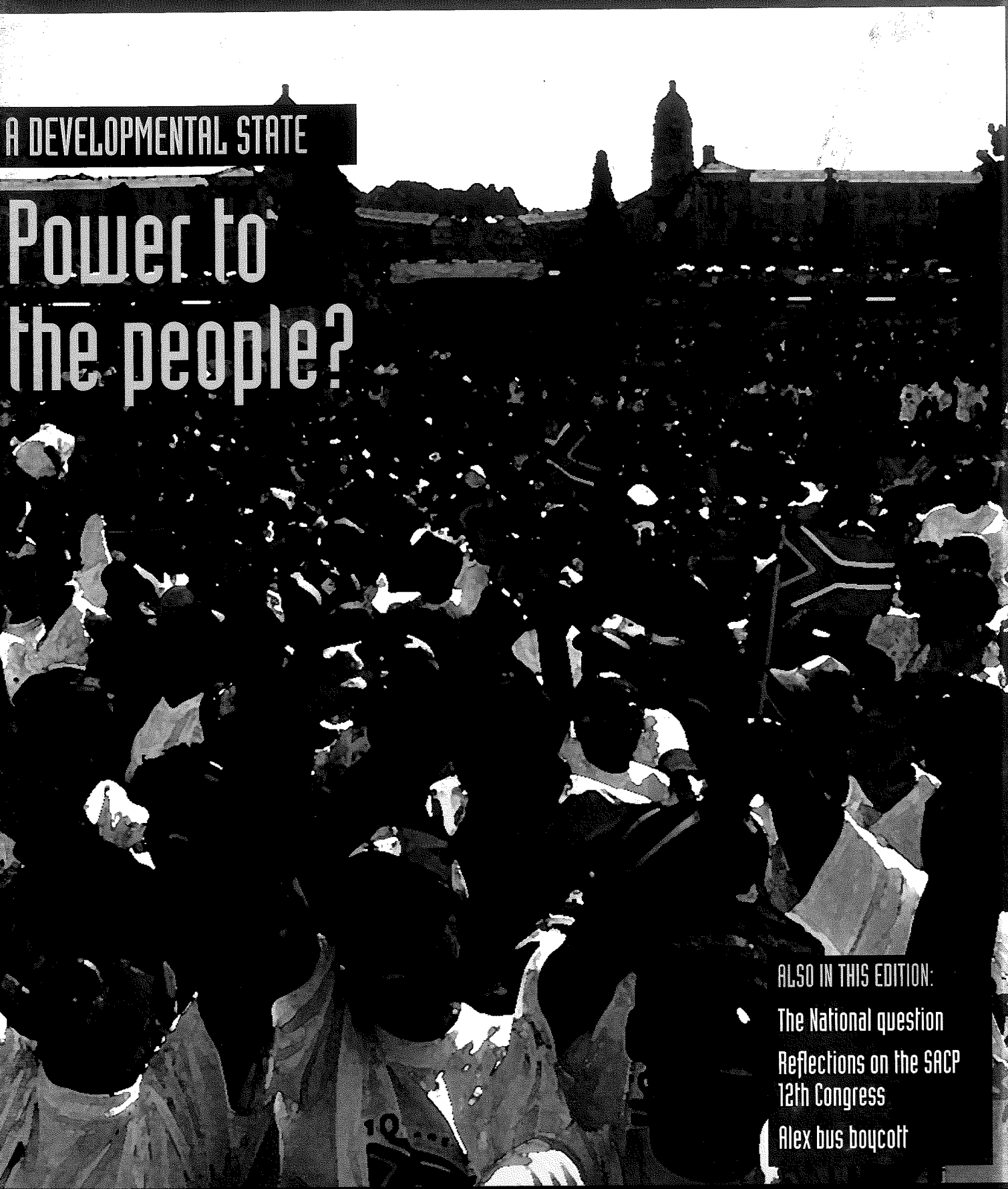
UMRABULO



LET'S TALK POLITICS

A DEVELOPMENTAL STATE

Power to the people?



ALSO IN THIS EDITION:

The National question

Reflections on the SACP
12th Congress

Alex bus boycott

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.

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

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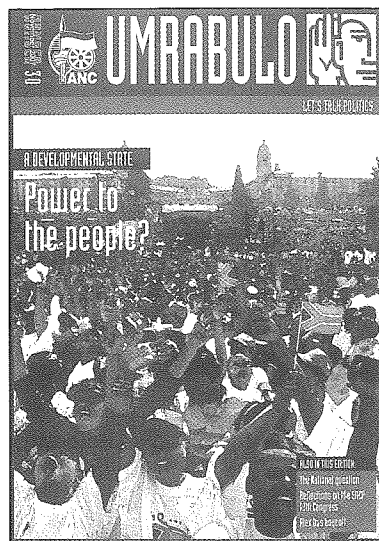
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Editorial

No royal road to science

During the last quarter of 1996, the ANC published the first edition of *Umrabulo*. Eleven years on, we publish the 30th edition, proud that *Umrabulo* has become, somewhat as intended, a critical platform of debate among the Left in our country.

An examination of the first edition, which was based on presentations at a Winter School of the NEC Political Education Committee, shows how far we have travelled since then, when we were seeking to re-examine our theories against the backdrop of the 1994 democratic transition. Therein are discussed such concepts as the National Democratic Revolution (NDR), a developmental state, macroeconomic policies and mass mobilisation.

All too familiar? Indeed, examine the current edition and you will find a similar set of issues. Yet it is in that commonality of broad topics that the similarity ends.

In this edition, the issue of the developmental state is interrogated from different angles with reference to the experiences of other countries, the relationship between a developmental state and progressive social policies, and whether such a state can take shape in an environment of a mature capitalist system and capitalist class.

These issues arise because there is broad consensus that success in implementing social transformation requires the leadership of a strong state that is as rooted among the people as it eschews being captured by a single class interest. Such a state should as much draw from international experience as it is fashioned from concrete South African conditions. It should be a state with all-round capacity – strategic, organisational, technical and otherwise – but one that is more than a lifeless technocratic entity. It should be informed by democracy with a social content.

In this context, issues of social policy, rather than just economic growth, should be central to the outlook of a South African developmental state. Pursuit of full employment should be among its core values. So should matters of international solidarity and the state's relationship with the progressive trade union movement and other structures of civil society.

In other words, what we seek is to create not a

developmental state in general, but a South African developmental state.

This edition also deals with reflections on the relationship between the NDR and socialism, and the challenge socialists face in defining their role under current domestic and global conditions. What the authors seek to do is to bring to the surface theoretical questions that have not found sufficient deliberation in the aftermath of the collapse of 'living socialism'. Attached to this debate are many questions: whether there can be a more radical NDR than one pursued and led by a revolutionary national movement allied to socialist and progressive trade union formations; whether the very concept of socialism has been adequately interrogated; and whether indeed the patient slog counselled in the past should hold today for a political party such as the South African Communist Party (SACP) which has to clarify its attitude, in the here and now, towards state power.

There are many more 'old' and 'new' questions of this kind that deserve continuing debate. In this edition, we have also done the editorially unthinkable – to extract from earlier editions articles on the national question.

There may be similarities of issues and even this uncharacteristic act of recycling. But rest assured, this is not history repeating itself. Rather it is the dialectic of the negation of the negation: experience in government is pushing to their limit the theoretical precepts from yesteryear; and 'old' challenges such as ethnicity are emerging afresh, clothed in modern attire but representing the very demon that the ANC's founders sought to flay.

So, as this edition shows, history marches on, shunning repetitive farces, and at the same time mocking all attempts to ignore its profound lessons. As to the challenge of interpreting it, perhaps Karl Marx should still have the last word: "There is no royal road to science, and only those who do not dread the fatiguing climb of its steep paths have a chance of gaining its luminous summits."

JOEL NETSHITENZHE
Chairperson of the ANC NEC Political Education Committee



An effective developmental state needs a strong Alliance

The challenges of globalisation call for a strong developmental state able to deploy massive resources to meet the needs of the people. Only the Alliance is capable of mobilising the multi-class force necessary to achieve such a state, writes Alec Erwin.

In the ANC National Policy Conference in June 2007 there was general agreement that we had to deepen our understanding of the role of the state and its role in the National Democratic Revolution (NDR). In particular there is a need to define the meaning and function of a developmental state.

Neither the NDR nor a developmental state can be taken for granted. It is absolutely essential that we understand the full complexity of these phenomena. Neither of them can be treated as technical matters that can be brought into existence by political decisions and institutional changes alone,

although both are important. A national democratic revolution is a historically defined possibility requiring a particular conjuncture of class forces. A developmental state is not a stage of development in state formation or a blueprint of governance. A developmental state comes into being when a political movement can translate its political power into a set of institutions that support developmental processes that can be sustained over decades.

While a historical conjuncture may exist with the potential for a national democratic revolution

or a developmental state, such potential can only be translated into a reality if there is strategic and sustained political leadership.

National democratic revolutions have occurred in particular struggles for independence from imperialism and colonialism in the 20th Century. They were a particular national response to external domination and internal class fragmentation. What is interesting about the present period of globalisation is that similar situations are arising. External domination takes the form of powerful global market forces and class forces in national economies have not consolidated to the extent one would expect in mature capitalist economies. The obvious historical point is that an NDR is not some timeless political economy formation. Their content, potential and changing structures have to be analysed within a specific historical period – we have to be analytically clear as to why we conceive of an NDR in a sovereign, democratic and independent nation in the 21st Century. It would be an error to work on the assumption that the NDR of the mid-20th Century will be the same as an NDR in 2007. We must always learn from history but we must not make the mistake of freezing our analysis in past history.

To set out what a developmental state could be in South Africa in this phase of our democracy we will look at the meaning of a national democratic revolution, the forces of globalisation and then the essential features of a developmental state.

NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTIONS

In developing economies the capitalist class has been small and predominantly dependent on its links with the capitalist class in developed economies. The capitalist system in colonised economies developed mainly around the production of primary resources for the developed imperial economies or in the import and export trade. In almost all cases the emerging capitalist class grew under the direction and control of the colonial administrations. The political struggle that emerged was not between the capitalist and working classes but between the colonised and coloniser. In this struggle the embryonic colonial capitalist class did at times break from the domination of the colonial administration and join forces with the anti-colonial forces. However, given the nature of the colonisation and imperialist process the anti-colonial forces consisted of a number of class components – from old aristocracies to the small industrial working class that was emerging. Such class alliances were perforce complex.

The removal of the colonial power was a common objective and easy to mobilise around but the precise form of democracy (or lack thereof) and the economic system to be adopted were more contentious matters, and often resulted in serious

divisions once the colonial administrations were defeated.

These multi-class anti-colonial political movements placed emphasis on different intermediate and final objectives for their liberation struggle. In some cases the defeat of colonialism was seen as allowing a return to previous modes of production with the previous class domination. In others, the defeat of the colonial power was seen as the base from which to modernise the state and the economy and bring about an indigenous capitalist process. In a number of instances the defeat of the colonial power was seen as the basis for modernisation and industrialisation based on mass participation. It was this commitment to power for the masses that distinguished these movements and it was such political programmes that articulated national democratic revolutions.

Generally it was combinations of mass nationalist parties and socialist parties that led such national democratic revolutions. However, where such national democratic revolutions succeeded it was because of clarity on the strategic objectives, which were to defeat the colonial power, establish industrialisation processes and build mass-based power. For the socialist parties these constituted essential intermediate objectives for a subsequent transition to a socialist society. There has been a great deal of theorising and debate around these issues, but what is not in doubt was that success depended on clarity of strategic purpose and unity.

In South Africa the formulation of the struggle has clearly been within the tradition of a national democratic revolution. The confluence of colonialism, particularly brutal racism associated with a large settler population, and the dangers of tribal and ethnic divisions, meant that only a powerful, multi-class and nationalist political movement offered any hope for democracy and national development – this emerged in the form of the ANC and subsequently the Alliance.

In South Africa, leadership has rested with the ANC as a modernising liberation movement with clearly articulated objectives to build a nation state based on non-discrimination, non-racism and equality. There are, however, two very important positions that the ANC and Alliance have consistently taken. The first is the importance attached to the African working class, since it is from this component of the working class that the most committed cadres of a national democratic revolution would come, as its achievement was clearly in their interests. Secondly, the role of the state has always been seen as decisive. The Freedom Charter shows a clear preoccupation with the role of the state in securing strategic economic resources – in the language of the day ‘the commanding heights of the economy’. It is these two consistent positions in particular that have kept ANC programmes

orientated toward benefiting the masses and toward collective and state led actions rather than a dependence on existing economic structures and a reliance solely on market forces. These positions inform the basis of government policy.

However, as was stressed earlier, no national democratic revolution is a static political formation since it has to respond to changing conditions. In our case a very important conjuncture has been reached. The struggle against apartheid was accurately described as a struggle against colonialism of a special type. This is why the ANC and Alliance fall clearly within the proud tradition of anti-imperial and anti-colonial national democratic revolutions. The ANC realised that the NDR would have to be pursued beyond the achievement of democracy. Recently the precise meaning of this continuation has come under consideration. The question that now arises is whether our democratic victory means that the objectives of the NDR have been completed. If we have indeed achieved our objective, as some seem to be assuming, the obvious questions that follow are whether the state should now be an instrument of capitalist advance or whether the time is now right for a push to socialism. As one would expect, elements of the national bourgeoisie are arguing for a move to a market-driven capitalist economy. An analysis of the recent Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and South African Communist Party (SACP) congress resolutions suggests that these two key organisations of the Alliance have come to the latter conclusion.

This article argues that both these positions are wrong and could very well be self-defeating for our development and nation building processes. The national bourgeoisie are weak and the working class too fragmented and vulnerable so that neither a market-driven capitalist nor a socialist path is viable. The ANC position, namely that the NDR would have to be pursued beyond the point of the democratic breakthrough, remains essentially correct. Faced by the new and powerful opportunities and challenges of globalisation it is essential that we strengthen the NDR and build a powerful and effective developmental state. We have to do this to build a nation and an economy that will provide a better life for all. Our progress in the last 13 years should not be taken for granted on any account. To understand this new conjuncture we need to explore the process of globalisation.

GLOBALISATION

The current phase of capitalism that we are referring to as globalisation has a profound and complex impact on all classes within the various national political economies. In addition it impacts on the sovereignty of the nation state as political processes grapple with these very dynamic forces. It

is the revolution in communication and computing technologies that is leading to observable structural changes in the productive forces, production relations and the workings of the international capitalist system. However, these developments are not entirely negative and great progress in development is possible if these dynamic changes are harnessed for the benefit of all our citizens. However, to do this in South Africa we will indeed have to build an effective developmental state.

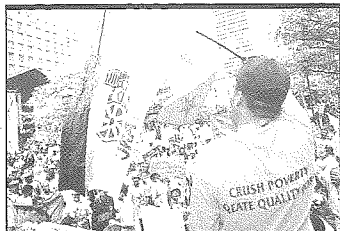
The basic changes within the means of production can be condensed into two powerful and dynamic processes that have developed in this phase of globalisation. The first is the dynamism of technological development and its rapid diffusion into production. This is now a global process and not even the largest economies can match or outperform the global system. This means that an isolated economy, no matter how large, will find its technology falling back in relative terms compared to those economies with strong links to the global system. Even an economy as large as China recognises this danger. In a sense there is a global process that has no regard for national boundaries. This then provides one of the most powerful and immediate curbs on the freedom of action of the nation state.

The second is the dynamism of capital or of the accumulation process and the implications of this for the arrangements of productive forces and the location of investment within the global economy. The magnitude of financial capital is now so large that the accumulation process has to be seen in a global context. The changes in information and communications technology (ICT) mean that capital markets are able to operate across the globe in real time. This provides for massive mobility and indeed volatility within capital flows. This highly mobile capital can combine with communication and computing technologies that allow command and control over production in many different locations. This means that the actual sites of production can now be very dispersed, even on a global scale. This has increased competition between national economies for actual real economy investments and the converse follows, a rapid abandonment of investment in political economies that cannot provide the operating environment for contemporary global capitalist accumulation.

Investment decisions are complex and invariably investors weigh up a number of factors. This means that there are no simple rules to attracting investment. However, the global accumulation process takes place within key global economic systems



*The ANC realised
that the NDR
would have to be
pursued beyond
the achievement of
democracy*



The strength and stability of state power in any one economy depends on the strength and stability of the dominant class or class alliances within that political formation

– capital markets, technology flows, internationally compatible accounting standards, and a predictable and relatively stable macroeconomic environment. None of these has to be perfect but if one or more deteriorates beyond a perceived threshold then the ‘exit’ effect is rapid and usually ‘herd-like’. This volatility and market-driven investment massively exacerbates the problems of uneven development and underdevelopment between nation states and, as serious, within national economies.

One of the most important capital flights is intellectual capital. If the rate of investment falls and skilled workers perceive that both their in-

come and personal development prospects are deteriorating in a particular political economy they will leave it. Such movement is now relatively easy since expanding economies experience acute skill shortages. The labour market for highly skilled and skilled workers is increasingly global.

It is these processes that give rise to important and fundamental changes at a macro level or what are referred to as the production relations. The dynamic of capital mobility calls into question the meaning of a national bourgeoisie and accordingly makes national accumulation processes more volatile. A strong national bourgeoisie is only likely in very large economies and then only if they have access to the global economy. The petit bourgeoisie remains hostage to the forces of capitalism. This has structurally important implications for states and the role they can or cannot play within a political economy.

Such global capitalist accumulation has correspondingly meant that the size and significance of the working class in virtually all modern economies is now vastly greater. A peasantry does not exist in most industrialised economies, although it remains significant in some of the giant developing economies and in Africa. However, this increased significance of the working class in each economy has not really translated into a global working class. A larger working class has not necessarily increased the political power of the working class in the current conjuncture – its complexity; differing incomes and living conditions; ideological intricacies across the globe; and its institutional weakness in relation to capital and states continue to act as barriers to realising its potential strength. The union movement and in some cases the political parties representing the working class are relatively strong but not strong enough to decisively seize state power.

Within the dynamics of change within the production and technology processes, and that of the

mobility and volatility of investment flows, markets flourish. This is important since the operations of markets are more favourable to the interests of capital than labour. So markets mean that the power of capital as a global force will tend to be greater than that of labour despite the enfeeblement of national bourgeoisie. The problem lies in the fact that markets favour the strong and wealthy and not the sellers of labour power. The latter require scarcity, strong unions, institutions and political power to influence the state before they can realise their immanent strength.

The power of markets has grown dramatically over the last few decades. The reason for this is that markets thrive on information and respond to it quickly – a process that has qualitatively and structurally altered with the advent of the communication revolution. There is a profound qualitative difference in the operation of markets across the globe – the very fact that they are, in many cases, operating in real time across the globe is the first element of this profundity. All the strengths and weaknesses of markets are still there, they may be more efficient but their inherent inability to achieve equity or ensure long term socioeconomic and environmental sustainability remain.

The power of markets, the weakening of a national bourgeoisie, the relative weakness of the working class, and the speed with which economic relations now change all have a destabilising impact on institutions that try to manage the wider public good. Such institutions move through political processes and these are perforce slower and more cumbersome – a problem that is exacerbated massively if the political forces are themselves fragmented and therefore weaker. The only counter to such market-driven instability is collective organisation and institutions that can counter these processes. The conjuncture is such that once again it is the traditions of struggle for a national democratic revolution that offer the best strategic path for such collective organisation.

The strength and stability of state power in any one economy depends on the strength and stability of the dominant class or class alliances within that political formation. A strong state is one that can make a decisive structural transformation and intervention within a political economy and then sustain those changes over time and against powerful counter forces in the global economy.

The actual development of classes and their relative strength in this phase of globalisation is more complex than foreseen a mere 20 years or so ago. The processes that have been outlined above have created greater degrees of interdependence and in doing so inextricably linked the capitalist and working classes of all national economies. However, the collectivising institutions that would be necessary to harness collective power or impose

public policy on powerful markets and enterprises are growing, but are weak in their ability to shape the global economy.

Globalisation is a phase of capitalist development where economic processes are able to function very powerfully across national political economies. The power of technological change and the site of that change is increasingly a global process rather than a situation where it develops in one economy and then permeates into other economies. This means that the actual means of production and the organisation of work are now very dynamic with changes occurring in a few short years. The power of markets has grown, and the power of national bourgeoisie and indeed of national working classes is continuously and powerfully eroded by the global processes of accumulation. This circumscribes the power of nation states and weakens and fragments the historic basis for political power within a state.

It is important to stress that this does not make a state powerless, nor are the prospects for economic development bleak. These changes in productive forces, if harnessed in the interests of the majority, can lead to massive development. Marxists will be familiar with this complex dialectic of capitalism. Globalisation does, however, pose very new challenges to how state power can be developed and used and what class alliances would be capable of building such state power. A moment's reflection shows that there are remarkable similarities in terms of the balance of class forces to those characterising the height of the age of imperialism. There are powerful external economic forces and fragmented internal class forces. Accordingly it requires a political movement that can mobilise across national class interests and is organised enough to carry out institutional transformations that can counter the powerful tendencies toward underdevelopment in the global economy.

In the light of the above it is clear that it is strategic interventions in the investment process and the operation of labour markets that will be at the centre of an effective developmental state.

BUILDING A DEVELOPMENTAL STATE

The strength of a state depends on the nature of the class forces that underpin the political power that controls the state. Yet what emerges is that globalisation has had a particularly emasculating effect on national bourgeoisie and the organised power of the working class has not been able to fully take advantage of this, both nationally and globally. The dialectical process has been more complex than expected with the continued growth of the capitalist system. Markets, with all their well-understood strengths and weaknesses, have however become more powerful in the global economic system. This is a very important ana-

lytical conclusion since it points to real dangers for a developing economy and society if a weak national bourgeoisie were to attempt to be the sole political power in control of the state – the classic comprador bourgeoisie would rapidly emerge with all the problems of uneven development and underdevelopment. The national bourgeoisie in South Africa is particularly weak at present. It is politically inchoate, indecisive and its new black entrants too weak to play a decisive economic role. Indeed it would be unwise in the extreme to leave the strategic choices for our future in the political hands of the national bourgeoisie.

We also have to come to the realistic conclusion that it would be no wiser to place sole political power in the hands of a weak and organisationally fragmented working class. The strength of the union movement has not grown as one would have expected in the period of democracy and socialist principles are far from hegemonic. A weak working class power base in an economy the size of South Africa is very vulnerable to isolation by global capital and the effects of this are plain to see in the world. It is a salutary thought that where powerful communist parties are firmly in power they are not seeking to isolate themselves from global forces but to rather manage them to their advantage – in effect they are continuing a national democratic revolution. The exceptions only serve to confirm the rule.

The conclusion we have to come to in South Africa is that there remains only one politically effective mobilising strategy and that is to continue the Alliance as we know it. Residing in the policies and, more important, the history of the Alliance, we find the only basis for mobilising a multi-class political force capable of designing and effecting a strong state that can harness the positives in globalisation and develop defences against its dangers. The work of this Alliance is to consolidate and develop the national democratic revolution within an increasingly complex global world. A united political movement with its roots firmly in mass participation and involvement is the only basis for the decisive, determined and yet patient transformation of our society and economy into a prosperous, stable and tolerant democracy.

The ability of the ANC to provide leadership to all classes is crucial. The principled and strategic support of the union movement and the SACP make this ability a reality since no other party can mobilise an effective mass opposition. It is this political reality that underpins the possibility of an effective developmental state. When groups talk of ‘capturing the leadership’ of the ANC to ensure it is dominated by unionists, socialists or capitalists they are in effect saying we should weaken the ANC's fundamental power, which is its ability to lead a multi-class movement with maximum unity.

If the ANC is weakened in such a way the prospects of a developmental state are exceedingly low. We must be especially wary of subjective and idealist positions that argue from positions of personalities and personal failure instead of from a materialist position.

Faced by the external power of global economic forces a developmental state is one that can effectively counter the forces leading to economic isolation, uneven development and underdevelopment. It has to be brought into being by a powerful multi-class political movement whose determined and persistent objective is the development of its entire people, the economy and the society. Such a movement is nationalist in orientation since it has to be to develop its economy, but its success depends on its ability to influence and contribute to multilateral institutions that are supportive of development. To do this it has to be active in building solidarity among like-minded political movements and nations.

Such a state is not some theoretical model that we have to apply. It is a concrete response to the conjuncture being dealt with and requires a powerful mobilisation of political support to construct its basic institutional features. There are specific challenges that we can identify in our attempt to construct a developmental state.

The first challenge that the developmental state has to meet is to set the strategic parameters for the accumulation process within the national economy. A strong public sector, effective state-owned enterprises, strategic investment initiatives, support for small, medium and micro-enterprises, and an investor-friendly regulatory environment are key dimensions of this coordinated and comprehensive programme. The state has to be capable of directly controlling vast resources and applying them to strategic tasks.

The second is to ensure that our economy and society remains close to the leading edge in the

global development of knowledge and technology and more important that we are able to apply this within our economy and to the full benefit of all of our citizens.

Thirdly, the state has to be composed of efficient and stable institutions that are capable of monitoring, evaluating and effectively implementing complex policy programmes and ensuring that they impact positively across the economy and society. This requires high levels of skill and organisational capacity to be located within the public sector. However, it is also vital that the state facilitates and supports the existence of civil society organisations that can assist with many programmes and create capacity to engage on complex policy and implementation issues. Strong unions and strong business organisations are essential.

In the fourth place, major reforms of the labour market have to be addressed to ensure that workers are the builders of the developmental process and not its continual victims.

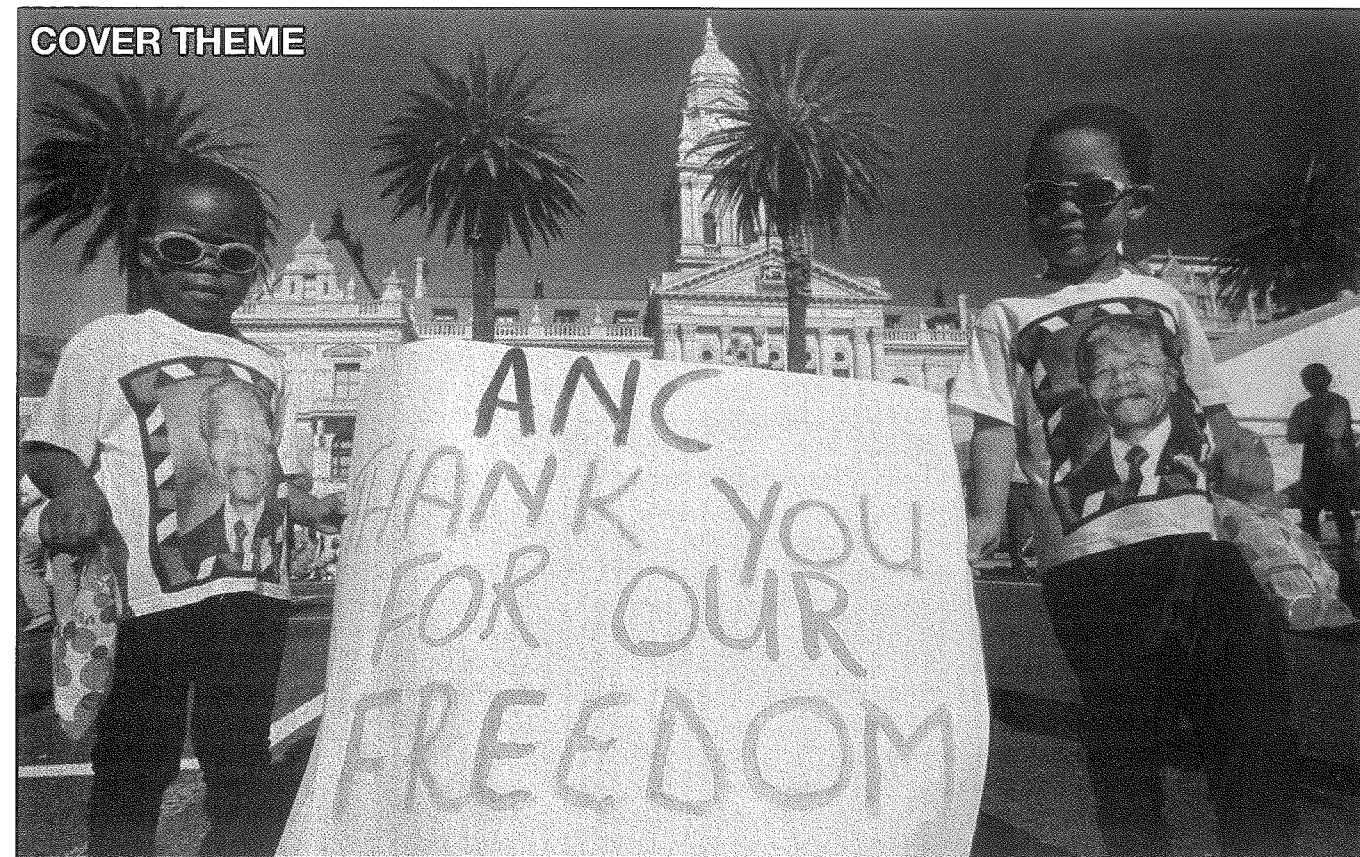
Fifthly, the state must be capable of establishing institutions and processes that prevent the inevitable effects of dynamic change from unfairly falling on those least able to adjust to them. A comprehensive system of support has to be built. Again the state has to have massive resources to undertake this task without adversely affecting other dimensions of the economy and society.

Finally the state must be capable of ensuring that democracy is consolidated, corruption is eliminated and that citizens are secure and the society is stable in its tolerance of diversity.

What must lie ahead of us is 'a luta continua' based on strategic consistency and renewed vigour to build on our considerable achievements over the last thirteen years.

ALEC ERWIN is a member of the ANC National Executive Committee.

COVER THEME



A capable state to build a new nation

The draft strategy and tactics of the ANC makes use of two concepts that are relatively new in the ANC's lexicon: the developmental state and social democracy. Enoch Godongwana outlines the main features of these and asks if they are complimentary or in contradiction with each other. Can we build a state that is both social democratic and developmental?

The task of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) is primarily the creation of non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous society.

Out of a society cast in a racial mould we need to build a new nation. We have to pay attention to gender inequality and the subordination of women in general. Simultaneously we have to ensure a consolidated democracy and improve the quality of life for all South Africans, in particular the poor. In the context of meeting these objectives, we need to construct a state that is capable of delivering on this mandate. That of necessity invokes the theory of constructing a state capable of meeting the needs of our people. That is why the matter has become a focal point of transformation.

The draft Strategy and Tactics document asserts, "In broad terms, the NDR seeks to ensure that every South African, especially the poor, experiences an improved quality of life. It seeks to build a developmental state shaped by the history and

socio-economic dynamics of South African society. Such a state will guide national and economic development and mobilise domestic and foreign capital and other social partners to achieve this goal. It will have attributes that include:

- Capacity to intervene in the economy in the interest of higher rates of growth and development;
- Effective sustainable programmes that address challenges of unemployment, poverty and underdevelopment; and
- Mobilise the people as whole, especially the poor, to act as their own liberators through participatory and representative democracy."

The political discourse on what kind of state we should construct to deliver on these strategic objectives of the NDR, invokes three interrelated concepts, that is, the developmental state, social democracy and the National Democratic Revolution. These concepts are sometimes cast in mutually exclusive terms. Are they?

The 'developmental state' and 'social democracy' are new concepts in the ANC's political lexicon. As would be expected, legitimate questions are posed about the content and relevance of these concepts in the South African context.

FEATURES OF THE DEVELOPMENTAL STATE IN EAST ASIA

What then is the developmental state? What is its political economy? The man credited with coining this concept, was Chalmers Johnson. He observed the socio-economic success of the East Asian newly industrialising countries and concluded that they represented a different path of capitalist development.

Johnson drew attention to the institutional characteristics of these states. These states not only had developmental objectives but they also established institutional arrangements that formulated and implemented policies to meet their objectives. This explains why he argues that his main purpose was to call attention to the differences, not the similarities, between the capitalist economies of the United States and Britain, on the one hand, and Japan and its emulators elsewhere in East Asia, on the other.

What are these distinct institutional attributes of the developmental state? Institutions are the source of the developmental state's transformation capacity. This explains why the developmental state is defined not only in terms of its goals but also in terms of its institutional attributes. This is a particularly important question in the South Africa where – according to Omano Edigheji – policies rather than institutional attributes are given analytical priority in the literature on the developmental state.

Johnson's (1982) account focuses on the golden years of Japan's Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI). He argues that the existence of what he called 'pilot agencies' to coordinate economic change was an important condition for effective policy-making. MITI was such a 'pilot agency' and played the role of a super-ministry in the industrial policy making apparatus (Weiss: 53). Through MITI, the state was central to the provision of new capital. It approved investments loans from the Japan Development Bank. It had authority over foreign currency allocations and licence to import foreign technology. It had the power to provide tax breaks (Evans: 48).

All these powers made it possible for MITI to exercise enormous influence on the direction of industrial policy and structure in Japan

The second attribute relates to the structure of the bureaucracy. The Japanese political culture is one where the public service is held in high esteem. This is why it is easier to recruit from among the best minds. It is high-quality bureaucracy re-

cruited from the top ranks of the best law schools in the country. Appointment is made on the basis of legally binding examinations (Johnson: 13). The duties of this bureaucracy are to formulate broad industrial policy, and identify the means for implementing it. It also has extensive extra-legal powers of "administrative guidance" and is comparatively unrestrained in any way, both in theory and in practice, by the judicial system (Johnson: 13).

Third is the national structure of finance. The state control of finance is the most important, if not the defining, aspect of the developmental state. The state could achieve its developmental objectives by manipulating the financial structure.

The fourth attribute concerns the relationship between capital and state. A common feature of the East Asian developmental states is the existence of organised industry associations that work closely with the state in policy formulation. This government-business relationship coordination and cooperation go hand in hand.

Authoritarianism is another feature of the East Asian developmental state. This based on a view that regards democracy as a valuable long-term goal but a potential impediment to the early stages of socio-economic development. In other words, democracy is a luxury which poor societies can ill afford. Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew puts it in the following words: "I believe that what a country needs to develop is discipline more than democracy. The exuberance of democracy leads to indiscipline and disorderly conduct which are inimical to development". (quoted in White: 22)

A developmental state is also an interventionist state. They define their missions primarily in terms of long-term national economic enhancement. It is a perspective that rejects the neo-liberal approach that advocates individualism, market liberalisation, and contraction of the state. It unambiguously asserts that economic development requires a state which can create and regulate the economic and political relationships that can support sustained industrialisation.

The developmental state also epitomises the struggle for national sovereignty and economic independence. The Japanese faced the harsh reality of a world dominated by the Western powers. They devised a system of political economy that sought to insulate them from such domination. Woo-Cummings argues, "Johnson conveyed the truth that the Japanese's state was, like the Korean or Chinese, a hard-bitten one that chose economic development as the means to combat Western imperialism and ensure national survival..." (1999: 60).

FEATURES OF SOCIAL DEMOCRACY

Turning to the concept of social democracy, primarily represented by parties accepting the authority and ownership structures of capitalism but

pressing for reforms to increase economic efficiency and to reduce inequality. In certain circumstances they even been positioned to the left of the ANC. (Sandbrook: 187)

It is therefore not surprising for Adam Przewoski to assert that they are "the only political force of the left that can demonstrate a record of reforms in favour of workers."

Richard Sandbrook *et al* argue that the "standard or traditional Western European model of social democracy... exhibited the following features...

- A heavy role for the state in economic life, with an extensive public sector and state regulation underpinning a 'mixed' economy.

- The pursuit of equality and justice through high redistributive taxes and a comprehensive and universal welfare state.

- The promotion of full employment, principally by means of Keynesian demand-side management.

- The maintenance of an alliance between the social-democratic party and a centralised labour movement seen as the protector of workers interests."

The social-democratic model has, however, come under intense criticism as unsustainable in the current global environment. Openness is said to sharply restrict a nations' capacity to autonomously design its own political economy. It is argued that most social democratic governments face the erosion of national options. (Esping-Andersen: 4)

Notwithstanding the theoretical controversies it provokes, globalisation is a reality that generates constraints. Andrew Glyn demonstrates this dilemma by citing the three largest West European countries – France, United Kingdom and Germany. At the turn of the century, parties of the Left were in government in these countries. These parties could not successfully push through their progressive programmes. Social democracy adherents argue persuasively that there are still choices to be made, although the range of these choices is limited.

The question that arises is whether it is legitimate to extend this general understanding of social-democratic principles to the global periphery. (Sandbrook: 15) This question arises because social democracy is closely identified with core capitalist countries. Sandbrook *et al* focus on social-democratic regimes in the developing world that have, to varying degrees, reconciled the needs of achieving growth through globalised markets with extensions of political, social and economic rights.

Four exemplary cases are used, that is, Kerala (India), Costa Rica, Mauritius, and Chile. Sandbrook *et al* assert that "though unusual, the social and political conditions from which these developing-world social democracies arose are not unique;

indeed, pragmatic and proactive social-democratic movements helped create these favourable conditions." They go on to say, "This demonstrates that certain social-democratic policies and practices – guided by a democratic developmental state – can enhance a national economy's global competitiveness."

The following are the common successes of the four cases cited:

- They all provide primary health care, including clean drinking water, adequate sanitation, nutrition programmes, comprehensive immunisation, and access to basic medical services. The life expectancy in all cases is over seventy.

- They have all made considerable progress in education, with nearly universal access to primary schools and an adult literacy rate of over 90 percent (compared to an average 75 percent for all middle- and low-income countries).

- They have all dramatically reduced incidence of poverty, even when their per capita incomes were low or remain low. In Kerala, for instance, only 12% of the population falls below the poverty line (compared to 26% for India as a whole).

- They have all mounted advanced social-security systems, relative to other countries at the same economic levels, which include protection for all or most against at least old age and disability.

- They all feature consolidated democracies with a robust civil societies – a rarity in developing countries. (Sandbrook: 10-11)

Such progress occurred under diverse demographic, economic, cultural and political conditions.

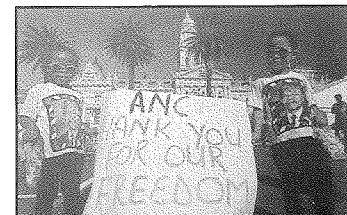
A SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENTAL STATE?

Is it possible to reconcile the concept of social democracy and that of the developmental state? Authoritarianism separates these concepts. The question that arises is whether a developmental state is possible without authoritarianism.

There is no inherent reason why developmental states cannot not be democratic. There is a strong body of literature that supports the proposition that democracy can enhance development.

One the key challenges facing the NDR is to grow this economy and create jobs for our people. It can only succeed in doing so if it establishes institutions that have correctly grasped this task. Those institutions, in turn, will succeed if we have the cadreship with the requisite skills and are patriotic. In that sense it is developmental.

The other task of the NDR is address poverty and inequality through redistribution by redirecting



One the key challenges facing the NDR is to grow this economy and create jobs for our people

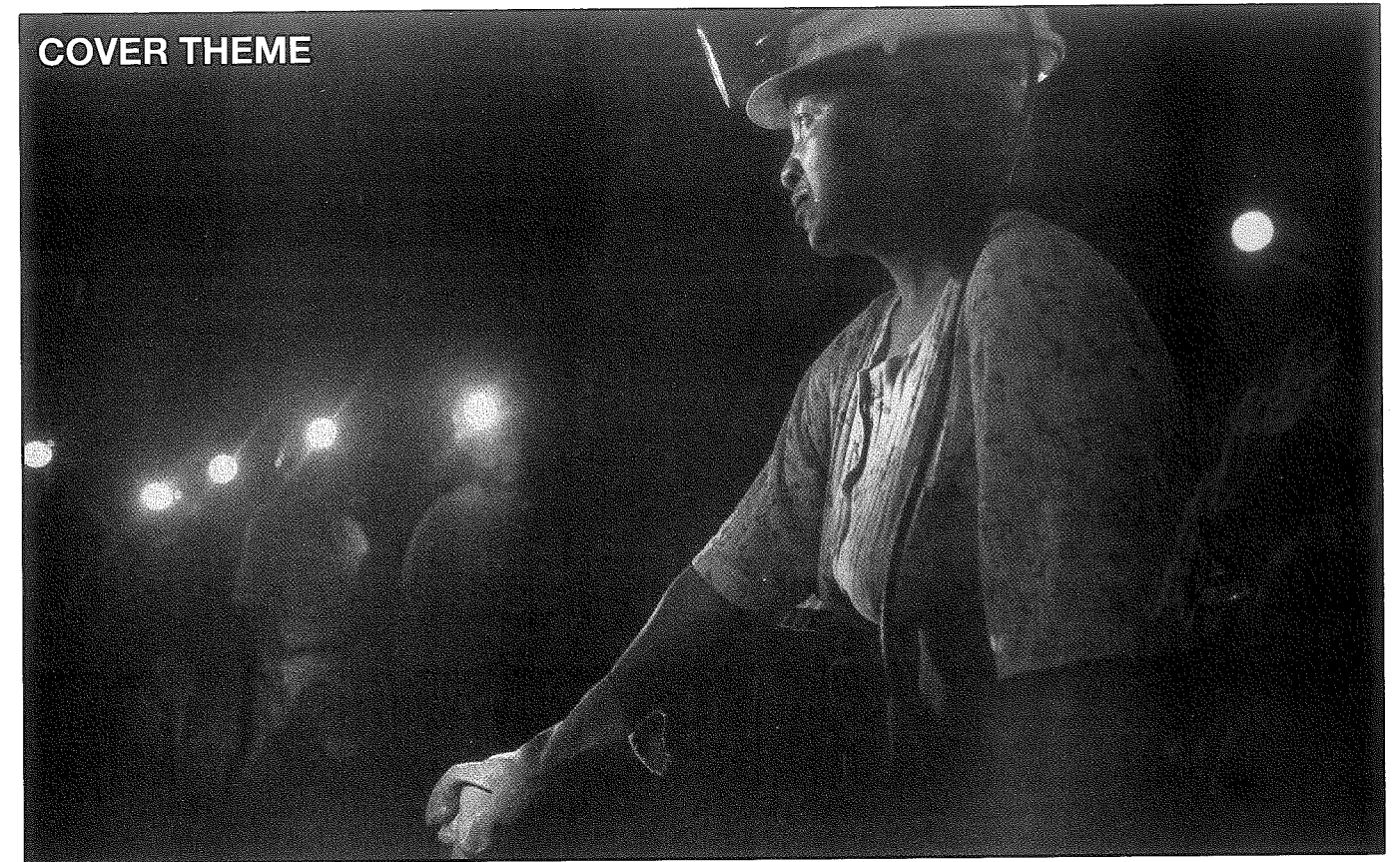
state expenditure to meet the basic needs of the poor. In that sense it is redistributive or social democratic state. These observations do not in any way ascribe a particular outlook on the part of the democratic state but refer to the institutional framework and policies

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COVER THEME



Expanding human capabilities for economic transformation

A 21st Century agenda for the developmental state

The developmental state should prioritise investment in developing the skills and capacity of its citizens over the development of physical infrastructure and the production of goods, writes Peter Evans.

The ANC Policy Conference Discussion Document “Economic Transformation for a National Democratic Society” is a powerful and sophisticated statement of strategies and goals. Among its key strengths I would underline the following:

- Clear emphasis throughout that economic transformation is a process that must be analysed in terms of political economy, that neither goals nor means can be reduced to abstract equations separated from political choices and organisation;
- Clear appreciation for the essential role of the state combined with acknowledgement that traditional models of the developmental state, derived

from the experiences of East Asia a generation ago, must be modified substantially;

■ Continual emphasis on the intrinsic connection between broadening access to productive assets and opportunities and achieving economic transformation.

As debate and discussion continue, the question of how much focus should be put on investment in human capabilities will unquestionably be an issue. The issue is relative emphasis: investments in plant, equipment and physical infrastructure aimed at increasing the output of goods vs investment in human capabilities aimed at increasing the productivity and well-being of the citizenry. Obvi-

ously, both are necessary, but, in the view that I will advance here, greater emphasis on human capabilities is more likely to lead to sustained economic growth, as well as to greater well-being. This "capability approach" has implications for the political process required to guide the allocation of investment, as well as for the character of the investment.

I will elaborate the "capabilities approach" by discussing three inter-related themes:

- Capability expansion as investment strategy;
- The service sector as a source of livelihood for most citizens in a 21st Century economy and as the site for the development of high return intangible assets; and
- The role of civil society in providing the developmental state with the strategic information necessary to define goals, calibrate implementation and ensure that investment is efficient and effective.

None of these themes will be developed in detail. Formulating programmatic policy suggestions is not the aim in any case. The points that I will underline have, in all likelihood, already come up in the construction of the document. My aim is to highlight the potential value of further discussion on these issues.

CAPABILITY EXPANSION AS INVESTMENT STRATEGY

The document makes it clear that the "creativity and skills of the whole population" are the foundation of economic transformation. Shortages of skilled labour are later noted as a "binding constraint" and "skills development and education" are highlighted as key to defeating unemployment and poverty. The emphasis on human capabilities as the most essential economic resource is one of the document's strengths, but the discussion could be fruitfully expanded.

Both modern economic theory and historical experience tell us that human capabilities (and the institutions that give them effective expression) are what propel economic growth and improved well-being. In the absence of investment in human capabilities and construction of high quality institutions, the most promising natural resource endowments become a "resource curse". Investment in plant and equipment also risks being ineffectual on its own. A quick look at the city of Detroit, Michigan, USA, is a stark reminder that all the investment in plant and equipment in the world cannot provide prosperity (or even jobs) without adequate complementary attention to human capabilities.

The current evolution of the global economy magnifies the importance of human capabilities. In the 21st Century, economic advantage depends on the capacity to build organisations that can

capture the potential of the ongoing revolution in information and communications technologies. This is true whether the economic product involved is a natural resource, a "non-commodity tradable" or a service. The foundation of such organisational capacity rests in turn on broad development of human capabilities. The modern economy is also one in which "intangible" assets carry the greatest returns. Design and marketing create the returns to manufactured goods. From software to drug patents, those who control ideas reap the greatest rewards. The most important kind of capital resides in human heads.

The concept of "human capital" only partially captures the importance of human capabilities. "Human capital" focuses attention on technical skills whose value is well reflected by market returns. The broader category of "human capabilities" reminds us that the highest return investments of all are those that create the foundations for the subsequent development of skills and technical prowess. Investment in early childhood health and education is the obvious case in point.

The centrality of human capabilities to economic growth has fundamental implications for the role of the developmental state. Since social returns to the expansion of human capabilities are substantially higher than private returns, private markets consistently and perennially under-invest in human capabilities. Instead, markets channel investment to other areas where total returns are lower but private returns appear higher. Only if the developmental state takes aggressive, entrepreneurial action, will the magnitude of investment in capability-expanding services come to reflect their true total rate of return.

The human capabilities perspective helps underscore the potential economic importance of *Batho Pele*. Likewise, in a human capabilities perspective, the emphasis of the Expanded Public Work Programme (EPWP) on "home-based care, early childhood development and similar programmes" should be seen not just as a way of generating employment and fighting poverty, but as high return investment with big potential payoffs in terms of subsequent economic growth.

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF THE SERVICE SECTOR

A human capabilities perspective has strong implications for sectoral analysis of economic transformation. If the expansion of human capabilities is the most powerful form of investment in economic growth, then the role of the service sector must be given more attention. Services become not just the principle source of employment for most citizens, but also the primary engine for accelerating productivity and growth.

This does not mean that other sectors can be neglected. Just as the agricultural sector continues to play a key social and economic role, even in advanced industrial economies, manufacturing will always be a key source of value-added. Nonetheless, even the most globally successful exporters of manufactured goods cannot rely on the manufacturing sector to provide livelihoods for their citizens. From 1995 to 2002, the total number of manufacturing jobs in China shrank by 15 million. It now appears unlikely that formal manufacturing jobs will ever employ more than 15% of the labour force in the 21st Century's "workshop of the world".

Most workers depend on the quality of jobs in the service sector for their livelihoods and well-being. The discussion document notes that working conditions in the service sector tend to be poor and implies that there is "natural" tendency for service sector jobs to be under-rewarded. Most service jobs are indeed under-rewarded, but this is above all a political choice and an organisational challenge. As I have just argued above, the social returns to a large segment of service sector jobs are higher than the private returns. Prevailing wages do not reflect the full economic value of these activities. At the same time, there is an undersupply of services in key capability-expanding sectors like health and education. Correcting these distortions requires aggressive action by the modern developmental state. Given the central role of public employment and funding in the service sector, channelling adequate resources to capability-expanding service sector jobs should be one of the principal preoccupations of the modern developmental state. Ensuring that key service sector jobs receive the rewards they deserve is also a challenge to the labour movement. As trade unions in advanced industrial countries are only now discovering, organising workers in the service sector (especially the private service sector) requires new approaches, strategies and organisational techniques. Both the challenge to the developmental state and that to the trade union movement are key economic challenges that must be surmounted if growth is to be accelerated. Igniting the transformation of the service sector is at the heart of any 21st Century strategy for economic transformation.

CIVIL SOCIETY AS A STRATEGIC INFORMATIONAL AND POLITICAL RESOURCE

One of the central principles underlying the role of the developmental state, according to the policy discussion document, is that: "People acting collectively in the spirit of human solidarity must shape the contours of economic development." Consequently "the state must be buttressed and

guided by a mass-based democratic liberation movement" within the framework of a "people's contract". This is the essence of seeing economic transformation as a problem in political economy, rather than as a puzzle that can be solved by a technocratic formula.

Defining the combination of organisational structures that best enables effective collective action remains an unsolved theoretical problem. A human capabilities approach underlines the importance of this problem. Earlier versions of the developmental state emerged in small countries where levels of investment in human capital were already high and the immediate overall economic impact of increasing manufactured exports was likely to be large. The problem of informational inputs and goal-setting was correspondingly simpler, at least in the short run. Potential returns from investment in manufacturing could be projected by looking at earlier manufacturing successes (eg. Japan) and engaging in intense dialogue with would-be industrial entrepreneurs.

A large country facing a 21st Century context in which expanding human capabilities is the core problem, requires a more complex framework of goal setting and informational inputs. Capability expanding services are always "co-produced". Delivery to passive recipients produces results that are sub-optimal at best and counter-productive in many cases. Accurate information on collective priorities at the community level and effective engagement of communities as "co-producers" of services is the *sine qua non* of a successful 21st Century developmental state. Without multiple channels of getting accurate information on collective priorities from communities of ordinary citizens, the developmental state will end up investing inefficiently and wasting precious public resources.

Amartya Sen's insistence on the centrality of democratic deliberation to economic goal-setting is, therefore, well-taken, but how best to implement this principle remains a conundrum. Enabling communities to decide which services are most crucial to their priorities for capability expansion, almost certainly requires multiple deliberative arenas. Party organisation must play a crucial role, as must labour movement organisations. Community-based organisations are an essential complementary source of information about the effectiveness of investments, as well as central organisational tools in the "co-production" of key services. Given the strategic role of women in the co-production of capability-expanding services, organisations in which women play leadership roles are likely to be particularly important.

How to simultaneously develop these various organisations as deliberative arenas and handle the inevitable conflicts that will arise among them is

one of the biggest challenges. "Civil society" is a complicated beast, full of conflicting particular interests and rife with individuals and organisations claiming to represent the general interest. These complications serve to underline the fact that the "information and communications" challenges most crucial to economic transformation are not technical but social, political, and organisational.

CONCLUSION

Even if the capabilities approach is eventually rejected in favour of a more traditional way of thinking about economic transformation, debating these issues should be fruitful. The basic economic propositions are straightforward. Human capabilities are the primary motor of economic change. Therefore, long term rates of economic growth depend on levels of investment in human capabilities. Since the divergence between social and private rates of return leads private markets to chronically under-invest in human capabilities, the developmental state must play the leading role. In practical terms, this implies increased public investment in capability-expanding services, of which health and education are the most obvious examples. A capability focus has the additional advantage of not only promoting growth, but simultaneously enhancing well-being. Not all economists will agree with these propositions, but they are consistent with what Joseph Stiglitz calls "modern economics," which views the idea that economic growth can be propelled by the accumulation of capital in the form of plant and equipment as antiquated.

Like any strategy for economic transformation,

the capabilities approach has political implications. In an earlier generation, traditional developmental states could formulate initial strategies of economic transformation on the basis of interactions with industrial elites. Even if this were politically feasible for modern developmental states, it would be economically ineffective. The co-production of capability-expanding, growth-enhancing services requires information too complex and too grounded in community choices to be extracted by a top-down technocracy. Nor can the required information be gained through interaction with elites. The broad-based deliberative processes advocated by Sen are, as he admits, very "messy". Such "messy" democratic processes are, nonetheless, the only basis on which the modern developmental state can secure the information it must have to efficiently allocate the public resources for which it is responsible.

In the end, these general propositions are valuable only insofar as they stimulate debate on specific policies. As they stand, they are not policy statements. Embodying them in specific policies and programmes would be a further intellectual and political challenge. To the extent that further debate supports their plausibility, discussion of their programmatic implications would be the next step.

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COVER THEME



The developmental state and monopoly power

South Africa is likely to remain a mixed economy with a dominant private sector for a long time, writes Ben Turok. However, inherited poverty, unemployment and inequality will not be overcome without major intervention by the state.

The impressive economic advances made by the East Asian Tigers (South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong) in the last decades of the 20th Century were ascribed to the instrumentality of a developmental state. In this model, a strong government willing to use the power of the state worked in concert with powerful economic interests to make a rapid advance to industrialisation. This was primarily due to massive investment in industry, in some instances due to state pressure on banks and big business. This approach was changed subsequently, partly due to pressure from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which pushed for liberalisation as against state-

led intervention.

It is reasonable to ask whether this model of cooperation between big business and the state has any relevance to South Africa. Most progressive economists would reject the notion on the grounds that big business, which is structured in monopolies in South Africa, was constructed on the back of apartheid and therefore has fundamentally different perspectives to an ANC-led government focused on socioeconomic transformation. Furthermore, they remain locked into an accumulation model which uses relatively cheap labour to generate large profits which are then allocated to top executives and shareholders. It is these profits that account for

the persisting huge inequality in our society.

The ANC in exile understood these contradictions very well, aided by a substantial body of foreign researchers who were equally interested in the structures of monopoly capitalism in South Africa, seen to be one of the most exploitative in the world. There was an expectation in these circles that the victory of the ANC would create a situation where monopoly capital would be challenged in the new South Africa.

As we know, the conditions for our transition were different, and monopoly capital made substantial efforts to ensure that the incoming Government of National Unity would not challenge their interests, nor was it in the interests of the ANC to do so. Curiously, in all the analytical documents generated by the movement since then, there has been little analysis of the structures of monopoly capital in South Africa.

Instead, the state has focused on reforms in the state system, the parastatals, and on the regulation of the economy as a whole, and indeed there is much to show for these efforts.

But given the scale of the legacy of unemployment, poverty and inequality, there is now a sense of urgency and it takes the form of pressure for a developmental state, though substantially different to that of the East Asian Tigers, and even contemporary China. We clearly need a developmental state "with South African characteristics".

THE CASE FOR A DEVELOPMENTAL STATE

We do not say that the United States, UK or Japan needs a developmental state, yet they have large pockets of ghettos, significant areas of poverty and unemployment and crime. So why do they not require a developmental state? The answer seems to be that these distressed areas are exceptions in a sea of affluence and developed social and economic infrastructure.

So why is it argued that South Africa needs a developmental state? Is it because we are a poor country, our industry underdeveloped, our universities and schools backward, our infrastructure, roads, rail, etc poor? But none of these criteria hold for the whole of South Africa.

True, our GDP per capita is relatively low. But *The Economist* magazine says we are one of the best resourced countries in the world with leading resources in gold, diamonds, aluminium, chrome and coal, among other others. We have a sound financial system, a budget surplus based on efficient revenue collection, and efficient banks. Many of our infrastructure components work quite well, such as telephones, air travel, main roads, and drinking water. We also have some of the most luxurious suburbs in the world. Our manufacturing

industry has considerable depth and substantial potential.

Clearly, there is a sound foundation for creating a strong economy, equal to upper medium income developing countries and even better than that.

The obvious answer is that what works benefits only a minority, and even then it does not work to its full potential. Mining, previously the backbone of the economy, is in decline; agriculture is also declining; and manufacturing is largely stagnant due to a lack of investment.

The private sector has been disinvesting for two decades and shows little appetite for a substantial effort to boost all-round economic advance. Yet, the private sector is crucial in controlling much of our capital, productive capacity and know-how, a condition that has not changed substantially since the democratic transition. The ANC discussion document 'The State and Social Transformation' (January 1997) argued that the correct handling of the contradiction between political and economic power was vital.

Since then a series of economic reforms have been introduced to alleviate the appalling inherited social conditions. But the ANC has always identified itself as a revolutionary rather than a reformist movement.

The crucial question therefore is whether the state's economic actions constitute a step-by-step platform for incremental advance to overcoming the three most pressing problems – unemployment, poverty and inequality – and the fundamental transformation of our society? Are we using state power to shift the balance of the political economy towards that goal? While no revolutionary movement is able to transform a country in a single sweep, it seeks to ensure that the preponderance of reforms contribute to fundamental change, rather than entrench inherited distortions.

The arguments for a developmental state point to the necessity to prioritise broad based economic development. If we do not, we shall not achieve "the central task in the current period (which) is the eradication of the socio-economic legacy of apartheid" (*Draft Strategy and Tactics*, February 2007). That is the task which determines the need for a developmental state for South Africa.

Documents prepared for the recent National Policy Conference contain sections dealing with the developmental state. They call for the building of the capacity to act "in a developmental way" and call for the mobilisation of "all of society", stating that "we are not a homogenous society". The document prepared for the commission on economic transformation sets out the following issues for discussion: The developmental state and economic governance; state owned enterprises and

development finance institutions; industrial policy; monopolies and mineral resources; rural development and land/agrarian reform; spatial development; the second economy; small business, cooperatives and procurement; broad based BEE, welfare and development; monetary and fiscal policy; and skills development.

These issues arose from consultations in the provinces and clearly represent a balanced economic agenda. The sections that follow elaborate on these themes in a way which reflects a new focus on development. However, much more analysis needs to be done on how dualism can be overcome.

One of the salutary issues that should seize our attention is that while the ANC urges us not to entrench welfarism and dependency, but encourage our people to earn an income, government's annual spend on social assistance is R62 billion for 12 million beneficiaries and rising (*Development Indicators, Mid Term Review*, The Presidency, 2007). In contrast, our spend on small enterprises is probably no more than R3 billion. Furthermore, the physical infrastructure that would facilitate economic activity in the former homelands and in urban townships is grossly inadequate.

GROWTH NOT THE SAME AS DEVELOPMENT

Decades ago, Amartya Sen argued that neoclassical economics did not apply well to underdeveloped countries. With the emergence of development economics came the proposition of an activist state with the major strategic themes of industrialisation, rapid capital accumulation, mobilisation of underemployed labour, and planning (*Development: Which Way Now?* The Economic Journal, December 1983, pp745-762).

Sen went on to argue that growth is not the same thing as development and what is at issue is the crucial role of labour mobilisation and use. Economic growth was no more than a means to some other objectives. Associated benefits are realised in the process of economic growth: "The same level of achievements in life expectancy, literacy, health, higher education, etc. can be seen in countries with widely varying income per capita."

The crucial point is that: "If the government of a poor developing country is keen to raise the level of health and the expectation of life, then it would be pretty daft to try to achieve this through raising income per head, rather than going directly for these objectives through public policy and social change, as China and Sri Lanka have both done." Hence his conclusion that "the process of economic development can be seen as a process of expanding the capabilities of people".

This seems to be a riposte to the case for a Basic

Income Grant. In dealing with starvation and hunger, the focus on income is a good one. But "when it comes to health, or education, or social equality, or self-respect, or freedom from social harassment, income is miles off the target."

These arguments have much relevance to attempts to deal with dualism in South Africa. While the formal economy could be advanced by traditional development economics, dualism requires development economics that embraces entitlements and capabilities.

Our economic development cannot be simply modernising and upgrading what exists, although that is essential. We have to expand and upgrade our infrastructure, make our industry competitive, and build the capacity of the state to direct and regulate the economy. This means developing the productive forces of the formal economy.

International experience indicates that the provision of infrastructure is not distributionally neutral, says Ben Fine. An essential task of a developmental state in South Africa is rectifying the inequality in provision of social and economic infrastructure. This is because infrastructure has been unequal between racial categories, and very fragmented. Fine argues that there are important "social rates of return to infrastructural provision" (Ben Fine, *Some Perspectives on the Provision of Social and Economic Infrastructure*, CIFE Workshop for SA Policy Makers, June 1996).

However, equally important, and in parallel with infrastructure, we need to promote productive work in the underdeveloped areas, rural and urban, directly and with the necessary state resources in what is commonly called "the second economy". We cannot depend on "trickle down" from the formal economy. Nor can we depend on ladders of advancement between the two spheres for substantial changes; the gap is too wide.

Such a programme will require a fundamental change of mindset in government, massive adjustment of the budget and reprioritisation in national, provincial and local government.

It will need far more specific research on how to overcome underdevelopment from a development perspective. In particular, what are the actual productive potentials of these areas, and hence what state resource investments are required. Such studies should also be far more sensitive to the different gradations of employment found in underdeveloped areas, such as formal sector full-time employment, formal sector part-time employment, formal sector casual employment, self employment, survival work, unemployed work-seekers,



An essential task of a developmental state in South Africa is rectifying the inequality in provision of social and economic infrastructure



What is abundantly clear is that the inherited poverty, unemployment and inequality will not be overcome without major intervention by the state

discouraged unemployed, unpaid work, and voluntary unpaid work. This analysis will enable a new approach to increasing productive paid work incrementally. Our universities could do much to assist here.

It will encounter stiff resistance from privileged economic interests in business and the state, since it will require restrictions in luxury consumption, redirection in state investment and expenditure, and a degree of pressure on the private sector to cooperate in building a

productive rather than a consumptionist/parasitic economy.

THE INTERNATIONAL DEBATE ABOUT THE DEVELOPMENTAL STATE

The international debate about development has been led by Ha-Joon Chang for a decade. He argues that infant industries must be protected until they mature, by ensuring cheap inputs, including low tariffs for essential imports, and high tariffs for competing final goods. Once an industry is mature, tariffs are reversed so that there is competition on final goods. The use of domestic input goods is encouraged. He insists that a significant domestic market is a foundation for economic advance (Ha-Joon Chang, *The East Asian Development Experience*, Zed Books, 2006). Chang also emphasises the importance of available finance for promoting industrial growth, as happened throughout the East Asian Tigers. This was "unparalleled in human history" and the state coerced the banks to provide the necessary finance.

Chang identifies the following characteristics of the East Asian model: "(1) Pro-investment, rather than anti-inflationary, macroeconomic policy; (2) The control of luxury consumption, which served both economic and political functions; (3) The strict control of foreign direct investment; (4) The integrated pursuit of infant industry protection and export promotion; (5) The use of exports... (6) The productivity-oriented view of competition."

Will Hutton claims that China's growth has been pretty much guaranteed "by state-driven capital accumulation in the cities financed by state-owned banks using China's vast pool of savings, together with migration from the land".

"The banking system is the essential and indispensable tool of the state... cheap finance to support investment... for bridges, reservoirs, railways, motorways and steel and cement making..." (Will Hutton, *China, The Writing on the Wall*. Little Brown 2007, p157-8).

The major advance in industrialisation in Asia

is rather different to the rest of the world. In an extended essay on de-industrialisation in developing countries, defined as the drop in manufacturing employment, Gabriel Palma found that in the post-war period there has been a rapid decline in manufacturing employment in most industrialised countries and in many medium and high income developing countries. He believes that South Africa is still making up its mind regarding which industrialisation path to follow. But the writing is on the wall (Gabriel Palma, *Four Sources of De-Industrialisation*, University of Cambridge, November 2004).

THE DIVERSITY OF POSITIONS ON A DEVELOPMENTAL STATE IN SA

A document for an ANC forum on economic transformation held in May 2007 includes a section called "*Building the Developmental State as an instrument of economic liberation*". This document emphasises the need to build the capacity of the state so it can act developmentally. Attention should be given to strategic, organisational and technical capacity. The document goes on to discuss unemployment and poverty, and overcoming dualism, but does not go beyond previous formulations.

However at the same meeting, Mandisi Mphahla, Minister of Trade and Industry, presented a detailed case for direct interventions to absorb the unemployed and people in the second economy into economic activities. "Our interventions must change the destiny of South Africa," he said. This must include massive interventions by the state, especially public investments and which will crowd in private investment. He analysed "the marginalised areas" and asked why they seemed to have no prospect for development. He suggested that the reasons lay in the lack of investment, little demand, de-concentration, poor infrastructure, lack of skills and work experience, stagnant enterprises and no access to markets. He concluded that previous policies had focused on supply side measures and now demand side measures needed to be added, for instance by leveraging procurement, in a balanced manner. In short, he gave a wholly different emphasis to the agenda for a developmental state.

Some critics of current policies suggest that the absence of more direct state interventions in the second economy is due to continuing preoccupation with maintaining a stable macroeconomic environment, which brings with it a high degree of caution about public spending to advance second economy productive capabilities. In part it may also be explained by serious reservations about the failure rate of small and micro enterprises and small scale agriculture.

However another key factor may be the continuing influence of the business sector which raises concerns about any new emphasis on state intervention, and uses its media channels to whip up public sentiment against this. Many state officials pander to this pressure. It is remarkable how easily some state officials internalise conservative values with respect to legislation and allocation of resources.

The failure to curb luxury goods imports catering for elite needs rather than national priorities is an indication of a failure of will to get to grips with economic decision-making in the national interest.

Do these problems reflect on the power of the democratic state? In his classic text *The State in Capitalist Society* Ralph Miliband argues that "political equality save in formal terms, is impossible in the conditions of advanced capitalism... Unequal economic power... inherently produces political inequality". Furthermore, the state is the guardian and protector of the dominant economic interests. Nevertheless, the state elite, which wields state power, is a distinct and separate entity, and the capitalist class, as a class, does not actually govern. From this analysis emerged the notion of the "relative autonomy of the state".

Arguably, in the conditions of political dominance of the ANC in the South African political system and in the state apparatuses, the relative autonomy is far greater than in advanced capitalist countries, where capitalist values and economic power is highly entrenched.

So are there fewer encumbrances to the creation of a developmental state which is pro-people in South Africa than elsewhere? Furthermore, the Freedom Charter and the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) remain the main policy reference points for the ANC and the government, as the ANC forum document quoted above sets out.

CONCLUSION

South Africa is likely to remain a mixed economy with a dominant private sector for a long time. What is abundantly clear is that the inherited poverty, unemployment and inequality will not be overcome without major intervention by the state. This intervention must necessarily be incremental given the scale of the problem. But by using political power strategically, through the creation of a developmental state, we can ensure that these reforms constitute a platform for the ultimate transformation of the political economy of our society, rather than the pragmatic alleviation of separate problem areas.

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Nation-formation and nation building

The National Question in South Africa

The national question can never be fully resolved, because it is not merely a material question, but one with emotional and psychological factors attached to it. As we build a common nationhood, people will continue to have multiple identities.

The national question has been an area of intense debate within the ranks of the ANC. This arises from the character of the freedom struggle for national emancipation – to sharpen our understanding of the tasks that the National Democratic Revolution is meant to accomplish.

In the current phase of transition and transformation, it is critical that we revisit this discussion, to ensure that we share a common understanding of this complex question. This applies both to our challenge of transforming South African society, as well as the challenge of how we order the internal life of our organisation.

BACKGROUND

Colonial conquest in South Africa had two contradictory consequences. On the one hand, it brought together various different communities into one nation-state. On the other hand, this very conquest was used by the colonisers to try prevent the unity of these communities into one nation.

The discovery of diamonds and gold in the late 19th Century signified the beginning of capitalism and, at the same time, a new era in the history of the country. Thousands of people who were previously separated in self-subsistence economies were either forced or attracted to the emerging industries to provide labour.

Transport networks were laid to connect the industrial hubs with the harbours. New towns emerged, further bringing together, into a single economy, communities that were previously separated. Peasant Afrikaner farmers began producing for the broader market, while Africans - dispossessed of their land - became not only providers of labour, but also consumers of commercial products.

One natural result of this was the emergence of the colonisers' languages as a medium of communication through which economic activity was

conducted. In the process, aspects of the colonisers' culture – material and otherwise – gained currency among all communities.

The importation of slaves and indentured labour by the Dutch East India Company from Indonesia, Malaysia and India also helped to shape the make-up of South Africa's population. These people had been oppressed in the countries they originated from, and were subjected to the same colonial treatment in South Africa. Along with this, was the emergence of the indigenous "coloured" community.

It is the irony of our history that this whole process, which crowned South Africa's revolution into one nation-state, was also the seed of later decades of struggles and bloody conflict. This arose because the state was colonial in character, whether it was in the form of the Union in 1910, or the Republic in 1960. Power was handed over by the British conquerors to the settler colonial community to continue the exploitation of indigenous Africans in particular, and the black majority in general.

THE ESSENCE OF THE NATIONAL QUESTION

The national question plays itself out in different ways which are specific to the concrete conditions in various parts of the world. Nevertheless, it is fundamentally a continuous search for equality by various communities that have historically merged into a single nation-state, or the struggle for self-determination and even secession by communities within such states.

In the global context, the national question is fundamentally an ongoing search for national sovereignty or self-rule.

A number of basic principles should be taken into account in addressing the national question in our country. These are summarised below in the form of ten theses.



THESIS 1

The liberation movement in South Africa characterised our society as Colonialism of a Special Type (CST) to describe the unique situation where both the colonisers and the colonised shared one country.

The basic conclusion arising from this is that the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) is an act of addressing the national question: to create a united, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic society. The "national character" of the NDR is therefore the resolution of the antagonistic contradictions between the oppressed majority and their oppressors; as well as the resolution of the national grievance arising from the colonial relations.

THESIS 2

National oppression and its legacy are linked closely to class exploitation. Part of the debates on the characterisation of South Africa under apartheid was the question of whether national oppression was a necessary condition for South African capitalism, or whether, in fact, South African capitalism was a necessary condition for national oppression.

What this debate highlights is that national oppression can only be successfully addressed in the context of socio-economic transformation.

This entails much more than competition among the "multi-racial" middle strata and classes for material benefits that can be gained out of the achievement of democracy, a phenomenon to which concepts like "black empowerment" popularly tend to be reduced. Rather, it means improving the quality of life of the poor, the overwhelming majority of whom are defined by South African

capitalism as blacks in general, and Africans in particular. In other words, the implementation of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) is an essential part of addressing the national question.

THESIS 3

A nation is not equivalent to a classless society. This would be a contradiction in terms, because the concept of class is by definition an international phenomenon, requiring the "withering away" of nations as such.

A nation is a multi-class entity. Under a system of capitalism, it will have its bourgeoisie, middle strata, rural communities – rich and poor. The objective of the NDR is not the creation of a socialist or communist society, though its progression, for those who adhere to these aims, does not exclude these long-term consequences.

Among the central tasks of the NDR is the improvement of the quality of life of especially the poor, and also to ensure that in the medium- to long-term, the place that individuals occupy in society is not defined by race. The opposite is the case in present day South Africa, where the poor are by definition mostly black, while the majority of the rich are by definition white.

An important part of this is that the NDR also entails the building of a black bourgeoisie. The tendering conditions that government has introduced, and its encouragement of the private sector to promote all kinds of "empowerment", aptly illustrates this. The reality is that the bigger and more successful this black bourgeoisie becomes, the more diminished its race consciousness will become, for example in its attitude to workers, and

dealing with unions.

At the same time, the unfolding NDR has also meant the fast growth of a black middle strata. This process will speed up even more as opportunities open up in various areas of life.

The democratic movement must seek to influence these classes and strata – both black and white – to take an active part in the realisation of the Reconstruction and Development Programme. This would then enable them to act in a way that promotes South Africa's true interests.

THESES 4

Apartheid was successful in crippling working class unity, and that legacy is still felt today.

The ANC enjoys the support of the majority of the coloured and Indian middle strata. What we usually refer to as the coloured and Indian question has to do with the expression of fears of the working class (including the unemployed) among these communities. These fears relate to the perception that the rise of the African worker and the African poor directly impacts on the comparative privilege that apartheid gave them in relation to African people. Similarly, this applies to white workers, which is partly why many of them became the mass base of the ultra-right. There are, of course, other important elements that come into play such as language, religion, racism and the geographic separation of communities.

This unique situation underlines the centrality of building working class unity as key to creating the South African nation.

THESES 5

It is important to realise that the national question is also a superstructural phenomenon at the level of consciousness, "feelings" and perceptions. Thus, it has an important and dynamic momentum of its own, underpinned by factors such as language, culture and religion. The social psychological element of the national question can therefore be used effectively to promote the process of forming a nation, or indeed, to undermine it.

One of our greatest successes in the transition has been to promote the "feeling" of pride in being South African, including through activities like sport, which may seem trivial. Capturing the national imagination through the campaign for a "New Patriotism" is critical to nation-building.

However, the social psychological phenomenon on its own is not sustainable without socio-economic transformation. Neither can it be accepted as universally credible in a situation in which the beneficiaries of apartheid do not accept that they have to forego some of these privileges. The rumblings on issues such as education, welfare grants, labour matters, and so on, are a reflection of this problem.

THESES 6

Individuals are social beings with different social experiences, class backgrounds, political histories, religious affiliations, and as sport and music preferences. With regard to the national question; race, ethnic origins, language and sometimes even religion, have an important role to play in defining a person's identity. Above all, the fact of belonging to this country and this state is itself an important definer of identity.

Therefore, individuals will have multiple identities: for instance being a South African with a specific mother tongue, class position, political and religious affiliation and so on. These identities do not necessarily disappear in the melting pot of broad South Africanism. Rather, they can all co-exist in healthy combination. The fundamental question that has to be asked is which identity assumes prominence, and under what conditions.

To deny the reality of these identities by the democratic movement is to create a vacuum that can easily be exploited by counter-revolution.

However, the main thrust of the NDR is not to promote fractured identities, but to encourage the emergence of a common South African identity. At the same time, it should be noted that some of the identities associated with "culture" or "ethnicity" or "religion" can in fact be contradictory to the building of a new nation that is based on principles of equity. For example, these attributes are used as an excuse to perpetuate gender oppression, or to campaign for racial or ethnic divisions among citizens.

THESES 7

From its characterisation of apartheid colonialism, the ANC was correct in asserting, in the documents on Strategy and Tactics from the Morogoro and Kabwe Consultative Conferences, that the main content of the NDR is the liberation of black people in general, and Africans in particular. They are in the majority, and they constitute an overwhelmingly larger majority of the poor.

Related to this is the identity of the South African nation in the making; whether it should truly be an African nation on the African continent, or a clone, for example, of the US and UK in outlook; in the style and content of its media, in its cultural expression, in its food, in the language accents of its children, and so forth. Hence, what is required is a continuing battle to assert African hegemony in the context of a multi-cultural and non-racial society.

It is debatable whether the popular imagery of a "rainbow nation" is useful in this respect. There is an important role that it does play as popular imagery. But if it is used to express the character of South African society as one made up of black Africans who pay allegiance to Africa, whites who

pay allegiance to Europe, Indians who pay allegiance to India and coloureds somewhere in the undefined middle of the rainbow, then it can be problematic. For it would fail to recognise the healthy osmosis among the various cultures and other attributes in the process towards the emergence of a new African nation.

THESES 8

Furthermore, Morogoro was correct to assert that this main content of the NDR should find expression in the leadership structures of the ANC, and indeed in the country as a whole. This is usually referred to as "African leadership".

However, this principle does not imply mechanical proportional representation in leadership structures. In other words, that we should do "ethnic, racial, language, gender and class arithmetic" in composing leadership structures.

The principle of African leadership and balanced representation in racial, gender, ethnic and class terms is a broad one, which should find broad expression in actual practice. Yet, attention should always be paid to these broad groupings because a critical mass can be reached where perceptions of dominance can take root.

The principle of African leadership does not mean moving away from merit. One cannot proceed from the premise that it is people, other than African people, who have merit. However, apartheid deliberately denied opportunities to blacks in general, and Africans in particular. Therefore, it is critical that deliberate steps are taken to empower them to play their role. Affirmative action is meant to address this, and naturally, it is those who have been most disadvantaged who ought to be the foremost beneficiaries of such a programme.

THESES 9

The national question can never be fully resolved. This is because it is not merely a material question, or one that is related solely to various forms of power. This derives from the fact that emotional and psychological factors are attached to it. In addition, people will continue to have multiple identities.

Instead, the challenge is to maintain a healthy equilibrium between centrifugal ("disintegrative") and centripetal ("integrative") tendencies.

Indeed, as we seek to integrate South African society across racial, language, ethnic and other barriers, we are also engaged in the process of developing those individual elements that distinguish these various communities from one another.

It will not be possible to achieve the kind of balance that will satisfy everyone for all time, even if the broad principle is attained in practice. This is aggravated by the fact that individuals compete for positions in politics, the academic terrain, the economy and elsewhere. The more dishonest and underhanded ones among them might seek to use criteria which exclude those who have historically been disadvantaged, or to use the racial, ethnic or language card to advance their personal ambitions.

Even within the ANC, tensions will flare up from time to time, especially in periods such as preparations for National Conference and other allocations of positions of power and influence.

THESES 10

The process of nation formation depends on objective conditions such as the fact of an integrated national economy, the historical evolution of a nation-state, national identity, and so on. This objective environment is itself a product of human activity; in our case represented broadly in the act of colonisation and the struggle against it.

This struggle was itself an important and conscious act of nation-building. To this extent, the ANC (and other political movements), the new government, and organs of civil society have a critical role to play in facilitating the emergence of a new nation, in nation-building.

This includes striving for consistent and thoroughgoing democracy, effecting socio-economic transformation, and encouraging a New Patriotism. It must also include the elimination of the geographical separation along racial and ethnic lines in the programmes to provide housing and other services.

These are not necessarily all the critical matters relating to the national question. Within the ANC we should ensure open, rigorous and dignified debate on an issue that will be with us for a long time to come. This is even more critical for an organisation for whom it is historically necessary to be, theoretically and practically, a microcosm of the non-racial society we seek to build.

Arising from such discussion, we also need to determine how, in practical terms, to put in place a programme aimed at speeding up the de-racialisation of South African society in all respects. This could be backed up by concrete targets to measure progress in this regard.

This article was originally published as a discussion document in preparation for the ANC 50th National Conference in Mafikeng in December 1997.

The National Question in a democratic South Africa

Writing in this 1997 discussion document, Z Pallo Jordan argues that if the racialisation of South African politics was rooted in specific historical and material conditions, there is no reason why radical transformation of those conditions cannot result in an end to racism and provide a solution to the national question.

This paper proceeds from the premise that the ANC had to make a number of concessions to the old order in order to secure the beach-head of majority rule in 1994. They were made with the implicit understanding that the main thrust of movement policy would be to consolidate that beach-head and employ it to lay the foundations of a truly democratic society.

It is our further contention that the economic unification of the country spawned a number of centripetal forces which have conspired to create a common South African society. However, the productive relations structured and determined by Colonialism of a Special Type (CST) reproduced a racial hierarchy which was institutionalised and has engendered equally centrifugal forces reinforced by the racial and ethnic divisions sponsored by the apartheid state.

Our third premise is that the ANC has been the most consistent advocate of an inclusive South African nationhood rooted in the universalist, liberatory outlook of modernity and the realities and imperatives of South Africans of all races sharing a common territory. I would therefore contend that issues of democracy, non-racialism and national liberation, on the one hand, and those of racial oppression and ethnicity, on the other hand, come together in acute fashion, and that the attitude one adopts to these two sets of issues defines distinct commitments.

Virtually all the liberation movements that attained victory after 1947, including our own, have been forced to make compromises at the point of victory. National liberation has rarely come in the form that the movement sought. Consequently, the terrain on which successful movements have to manoeuvre after victory is not necessarily all of their choosing or making.

Our own national democratic revolution is no

different. April 27 1994 – when the people finally assumed power – will remain a very significant day in South African history. But in reality it merely marks a high point in a continuing process. In that ongoing process there will be moments of rapid advance, but there will also be the need, sometimes, to retreat. Retreat does not mean conceding defeat; it is most often a tactical option chosen to put off till a more opportune time, action one would have preferred to take in the present.

What I am suggesting therefore is that national liberation movements have, in many cases, been compelled to postpone aspects of their programme in the light of an intractable tactical conjuncture. The retreat, in other words, is undertaken to prepare for a more coherent and better planned advance.

It is important that we boldly acknowledge and accept that the movement has had to seek compromises and make concessions to the old order so that we could attain the important beach-head of majority rule in 1994. A victory that was further consolidated with the signing into law of the constitution in December 1996.

THE NATURE OF APARTHEID

The ANC never regarded apartheid as mere racial discrimination, though of course racial discrimination was central to its practice. Apartheid was a multi-faceted and comprehensive system of institutionalised racial oppression with the following characteristics:

- white minority rule in which the black majority – African, Coloured, Indian – were statutorily excluded from the political process;
- the conquest and dispossession of the indigenous people of their land and its wealth, institutionalised in formal legislation, the 1913 Natives Land Act being seminal;
- an undisguised white minority monopoly over

economic power – the land, mines, industry and commerce – as a result of which the propertied classes were virtually exclusively white, while blacks, on the whole, owned little or no property;

- a system of labour coercion which employed a host of extra-economic devices to compel the indigenous people to make themselves readily available as a source of cheap labour power;
- a system that required a highly repressive state machinery directed against the conquered people whom the apartheid rulers regarded as a rightless mass to be held down by force of arms.

At the core of the system was the conquest and domination of the African majority, who were the most exploited and oppressed.

National oppression thus found expression in the palpable form of a number of economic, social and developmental indicators – such as poverty and underdevelopment, the low levels of literacy and numeracy among the oppressed communities, their low access to clean water, the non-availability of electricity, their low food consumption, their invariably low incomes, the poor state of their health, the low levels of skills, the generally unsafe environment in which these communities lived, etc.

To uproot oppression required, among other things, the correction of precisely these conditions. In the view of our movement the content of freedom and democracy would be the radical transformation of South African society so as to create an expanding floor of economic and social rights for the oppressed majority. The changes that would bring about this transformation were set out in the Freedom Charter. Though it is not a programme for socialism, the Freedom Charter envisaged the seizure of economic assets in the land, the mines and monopoly industries.

Political democracy placed the levers of power which could be used to address the most immediate and pressing social and economic needs of the oppressed communities in the hands of the ANC. The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) was an attempt to reconcile our vision of transformation with what was immediately attainable in practice. The RDP has been further refined as the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) strategy, aimed at operationalising the RDP in the context of the global environment within which South Africa exists. Parliamentary democracy requires the ANC to package our policies in a platform that can muster the votes needed to win at the polls.

IS THERE A NATIONAL QUESTION AFTER 1994?

As conventionally understood in South Africa, as elsewhere, the National Question concerns the oppression of one or a number of other people/s by a dominant colonial power. Consequently, the

right to self-determination or to national freedom/independence does not apply to the dominant group, but is applied exclusively to the oppressed or dominated group. International law, as it evolved since 1945, including a number UN General Assembly resolutions on South Africa, further underwrote this interpretation of the right to self-determination. Neither international law nor established tradition recognises any right to self-determination by an oppressor group or nation. This is a right that can be claimed exclusively by the oppressed.

In South Africa conquest, accompanied by the development of agrarian capitalism and later mining, set in train a number of socio-economic processes that continue to unfold. Large numbers of Africans, formerly outside the modern economy, were drawn into it first on the mines, then in the developing urban areas. Throughout this period the colonial, and later white authorities, regarded all Africans as a conquered and subject people.

More importantly, conquest drew African, coloured, white and the most recent immigrant population, the Indians, into a common society dominated by the Randlords of British extraction. The Africans' shared status as colonised people conspired with the economic evolution of the country to create the material conditions for the birth to a national consciousness. This emergent national consciousness was articulated first by the African intelligentsia – clergymen, professionals – during the first decade of this century.

Urbanisation had a homogenising effect on the whole society and expanded the area of shared values among Africans, coloureds, Indians and whites. The black leadership that grew within these circumstances accepted the modern world because they recognised its liberatory potential for opening up new vistas for themselves and their people. They were modernists.

Thus by the time the Act of Union was passed in 1909, Africans drawn from varying ethnic stocks belonged to the same church, worked at the same jobs, played the same games, read the same newspapers, belonged to the same sports clubs and shared the same political ideals. Thus a person of Zulu birth, could be a member of the Congregational Church, work as a clerk on the mines, be a star soccer player, a reader of *The Star*, and a member of the Native Voters Association, like a neighbour who was born Venda, Xhosa, Tswana, Sotho, etc. Such urban Africans shared many of these affiliations with whites, coloureds and Indians.

The modernist African intelligentsia consequently evolved an inclusive vision of South Africa, embodied in Rev ZR Mahabane's invocation of: "The common fatherhood of God, and the brotherhood of man." From its inception African nationalism in South Africa eschewed ethnicity, racism and tribal particularism in favour of a non-



racial national agenda expressed in the preamble of the Freedom Charter as "South Africa belongs to all who live in it..."

The first whites to embrace the concept of a common society were the left-wing of the then pre-dominantly white labour movement, the South African Communist Party, in 1924. A handful of white liberals within the dominant capitalist classes began to see it as the inevitable result of the changes wrought by World War II. White liberalism made its last ambivalent attempt to force this recognition on the rest of white South Africa through the Commission on Native Laws of 1946 (Fagan Commission). Otherwise the majority of white South Africans rejected the notion of a single society, and insisted on excluding blacks from common citizenship. By the cunning of reason CST carried within it two contradictory tendencies – the one, segregationist; the other, its countervailing trend, an integrating impulse.

Racial domination – in its various guises of "white supremacy with justice" a la Smuts' United Party, or the "apartheid" of the National Party – was also the means of domination employed in the pursuance of particular class interests. By legislative fiat and administrative measures, the white autocracy steadily destroyed the property-owning classes among blacks. Beginning with the Natives Land Act of 1913, these measures were followed up by the Natives Land and Trust Act of 1935, the Asiatic Land Tenure Act of 1946, the Group Areas Act of 1951, the Bantu Authorities Act of the same year and a host of others that bankrupted the black property-owning classes by restricting their rights

to own property and engage in commerce. Policies such as the white labour policy instituted by the Nat-Labour Pact government after 1924, then further elaborated in the Job Reservation Act of 1954, also made certain forms of skilled work the exclusive preserve of whites. State policy thus created a racial hierarchy graded by skin colour, with whites at the top and Africans at the bottom.

An intricate dialectic of race and class was thus devised, resulting in a class stratification coinciding in large measure with a racial hierarchy, so that in general terms the overwhelming majority of blacks were propertyless working people, while the propertied classes were virtually lily white. The ANC's policy thrust of tilting in favour of the working class and its mass organisations is grounded in this reality. Historical experience is also the basis of the alliance with the Communist Party and Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU).

The revival of African ethnicity was a deliberate act of state policy to fragment the potential opposition to white domination. Beginning with the 1927 Natives Administration Act up to and including the "independence" of Venda, its purpose was to divert African aspirations into harmless ethnic channels. It should not be associated with nostalgia for past greatness on the part of the Africans. Ethnicity, specifically that associated with the "homelands" and "bantustan" politics, quite clearly has nothing to do with "blood", "the ancestors", "the soil" and other attributes which ethnicists invariably invoke. Nor is it the articulation of a "psychological urge" (as the theorists of ethnicity claim) to cohere as members of a unique ethnic community.

The question arises: Is there a national question in post-apartheid South Africa? The easy answer is not in the form in which it is conventionally understood. Racism is no longer institutionalised; all South Africans now have the franchise; racial restrictions on property rights and on access to the professions, trades, and forms of work have been abolished; the instruments of labour coercion have been done away with; and a democratic constitution has put an end to legal repression.

Yet no one can pretend that South Africans share a common patriotism let alone a common vision of the future. Ours is still a highly racialised society and, since the 1970s, racism has been amplified with a sharpening of ethnic attitudes.

Both racism – attitudinal as well as institutional – and ethnicity are functions of the development of South African capitalism in a colonial milieu. Ethnicity, we have argued, was artificially fostered by the Afrikaner nationalist intellectuals and the white minority state, in the one instance as an instrument of ideological domination over the Afrikaner working people; and in the other, to create an opposing centre of authority to the political leadership coming from the modernist black intelligentsia and the labour movement.

Though rooted in these material realities, both forms of ethnicity have produced resonances within the society.

More elusive and erratic is the ethnic consciousness presently found among sections of the coloured and Indian communities. As black national minorities both these communities suffered under the apartheid regime, though the extent was marginally better than that endured by Africans. What is peculiar about what is referred to as ethnicity among both is that neither is an assertive identity of "selfhood". Where it exists it appears to assume the form of a dependent identification with their former white masters who are now regarded, at best, as "the devil we know", and at worst, as a bulwark against a perceived "black peril" – the African majority – which supposedly will take away their jobs, housing and welfare opportunities.

The driving force behind this 'ethnic' consciousness is competition with fellow blacks over scarce resources. The perception of Africans as a clear and present threat is reinforced by a powerful mood of contingency – a fear of change – which would much prefer the known world to remain as it is, rather than risk the uncertainties of change. To the sections of these communities who embraced this outlook, the National Party represented the continuity they craved. The electoral behaviour of coloured and Indian working people is unlikely to change until visible delivery on the part of the democratic government demonstrates that there could be sufficient resources for all the disadvantaged.

NON-RACIALISM AND DEMOCRACY

The ANC has always held that democracy, national liberation and non-racialism are inseparable. But, we have equally forcefully said that for democracy to advance national liberation it must entail the empowerment of the oppressed and most exploited – the Africans, coloureds and Indians. The Freedom Charter remains the seminal statement of our movement's vision and it envisages the radical restructuring of key aspects of the economy as the means to destroy the material basis of the white racist power structure.

No serious person, even from among our opponents, could pretend that South Africa today is not a country of far greater opportunity than it was 15 years ago. The opening up of new opportunities for many who never had a chance to pursue their own ambitions, aims and individual aspirations before has created an environment conducive to the emergence of a class of black capitalists, a stratum of very senior black managers and business executives, a stratum of senior black civil servants and bureaucrats, a stratum of black professionals, as well as a black lower middle class.

The struggle for democracy was also a struggle to create opportunities for men and women of colour to rise in accordance with their talents. Obviously, the ANC cannot bar blacks from becoming and being capitalists, any more than it could debar them from becoming lawyers, doctors, accountants, engineers, skilled workers, etc. The high visibility of these strata should not deceive us. In absolute terms they number far, far fewer than their equivalents among whites.

The vast majority of blacks, however, remain workers and other working people.

The movement adopted the conscious and deliberate de-racialisation of South Africa by undertaking a host of measures, among which are affirmative action, to ensure that the results of decades of systematic discrimination and denial of job opportunities are reversed. In other words, as policy the purpose of affirmative action is to create circumstances in which affirmative action will no longer be necessary.

The practical implementation of these policies, outside the public sector, has however been problematic. In both the Western Cape and KwaZulu Natal, the impression has quite deliberately been fostered that affirmative action entails the laying off of coloured and Indian workers or denying opportunity to coloured and Indian workers to create opportunities for Africans. The mischievous intent of these practices is obvious and it produced handsome returns for the then NP in both constituencies.

Racial and ethnic flashpoints over what are seen as diminishing job opportunities are thus being created to compound the existing tensions encour-

aged by the racial hierarchy in jobs and skills of the past.

The questions we have to pose are, do we see it as one of our tasks, among others, to legislate and lay down strict guidelines for the implementation of this aspect of policy? Should such guidelines apply to all categories of jobs or only to certain ones? Would the most effective means of implementation require the setting of targets by government and the private sector? To what extent should government hold the public sector corporations to account for their implementation of affirmative action?

Beyond the sphere of employment, systematic exclusion from opportunity and property rights has also left a legacy of unrepresentivity in every sector of the economy. Captains of industry in South Africa are invariably white males. The same category of persons dominate the boardrooms of every major corporation in mining, industry, banking and commerce. Commercial farming is virtually by definition the preserve of whites.

In the de-racialisation of society, is the fostering and encouragement of these emergent black middle classes one of the ANC's tasks?

The ANC itself is a multi-class movement, yet historically our movement has received far more support from certain classes than from others. Since the 1940s it is specifically the African working class of town and country who have been the movement's main base of support. Historically the movement has employed the classic weapon of working class struggle – the general strike – as its principal method of peaceful struggle. Because of the relative weight of the working class and other working people among the oppressed the ANC has also tilted unambiguously in favour of their cause and aspirations.

I would suggest that this implies that the ANC's engagement with the emergent black bourgeoisie should involve the elaboration of certain standards of conduct and a business ethic that will speed the realisation of the 'postponed goals' of the national liberation movement. In the immediate timeframe this must include job creation, the fostering of skills development, the empowerment of women, the strengthening of the popular organs of civil society, and active involvement in the fight to end poverty.

The ANC should also encourage this black bourgeoisie to cultivate within their own enterprises and in those where they hold executive positions, the creative management of the conflict potential of industrial relations. In other words, the ANC must influence the black bourgeoisie to assume certain RDP-related responsibilities and to give the lead to the business community with respect to responsible corporate behaviour.

THE STRUGGLES WITHIN THE STRUGGLE

The movement's own non-racialism and non-ethnic ethos is not merely a matter of high moral principle. The endurance and sustenance of these norms, which many today take for granted, has not been unproblematic. The racism pervasive in South African society and the ethnic and tribal segmentation encouraged by the white minority state were powerful currents against which our movement has had to contend.

Consequently the movement itself has been the site of intense politico-ideological struggles around the issues of ethnicity, race, class and gender. During the 1930s, for example, conservatives among the ANC's founding fathers led a campaign to expel communists from the movement. At around the same time Dr John L Dube led the bulk of the ANC branches in Natal out of the mother body to set up his own regional organisation in opposition to the ANC. At the height of the struggles of the 1950s a group of dissidents, led by Potlako Leballo, tried to manipulate the justifiable anger of Africans against their oppressors on an "Africanist" platform, a large component of which was also opposition to communism.

The majority of ANC members resisted these siren songs despite the evident emotional appeal of the "Africanist" slogans. The dissidents walked out of the ANC to constitute themselves as the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) in 1959.

There have been repeated attempts through the years by others to whip up residual ethnic loyalties and sectional inclinations as a means of mobilising support around platforms of dubious credibility. To the credit of the ANC's membership, none of these attempts has been successful.

Which raises the question: Is the ANC leaving those of our people who identify ethnically to the political wolves of ethnic entrepreneurship by continuing to discourage ethnicity and favouring an inclusive nationalism?

Perhaps that question is best answered by posing others. What honour would accrue to the ANC if it were to compete with the PAC on the issue of "Africanism"? Or better yet, can the ANC ever hope to outdo the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) in the promotion of a Zulu ethnicity and chauvinism? And, if it did try to compete on such terrain, what price would the movement have to pay to do so? And, what price will it have to pay for having done so? A third question: Would the ANC profit by trying to pander to the baser instincts of the coloured and Indian working people?

TOWARDS SOLUTIONS

The ANC's vision of empowerment of the mass of our people requires a highly critical attitude to-

wards ethnicity and sectional claims. This does not imply insensitivity to the sense of grievance felt by many African communities and language groups about the relegation and corruption of their languages and cultural practices. I would however argue that the redress of these does not require recognition of special ethnic claims or the politicisation of the issue of language. More specifically, with regard to the claims of the pro-apartheid Afrikaners and Afrikaans speakers, the democratic traditions offering constitutional and other special protection to ethnic and linguistic minorities were designed to secure the rights of oppressed groups whose rights would otherwise be threatened by dominant oppressor groups. Latter-day attempts to appeal to the authority of that tradition as a means of sheltering the privileges of racist and oppressive minorities do violence to that tradition and are patently fraudulent.

It's proper that we remind ourselves of our strategic goal – creating a democratic, non-racial, non-sexist society. The radical transformation of the quality of life of the black majority is central to these objectives. Putting an end to poverty, hunger, insecurity, and economic exploitation should therefore be at the top of the ANC's agenda.

As in all instances, the national question in South Africa is undergirded by the material realities the development of capitalism in a colonial setting and the institutions created to sustain those productive relations. The democratic breakthrough of 1994 created conditions which enable the ANC and its allies to steadily eradicate the material base of racism in our society. If we accept that the racialisation of South African politics was rooted in specific historical and material conditions, there is

no reason why radical transformation of those conditions cannot result in an end to racism and provide a solution to the national question.

We cannot hope to address these problems by uncritically embracing some of the temporary expedients the movement had to adopt in the context of a negotiated settlement.

This will probably require the ANC to pursue de-racialisation with the same determination and tenacity as the racists pursued racism and division. This must be done as a matter of conscious policy by giving no quarter to any form of racial discrimination in schooling, employment, housing and recreation; and we must positively reinforce all efforts at de-racialisation. This will not prevent a person who places some value in being identified as Venda/Sotho/Tswana/Zulu/Xhosa/Coloured/Indian, etc from doing so, but it will not require another, who sets no store by that, being compelled to do so. It does however require us to reject the insistence of ethnicists and racists that ethnic origin or race defines an individual's identity or should take precedence over everything else in defining it.

Acknowledging the un-finished character of our national democratic revolution is not to detract from the significance of the gains our movement has made. It should rather spur us to press even harder for the commencement of the next phase of an unfolding democratic revolution. Now more than ever the slogan of the day should be "A luta Continua" – the struggle continues!

Z PALLO JORDAN is a member of the ANC National Executive Committee. This is an abridged version of a discussion paper in preparation for the ANC 50th National Conference in 1997.

Not just an "angry group of people"

Reflections on the SACP 12th Congress

Silumko Nondwangu considers the outcome of the SACP's 12th Congress and asks whether it has succeeded in uniting all strands of socialist thought and advancing a lucid Marxist analysis based scientific method, and revolutionary practice.

The views below are my reflections on the South African Communist Party (SACP) 12th Congress. They are arranged in three main parts – the period before the Congress, the Congress itself, and the aftermath of the Congress. An attempt is made at the end to offer some broad possible remedies to some of the "problems" dealt with in this input.

As a solid formation in the governing Alliance, and a key contributor to the rich history and political traditions of the Alliance, the SACP is an integral part of the ANC government. In the context of the 12th National Congress, it has been asserted that some members of the SACP are calling for the organisation to participate in the national electoral process and subsequently at all levels of state power. Is this assertion correct?

In fact, and contrary to this view, the SACP has always participated in the electoral processes of this country, through the Alliance. The SACP does participate in all levels of state power, and has done so since the first elections in 1994. The SACP claims – and legitimately so – to be part of all the electoral victories of the ANC-led Alliance in local, provincial and national government elections since 1994. Any contrary view to this assertion is both misleading and a lie.

What, therefore, is at issue here is not whether or not the SACP participates in electoral politics and in the state. Rather, it is what content and forms this participation should take, different from what currently obtains. It is important to make this distinction both in theory and in practice, because failure to do so may simply place the SACP in the same boat as the Democratic Alliance, Inkatha Freedom Party and all the other opposition parties in South Africa, with the simple explanation that the only major difference is that the SACP has not yet decided to "directly" participate in South Af-

rican electoral and government politics.

While there is no doubt that the 52nd National Conference of the ANC, and therefore Alliance leadership questions have informed some of the discussions, it is wrong to reduce all the complex political energies that have cohered to produce the outcomes of the SACP 12th Congress into the "succession debate in the ANC". Social, economic, cultural and political forces in and out of South Africa today, larger than the sum total of the political lives of individual leaders, must be fully interrogated to better understand the outcomes of the SACP 12th Congress.

Indeed, the levels and quality of ideological development and therefore political consciousness, among the general membership and leadership of the SACP today is not, and cannot be reducible merely to the influence of leading politicians. This has a complex history of its own.

THE CONTEXT OF THE 12TH CONGRESS

Some of the key elements of the contextual issues that preceded the SACP 12th Congress include:

- Globally and nationally, there is a perceptible upswing of working class protests. In our own country most of these protests may still be largely expressed as frustration at the pace of social transformation, and the low wages the majority of the workers in the country continue to suffer from. The national public sector strike offered a vivid background picture to the SACP 12th Congress.

- The public and media speculation that the SACP would postpone its decision to go it alone at the polls in 2009, to await the outcome of the leadership question at the ANC December 2007 Conference.

- Perhaps in future the Alliance needs to better consult among its components regarding dates for important activities like Conferences and Congresses; coming hot on the heels of the COSATU



Congress and the ANC Policy Conference, the SACP Congress risked being analysed and judged largely in the light of the ANC Policy Conference. This diminishes, drastically, the great work the SACP has been involved in, in the past five years, and the possibilities of a very objective assessment of the SACP, and its level of development, independent from COSATU and the ANC. It cannot be a fixation that a Party analysis is based on what the ANC does.

- The widespread perception that many ordinary members of the SACP were fed up with the ANC, and hence the demand for the SACP to directly participate in electoral politics in South Africa. I say "perception" because there is no scientific basis to ascertain, or qualify this "belief".

- The usual pre-Conference media noises regarding perceived "problems" in the SACP, including allegations of "purges", "media leaks" and so on. These of course were met with counter denials from the Party. The timing of the suspension of Comrade Philip Dexter perfectly played into this media and public perception.

- The late "release" and distribution of Congress discussion documents could hurt the quality of debates during Congress. Now that Conference is passed, this needs to be ascertained and debated. It is true that the 12th Congress preparations greatly benefited from the Durban Special Congress decision to set up a commission on state power, and the document which this commission produced. However, this process has denied the SACP the opportunity to produce detailed sectoral analytical discussions papers on a range of different aspects of the six key sites of power in our society and the world.

The net result of this has been to give the impression that the SACP is overly concerned with narrow electoral and government "state power", at the expense of a fuller detailed analysis of our society and world.

As unlike the period leading up to the ANC Policy Conference, there was not much media coverage of public views regarding the contents of the SACP Congress. While this can be attributed to the actual management of the debates inside the SACP at branch level, clearly the unavailability to the public, and to the entire liberation movement in general, in good time of the discussion documents dealt a blow to this aspect of work.

UNITY DOES NOT MEAN THE ABSENCE OF DIFFERENCE

The 2002 paper of the SACP titled, *Strategy and Tactics of the SACP in the NDR*, asserts: "The elaboration of an effective strategy and tactics for the SACP depends critically on an effective and honest analysis of the ideological and class terrain on which we are operating. A core feature of this terrain is our alliance and broad National Liberation Movement (NLM) itself. In practice, every single day, SACP activists are preoccupied with this reality, and yet this critical area of strategy and tactics tends to remain at the level of the 'informal', that of which we speak, among ourselves, but which should remain, formally unspoken. This is not an adequate way in which to proceed. We should honestly and analytically bring to the fore the different ideological and class currents within our NLM in a much more open, but non-factionalist and relatively non-polemical, way."

It may very well be that the 12th SACP Congress

delegates reflected in greater detail their practical experiences in the period leading up to this Congress, and the contradictions that would have arisen in the execution of the NDR.

They would have understood that these contradictions arise primarily as a result of the dominance of white monopoly capital, and the constraints on the democratic state to discipline and shape this monopoly capital. They arise in any execution of struggles, but do not necessarily create enemies in the people's camp, nor should they be pursued in a factionalist fashion. We should not fudge our differences, but they should be dealt with. It is the manner in which such differences are dealt with that is important.

The paper further asserts: "Unity does not mean the absence of difference and diversity..." In this context, communists would ask the question, 'Have we from our Congress honestly surfaced the different ideological and class currents within our National Liberation Movement in an open but non-factionalist and relatively non-polemical way?'

This question will have to arise in the manner in which issues of substance and theory were pursued in the Party Conference. It should arise when indeed the Party does introspection into the calibre of leadership that the Conference has elected. These questions, as they would continue to occupy our minds as socialists and communists, would not in any way be suggestive of any imperfections on the part of the newly elected leadership, but an exercise that revolutionaries would undertake to reflect on the execution of a struggle for socialism.

An initial observation would suggest, as incoming Chairperson Gwede Mantashe observed in his closing address, we all need to "consciously work on the image of the SACP as an angry group of people." Would this assertion from the newly elected Chairperson of the SACP suggest that in both 'form and content', the overall thrust or some elements of the Congress must be judged from this statement.

Citing again from the 2002 Party document: "The ANC (like the SACP) is not a federation of factions or tendencies, it is a single movement. But what this means is that, at the end of democratic processes, the ANC (like the SACP) adopts policy positions, programmes of actions, etc. and all members are bound by these decisions... It does not mean that the decisions are not the result of debate, or that diversity and difference have simply evaporated. More importantly, decisions taken by the ANC (or SACP) while they may sometimes represent one view (a majority perspective) at the expense of other views, very often represent a management of differences."

MANAGEMENT OF DIFFERENCES?

In this context, can it be argued that the outcomes of the SACP's 12th Congress represented in reality 'a management of differences' or what the newly elected Chairperson ascribed to 'an angry group of people'?

It may be argued that the position that the Congress took on state power represents 'a management of differences within and without', but can the same be said of the outcome of the leadership elections?

In the history of any progressive liberation movement and, in particular the SACP and many other communist parties throughout the world, the issue of innovation and continuity determines the calibre of the elected leadership. But importantly, the dynamics at play and the fluidity of the environment would also be a factor in the cadres that you elect.

The Party would insist on continuity precisely because of the rich experience that this brings into the fold of the Party. It may well be that a new criteria has been developed that negates this practice that has informed communist parties all over the world and for many centuries. This practice is derived from understanding the past and its relevance to the present, and how this map shapes the future.

This point on leadership, is pursued in the Young Communist League (YCL) National Committee, and it says:

"The YCL should engage with the founding principles of a collective leadership, and may consider factors such as continuity, competence in fields designated by the last Congress (office bearers) attendance of meetings and SACP activities by Central Committee members, representation of youth and women, representation of worker and working class leaders, SACP members in civil society organs, adherence to Communist Party discipline and constitution, consistency of service to the party and its structures, contribution to SACP campaigns and understanding the strategic objectives of the Party and commitment towards taking these forward."

In the assessment of the 12th Party Congress, it is appropriate to examine whether indeed the leadership elected represent some, but not all of the attributes that the YCL has identified in its National Committee, or as others argue, a factionalist tendency expressing itself in the build up to Conference and within.

The party for socialism would attempt at all material times to become an embodiment of all strands of Socialism, but with an emphasis towards Marxism/Leninism. Can it be said that Congress is a reflection of this broad definition of socialism?

STRANDS OF THINKING IN THE MOVEMENT

The 2002 discussion document in dealing with the currents within our NLM over the last decade, asserts: "In order to ground an effective strategy and tactics for the SACP it is necessary to go further than just noting a diversity of ideological currents and traditions within our broad NLM and indeed within the SACP. We need to ask the question: What, over the last ten years, have been the dominant currents within the ANC-led Alliance?"

It then defines the currents thus: "It must be emphasized that these are not factions, but strands of thinking found within the movement. They have emerged out of older traditions and legacies. These three currents are certainly not water-tight compartments, they continuously cross-fertilise and influence each other, and they characteristically (and usually correctly) present themselves in hybrid forms. Nor do they neatly begin and end at the organisational borders of the three component parts of the Tripartite Alliance. These currents are: an Africanist current, a modernising, progressive, pragmatic current, and a socialist current."

So as the Party defines them, these are currents that express the multi-class character of the NLM and which some find expression in different forms in the SACP. If indeed as you would define them as tendencies in the SACP, have these tendencies in the SACP continued to co-exist in the evolution of the SACP or is the perception true that the Party deals ruthlessly and purges dissent?

In another party document, entitled 'Our Marxism', the SACP considers the state of development of socialism and communist parties after the 1917 October Russian Revolution, and asks: "What has gone wrong? In Moscow, in the Communist International headquarters, the Bulgarian revolutionary George Dimitrov argued that newly formed Communist Parties had isolated themselves from the broader worker and popular movements of their countries. They had failed to build united fronts (with the social democratic and other labour forces), still less broader popular fronts, and had conducted themselves in far too sectarian a manner. They had left space wide open for fascism, which had, in many countries, through a combination of terror and demagoguery, succeeded in mobilising popular forces."

Further, this 10th Congress SACP Document says: "In Italy, Antonio Gramsci (significantly a prisoner in a fascist jail at the time) also grappled, in a vast (and sometimes complex) set of prison writings, with the defeat of the left. Like Dimitrov, he believed that the working class parties had isolated themselves, they had failed to develop a hegemonic project..."

Against this rich international experience of communist parties with regards to 'building united fronts' (with social democratic and other labour forces), can it be said the SACP from this Congress will appeal to its constituencies, in substance and theory, and unite the broad sections of the NLM who may not necessarily share the same ideals of a socialist society, but want to win complete freedom from racism and all other forms of national oppression?

Can it also be argued that the calibre of leadership elected represents the all encompassing traditions of a communist party, with the possibility to grow the stature of the SACP in the NLM and society in general?

Has the SACP asserted the provision in the Party constitution which asserts that "members active in fraternal organisations or in any sector of the mass movement have a duty to set an example of loyalty, hard work and zeal in the performance of their duties and shall be bound by the discipline and decisions of such organisation and movement. They shall not create or participate in SACP caucuses within such organisations and movements designed to influence either elections or policies. The advocacy of SACP policy on any question relating to the internal affairs of any such organisations or movements shall be by open public statements or at joint meetings between representatives of the SACP and such organisations or movements."

The recent Congress therefore must be judged against whether indeed the delegates were able to:

■ Locate the role and form of organisation to build the SACP in what *Our Marxism* affirms, 'developing a hegemonic project' to 'build united fronts (with the social democratic and other labour forces)'. Whether indeed Conference has been able to cement the cracks in the Party and to create space for the left forces to engage within will be a matter of discussion for many years, and maybe decades to come.

■ Assert programmes that indeed speak to what the 11th congress document asserts: '*Socialism is a requirement for the survival of human civilisation itself.*' However, the fact that global capitalism is enmeshed in crisis is no guarantee that a better world will emerge. That requires worldwide struggle, led by the working class, and drawing on the widest range of progressive forces". In dealing with global analysis of the complexity of the socialist struggle, whether indeed the deliberations and policies reflected this reality, and leadership elected will be able to match this mammoth task and march with the working class to a socialist society. So the issue about electoral politics and the Party must first be informed by its broad poli-

cy positions on the struggle for socialism and not this matter alone.

■ Thirdly, the extent to which congress, and beyond this gathering the SACP, will deal with the observations made by the newly elected Chairperson, that of 'consciously dealing with the image of the SACP as a group of angry people.'

■ Lastly, the extent to which congress decisions will grow the SACP and its Allies, contribute towards cohesion and unity in the NLM, and in the continent and worldwide, inspire other communists to struggle for 'a different socialist world, based on meeting social needs, not private profits' and that indeed that this is the 'imperative'.

LUCIDITY OF THOUGHT

Clearly, we communists, socialists, social democrats and indeed all progressive ideological currents in our country will be looking to the SACP to move and act on the many rich resolutions of the 12th Congress. What we do and how we respond to the ANC's challenges will be a test of the Party's character. Clearly, the newly elected Chairperson is making some inroads in this regard. This remains in my view a bigger challenge for the SACP to unite the National Liberation Movement.

We will be looking to see how the Party will grow its theory and understanding of its revolutionary tasks as they relate to the evolving state in South Africa in general and the entirety of South African society in particular.

We will watch, with great interest, how the thorny complex matter of the SACP and electoral politics and state power post 1994 in South Africa will be dealt with, by both the newly elected lead-

ership of the Party, and its membership. But more importantly, we will all be interested to learn how the Party will respond to the outcomes of the ANC Conference this December.

Communists are distinguished by their lucidity of thought, scientific method, and revolutionary practice in attaining the noble goal of full, true human freedom from the tyranny of class rule, of capitalism. Can the SACP rise to this challenge in the 21st century and unite the Left forces within and without? This is a challenge the new leadership has to grapple with.

In the meantime, all of us have a revolutionary duty to contribute to growing a Marxist theory and revolutionary practice in the SACP. Can we do this?

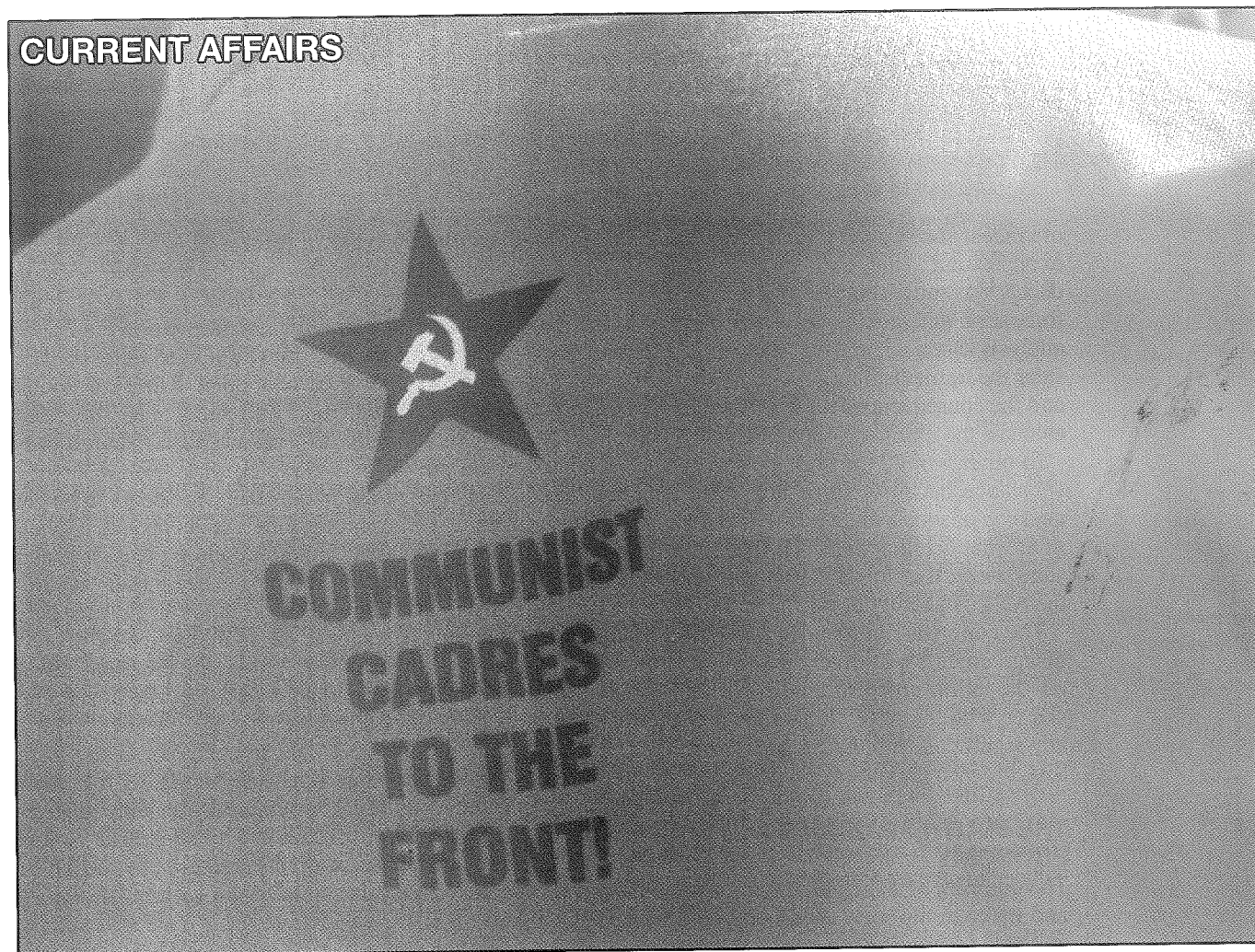
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CURRENT AFFAIRS



Has Socialism left the Party?

Renewing the Alliance and reviving the socialist project requires the SACP to engage in extensive debate about the basic principles that underpin their maximum programme. Unfortunately, writes Michael Sachs, the recent 12th Congress of the Party showed little enthusiasm for such a debate.

International delegates to the 12th National Congress of the South African Communist Party (SACP) were visibly moved by the choir's stirring rendition of the Internationale, the socialist anthem which brought proceedings to a close. "Reason thunders new creation" they sang, "it is a better world in birth!"

But the harmonies that captured the imagination of the local delegates were inspired by more domestic and immediate concerns. Among the favourites were "Siyaya eLimpopo", "Lelilizwe ngelamaKomanisi" and so "kungcono silitathe". These popular choices reflected the gathering's exclusive focus on issues of power and policy in the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) and its failure to relate these to the tasks of creating a new,

socialist society.

The SACP has a long and proud history of applying Marxist theory to analyse contemporary society and connecting the tasks of socialists in the NDR with the struggle for a socialist future. But there is widespread concern among cadres of the Party and its sympathisers about the paucity of original thinking and considered Marxist analysis arising from the 12th Congress. Instead, the congress was concerned mainly with frustrations and unhappiness about the implementation of ANC policy and the functioning of the alliance.

Substantive debate focussed almost exclusively on the question of 'state power'. Underlying this debate is the question of whether the Party should influence the state through a reconfigured alliance,

or contest state power directly, independently and in opposition to the ANC. Unfortunately even here debate was somewhat shallow, arising largely from frustration and lacking any basis in sober Marxist analysis. Such an analysis would need to re-consider the immediate tasks of socialists in the NDR and the consequences for the alliance, but also re-evaluate the ultimate goal of the SACP's activism.

In other words, the state power debate lacked substance because, since it did not address the question of socialism, it could not answer the question: what is it that the working class will do with state power that fundamentally differs from what the ANC is already doing?

The congress did identify numerous concerns, disagreements and divergent points of emphasis on the minimum programme which the Party shares with the ANC. However, it was devoid of any significant discussion on the meaning of the SACP's own maximum programme.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN ROAD TO A MIXED ECONOMY

The question of a socialist future for South Africa and its contemporary meaning could have been engaged. After all, the new SACP programme, released shortly before congress was entitled the South African Road to Socialism (SARS). But SARS was not presented to the congress and delegates made little reference to it in their deliberations on the question of state power.

This is reflected in the resolutions adopted, which mentions the word 'socialism' only twice – once in the context of the struggle against patriarchy and once in relation to the 'know your neighbourhood' campaign. Defeating patriarchy and knowing your neighbourhood are said to be central in the 'the struggle for socialism'. The word 'communism' doesn't get a single mention. It is also reflected in the SARS programme itself, which was adopted without amendment.

Despite the lofty ambition of its title, the shortest chapter in the document is the one headed "The SACP and Socialism", which begins with a definition: "Socialism is a transitional social system between capitalism (and other systems based on class exploitation) and a fully classless, communist society. A socialist society has a mixed economy, but one in which the socialised component of the economy is dominant and hegemonic. The socialised economy is that part of the economy premised on meeting social needs and not private profits."¹

The chapter goes on to detail the various aspects of the mixed economy including empowerment of workers on the shop floor, a wide range of social ownership forms, rolling back and transforming capitalist markets and ensuring food security and

the sustainable use of resources.

This is remarkably similar to the ANC's vision of a National Democratic Society. The ANC draft resolution on economic transformation envisages "a mixed economy" in which "the state, private capital, cooperative and other forms of social ownership complement each other in an integrated way to eliminate poverty and foster shared economic growth".²

The main point of divergence appears to be the relative strength of public versus private capital. In the "socialist" mixed-economy the state and social capital is 'dominant and hegemonic' whereas in the "national democratic" mixed-economy "the private sector is the main engine of investment, growth and employment creation" even though "the state plays a decisive role in shaping economic development".³

So the ANC sees the private sector as the main agent of accumulation and the state's role is to structure and regulate accumulation and redistribute part of the surplus it generates. The SACP would rather see a much greater substitution of public for private capital in the accumulation process. In either case, however, we are still talking about the accumulation of capital in a (capitalist) mixed-economy, or at least the SACP programme offers no explanation to the contrary.

As such there is little of great consequence that separates the end-point of the SACP's maximum programme from the minimum programme it shares with the ANC. Aside from the rhetorical (but untheorised) preface about a transition to a 'classless society', the vision of socialism proposed by SARS is not significantly different from the principles underpinning the programmes of most European social democratic parties.

This approach can be contrasted with the 1989 programme of the SACP, the *Path to Power*. Here the transition to socialism was conceived as directly and inextricably linked to seizure of state power by the working class in a socialist revolution:

"A socialist revolution differs from all other revolutions in world history. It sets out to abolish private ownership of the means of production and all forms of oppression. The systems of slavery, feudalism and capitalism are all based on the private ownership of the means of production and oppression of one class by another. Thus, capitalist relations of production developed even before the bourgeoisie had achieved political power. But the development of socialist relations, which will bring an end to the system of economic exploitation, cannot begin until the working class and its allies have won state power. While the material basis for socialism is created by capitalism itself, socialist relations of production are realised only

after the political revolution.

"The fundamental question of any socialist revolution is the winning of political power by the working class, in alliance with other progressive elements among the people. The working class then sets out to eliminate exploitation by achieving public ownership and democratic control of the means of production. Fundamental to the socialist political system is the introduction of the widest democracy to the greatest majority of the people and the elimination of all forms of discrimination, including national oppression and sex discrimination. At the same time, the workers' state should prevent the resurgence of the overthrown classes, both internal and external."⁴

Of course, shortly after the SACP adopted the *Path to Power*, the Berlin Wall was pushed over by dissatisfied citizens of the German Democratic Republic. This event – and the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union and the world Marxist-Leninist movement – initiated a widespread debate among socialists and communists, a debate in which the SACP and its cadres played a leading role.

For some socialists these events meant that "the concept of 'scientific socialism' has lost all meaning".⁵ For the SACP the debate culminated in a recommitment to 'scientific' Marxism-Leninism and an assertion that socialism, being inherently democratic, required no further qualifications, for example by re-inventing the Party's objective in terms like 'democratic socialism' or 'social democracy'.

The concept of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' was rejected, and the slogan "*Socialism is the Future, Build it Now!*" was proudly asserted as the lodestar of a mass-based vanguard party.

Listening to some SACP members today, one gets the strong impression that all of this has been entirely forgotten. In place of a renewed Marxism ready for battle on the terrain of twenty first century capitalism, we have a reversion to the habits of sclerotic Marxism-Leninism – the characteristic ideology of stagnating Soviet socialism. Instead of boldly confronting the questions posed anew by contemporary developments in global and national capitalism, we have a regression to the ideology and practice of a bygone era.

For example, in the context of the state power debate delegates at the 12th Congress made frequent statements to the effect that "our participation in parliamentary elections is not an end in itself but a tactic to educate the masses about the futility of bourgeois democracy". Others contend that it is time to revive the Party underground and begin clandestine work in the armed forces with a view to the inevitable seizure of power. Similar insurrectionary sentiments were expressed by Young Communist League General Secretary Buti

Manamela, who enthusiastically told the plenary session that "We are ready to take power, whether through the ballot or through the barrel of a gun!"

SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM OR CONFESSIONS OF FAITH

The outcome of the debates of the early 1990s, in the form of the slogan "*Socialism is the Future – Build it Now*", marked a clear departure with the earlier view that "the development of socialist relations cannot begin until the working class and its allies have won state power". But it appears that this departure has not been thoroughly internalised within Party ranks.

Today, two interpretations of the meaning of this slogan appear to co-exist amongst Party members. The first can be characterised as "*Socialism is the Future – Build Working Class Power Now!*" The task of the party is to build the hegemony of the proletariat on the terrain of the NDR with a view to a future seizure of power at which time the proletariat will smash the bourgeois state, expropriate the bourgeoisie and embark on a path of socialist construction.

This approach seeks to reconcile current practice with the SACP's 1989 programme, although power is now conceived of (in Gramscian terms) as extending beyond the state to include workplaces, 'communities' and 'the economy'.

A second interpretation could be styled "*Socialism is the Future – Make Socialistic Reforms Now!*" Here the SACP's main task is to advocate for a more worker-friendly form of capitalism while organising workers into socialistic forms of economic association, such as cooperatives. This means campaigning for a 'socialist-oriented NDR' which begins to roll back the market and expand the hegemony and dominance of the state and non-profit sectors on the terrain of capitalism. The hope is that incremental reforms will open the path to further working class advance, and that the NDR will consequently develop into a socialist revolution.

From the point of view of a transition to socialism neither of these approaches is necessarily wrong. Moreover, they are not necessarily in contradiction with each other since it can be argued that socialistic reforms are required precisely to building working class power, and that the gathering hegemony of working class power will generate socialistic reforms. However, while both interpretations are eloquent about how we should build socialism now, neither engages with the meaning of a socialist future and how the tasks of the present relate to the objective of transcending capitalism.

Perhaps this apparent vacuum of socialist thought arises because the issues involved are taken for

granted, having been settled long ago. No doubt all the members of the Party agree that the socialist mixed economy is merely "a transitional social system between capitalism and a fully classless, communist society". But does this assertion have any scientific content, or is it simply a moral argument about the certainty of a utopian future? Is it based on a careful analysis of the dynamics of contemporary capitalism or is it merely a confession of faith? If it is the former this is nowhere evident in the SACP's programme or in the documents adopted at the 12th Congress.

Perhaps, then, there is another explanation for the SACP's lack of debate about socialism. Perhaps such a debate would raise too many uncomfortable questions to which unifying answers could not be posed. In particular, it may be that the conclusions of such a discussion would risk the explicit recognition that 'scientific' Marxism-Leninism has lost all meaning for the Party and reveal the extent to which many of its cadres are actually in favour of a social democratic compromise with capital.

Revolutionary communism is founded on the belief that socialism constitutes a higher mode of production that will supersede capitalism on a global scale as a consequence of the fact that it is superior to capitalism economically (in terms of technological and material development), socially (in terms of the conditions of life of humanity) and politically (in terms of the democratic self-determination of people). Moreover, this belief is based on the claim that a scientific analysis of contemporary capitalism reveals such a transition to be inexorable and (in the view of some) imminent. For Marxist-Leninists, therefore, communism constitutes the inevitable end of history. Reason thunders new creation and a humane and rational society is born at the conclusion of so many heroic millennia of struggle between the classes.

In contrast, social democrats would largely agree with Fukuyama's view that the 'End of History' has already arrived, and with the assertion that 'scientific socialism' has lost all meaning. For them, there is no new mode of production waiting to be born in the fires of proletarian revolution having been conceived in the minds of revolutionary communists, scientifically or otherwise. Consequently, the struggle of the working class – especially where it has access to the option of a democratic mandate – is to improve the economic, social and political conditions within the framework of the current mode of production; to reform capitalism until it becomes 'socialism', in the sense that the logic of the market is effectively tempered by the rational will of a democratic state accountable to the working class.

Since the SACP programme offers no reasoned explanation of how a "socialist mixed economy"

will lead to the creation of a "fully classless, communist society" the SACP's approach to communism is purely utopian. Consequently, despite its rhetorical commitment to Marxism-Leninism, the Party's approach to a socialist mixed-economy is entirely social democratic.

THE ROAD TO SOCIALISM OR THE ROAD TO LIMPOPO

We noted above that the 1989 programme of the party established a direct link between the working class seizure of state power and the transition to socialism. In current debates, however, the question of 'State Power' is entirely divorced from the question of socialism.

The short chapter on socialism in SARS is followed by a much longer chapter on state power, which does not mention socialism once. The resolution of the 12th Congress on 'the SACP and State Power' is also silent on the question of socialism. Instead, it is motivated by concern that "the structures of the SACP and our cadres have confronted many problems with the way in which the Alliance has often functioned, particularly with regard to policy making, the lack of joint programmes on the ground, deployments and electoral list processes."⁶

In this context, the debate inevitably boils down to the simple question of whether the SACP should continue to give support to the ANC in the form of a strategic alliance or establish itself as a social democratic opposition party. Some believe the best approach is to encourage the ANC to implement social democratic reform by remaining in a reconfigured alliance which can emerge from heightened working class activism within the ANC – 'siyaya eLimpopo'. Others are of the view that the SACP would do a much better job of implementing the same social democratic programme itself – 'kungcono silitathe'.

The second approach is obviously inconsistent with the continuation of a strategic alliance between the SACP and the ANC. They would become opponents in the electoral process contending for the same constituency. The possibility would still exist of continued collaboration between the two, either through some form of electoral pact, or in the context of a coalition government. In either case the strategic alliance is replaced with tactical cooperation on specific programmes.

But if the SACP has no maximum programme that is significantly different from the ANC's then even the first approach – of a reconfigured alliance – will lead to a growing tendency to regard the alliance as a tactical device rather than a strategic necessity in the struggle for socialism.

In opening the ANC Policy Conference in June, President Thabo Mbeki said:

"I must restate some of the fundamental conclusions that have informed the functioning of the broad movement for national liberation for many decades... One of these conclusions is that there is a distinct, material and historically determined difference between the national democratic and the socialist revolutions. Objectively, and not by proclamation or conference resolutions, the ANC necessarily serves as the leader of the forces committed to the victory of the National Democratic Revolution, which struggle for the realisation of the national democratic goals of the masses of our people...

"Equally, the ANC would respect the right and duty of our ally, the South African Communist Party, to lead the struggle for the victory of the socialist revolution. Our movement has never stopped or discouraged the SACP from playing this role, and will not do so today or tomorrow...

"In this context, the SACP has always understood that it could not delegate its socialist tasks to the ANC, consistent with the fact that the tasks of the socialist revolution could not be delegated to the National Democratic Revolution. For many decades, the SACP has therefore not seen and acted against the ANC as its political competitor, which we are not."⁷

In saying so, the President has in mind a revolutionary communist party, with a clear vision of transition to socialism such as that identified by the 1989 programme of the SACP. But if the difference between 'socialism' and 'national democracy' amounts only to a question of emphasis on the nature of the capitalist mixed-economy, then there can be no "distinct, material and historically determined difference between the national democratic and the socialist revolutions".

Consequently, there is no objective basis on which to differentiate between 'socialist tasks' and the 'national democratic tasks'. If this is so, why should the ANC continue to lead the alliance? The SACP might as well do so itself.

In such a case we might characterise the SACP as a Left social democratic party in alliance with the ANC, which is a more centre-left social democratic movement. Here, we do not have a strategic alliance founded on two distinct but interconnected revolutionary streams (socialism and national democracy). Instead we have an uncomfortable coalition of two social democratic parties, each of whom vie for the mantle of leadership, but only one of whom actually places its programme before the electorate.

THREE CHOICES

These conclusions leave the SACP with three choices. First it could stand for election on its own, advancing an independent, left social democratic

platform to become an opposition party to the ANC, thus ending the strategic alliance in favour of tactical cooperation on selected issues. Second, it could accept the ANC's bona fides as the leading and most popular social democratic formation in South Africa and continue to participate in strengthening the ANC in the context of a reconfigured alliance. Third, the SACP could renew its commitment to revolutionary communism.

The first option appears to be the preference of many (perhaps most) in the SACP, including those who wish to 'seize power with the ballot or the bullet'. Assuming that this resulted in an SACP assumption to power, whether alone or in coalition with other parties (including most probably the ANC), the realities faced in government by all mass-based, left parties in the context of capitalist globalisation would also face the SACP.

These realities would generate exactly the kinds of strains and challenges that have characterised the ANC's period in government. If the current debates within the SACP are any guide, this would result in a new round of frustration, and new 'angry voices' would emerge to further fragment the SACP. The most likely end-point is not socialism, but a group of fragmented set of left splinters, all vying for the mantle of the SACP's proud historical legacy.

The second option of a reconfigured alliance is difficult to sustain because, if the ANC and the SACP are both social democratic parties, one professing to be 'to the left' of the other, the question of merging the two (or liquidating one) will increasingly come to the fore. To avoid such a fate the debate about a reconfigured alliance would need to go beyond consideration of the way the parties relate to each other and look also at the mission of the SACP, its structure (in the form of a mass party) and its specific role, distinct from that of the ANC, in supporting and advancing the NDR. In other words, the reconfigured alliance cannot be something that the ANC is called upon to generously bestow on its communist ally, but must emerge from a clear and thoroughgoing transformation of the SACP itself.

The third option is to revitalise the SACP's commitment to revolutionary communism with a view to reconfiguring the strategic Alliance on the basis of a renewed understanding of the "distinct, material and historically determined difference between the national democratic and the socialist revolutions". This option is perhaps the most difficult. It requires going back to basic principles with a willingness to think outside the tattered box of Soviet socialism. It means reviving the debates of the 1990s and asking if they were genuinely resolved in terms of a new revolutionary project, or swept under the carpet in favour of a tacit but

unspoken social democratic conclusion.

If this is so, and if the SACP is a actually a reformist social democratic party clothed in the threadbare drag of Marxism-Leninism, it may be better for the Party to come out of the closet, confront itself in the mirror, and admit that its creed is not revolutionary communism but ordinary reformist social democracy.

While difficult and painful, such a self-confession would at least clear the clouds that currently obscure so much of the 'State Power' debate, opening the way for a credible SACP electoral challenge. Perhaps on this basis too we could return to the second option, and a more sober and enduring relationship of mutual trust and support can be built in the context of a genuinely reconfigured strategic alliance, premised on distinct roles in the common struggle for social democratic reform of twenty-first century capitalism.

MICHAEL SACHS is coordinator of the Economic Transformation Committee of the ANC.

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CURRENT AFFAIRS



Alliance past, Alliance future: The ANC and socialism

Is it time for a reconfigured alliance as suggested by the SACP's 12th National Congress resolution? Nyiko Floyd Shivambu argues that, while the Alliance remains firmly grounded in the theory of the NDR, the new terrains of struggle opened by the democratic breakthrough requires us to rethink the configuration of the Alliance.

The SACP's characterisation of South Africa as Colonialism of a Special Type (CST) has overwhelmingly influenced the ANC's strategic perspective. CST was based on the reality that Africans (and, in the main, the other non-white population groups) in the Union of South Africa were colonial subjects. The only difference was that South Africa was internally colonised by a white population that had naturalised into the territory South of Africa, relatively independent from colonial masters in Europe.

The 2007 ANC Draft Strategy and Tactics notes

the reality that the CST was characterised by three interrelated antagonisms, which "found expression in national oppression based on race; class exploitation directed against black workers on the basis of race; and triple oppression of women based on their race, their class and their gender".¹

Consequently, the alliance was and is premised on the characterisation of South Africa as a CST and the formulation of the struggle as a National Democratic Revolution (NDR) aimed at resolving the national, gender, and class contradictions, through liberation of Africans in particular and



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blacks in generals. The view that there is a need for a dialectical resolution of the national, gender and class contradictions in South Africa made profound inroads and effectually underpinned the National Liberation Movement (NLM) in South Africa.

Apartheid capitalism matured to a stage where the racial order and exploitation in South Africa reached a reciprocal and/or mutual union, where one survived because of the other. Against this background there was a recognition that in South Africa the struggle to discontinue class exploitation was not sufficient to address the contradictions that were characteristic of CST.

All revolutionaries recognised and acknowledged this reality, and could not elevate any of the components of the South African struggle over the other. A failure to recognise and appreciate the national content of the class struggle in South Africa and vice versa amounts to counter revolution. It is within this basis that the alliance emerged out of consolidated and practical struggles of the exploited and oppressed groups in South African society.

An acceptance on the part of the ANC that national liberation cannot be de-linked from class liberation formed the basis of the alliance between the ANC and the SACP. An acceptance by the SACP, that there is a national component in the class struggle and by the ANC, that there is class component in national struggle, underpinned (and underpins) the alliance.

THE FREEDOM CHARTER IS THE BASIS OF THE ALLIANCE

The NDR is aimed at the conscious construction of a non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa, which should necessarily emancipate the black majority and Africans in particular from economic and political bondage.

The Freedom Charter was accepted as the clearest and most correct articulation of the strategic vision of the national liberation struggle and the NDR. While subjected to a variety of interpretations, the Freedom Charter's vision to build a democratic and non-racial South Africa remains uncontested. The Charter also set out the clearest objective on the reclamation of the country's wealth to the ownership of the people as a whole, while not entirely abolishing private capital.

The Freedom Charter is certainly not socialism; hence the SACP viewed it in the 1962 South African Road to Freedom as a minimum programme. The Charter never sought to restore capitalist profitability.

Nelson Mandela observed in 1957: "The Charter does not advocate the abolition of private enterprise, nor is it suggested that all industries be nationalised or that all trade be controlled by the state. 'All people shall have the right to trade where

they choose, to manufacture and to enter all trades, crafts and professions', says the Charter. The right to do these things would remain a dead letter without the restoration of the basic wealth of the country to the people, and without that the building of a democratic state is inconceivable."²

It is not some clandestine SACP programme that the demands of the charter constitute a very firm foundation for a socialist transition. Restoration of mineral wealth, monopoly industry, banks to the ownership of the people as whole, and land belonging to all who work on it, is certainly a basis for a socialist transition.

It is vital to appreciate the reality that the Freedom Charter broadened the alliance of progressive and revolutionary forces in South Africa. The Charter came to be the glue that held the Congress movement together, thus uniting all forces for progressive change. COSATU's response to the 2007 Draft Strategy and Tactics is reminiscent of the unifying role of the Freedom Charter. It argues that any possible substitution of the Freedom Charter as ANC's strategic objective directly threatens the unity of the alliance.

Consistent with the assertions of the Freedom Charter, the Strategy and Tactics adopted in the Morogoro Conference state: "In our country – more than in any other part of the oppressed world – it is inconceivable for liberation to have meaning without a return of the wealth of the land to the people as a whole. It is therefore a fundamental feature of our strategy that victory must embrace more than formal political democracy. To allow the existing economic forces to retain their interests intact is to feed the root of racial supremacy and does not represent even the shadow of liberation."³

The Morogoro document further said, "It is historically understandable that the double-oppressed and doubly exploited working class constitutes a distinct and reinforcing layer of our liberation and Socialism and do not stand in conflict with the national interest."

This is certainly consistent with an observation President Thabo Mbeki made in 1979 titled that: "The charge of traitor might stick if we were to advance a programme of equality between black and white while there remained between these two communities the relations of exploiter and exploited."⁴

Surely President Mbeki was correct in asserting that removing apartheid legislation, while the majority of Africans remain in abject poverty and economically exploited could qualify those who do so to be traitors of the South African revolution and liberation struggle.

As long as the Freedom Charter remains the strategic objective of the ANC, the suspicion that the SACP wants to turn the ANC into a socialist

organisation is really unfounded. The SACP and its members in the ANC do not seek to turn the ANC into a socialist organisation, but intend to ensure that the ANC achieves its own strategic objectives, which are the resolution of the class, gender and national contradictions and building a society envisaged by the Freedom Charter. There certainly is nothing wrong with the SACP and working class forces construing the ANC's achievement of its own goals as a basis of a socialist transition.

The Freedom Charter's assertions on economic transformation are often subjected to conceptual vicissitudes, at times deliberately obfuscated for ideological and class predispositions. This steals from the Charter its conspicuous socialist orientation, mainly on aspects of who should own the key means of production.

COSATU's discussion document for its fourth Central Committee observes: "This much was evident inter alia from the proposals in the Freedom Charter, whose clauses on state ownership of the commanding heights of the economy, and control of the private sector for the benefit of the people, made it clear that the NDR in South Africa needed to involve far more than deracialisation of existing structures of ownership, and required the active breaking up of inherited power relations which were the legacy of decades, indeed centuries of national oppression, and colonial domination."⁵

This observation is certainly revolutionary, yet ignores the reality that the Charter did not explicitly canvass for state ownership, but socialised ownership of the key means of production, which is characteristic of a socialist transition. The Charter says, "The mineral wealth beneath the soil, monopoly industry and banks shall be transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole". State ownership is different from ownership by the people as a whole, and this finds practical coherence in the SACP's 12th National Congress substantiation that state ownership should be the means towards socialised ownership.

THE LEADERSHIP OF THE ALLIANCE

President Mbeki noted in his opening address to the ANC National Policy Conference: "In this context, the SACP has always understood that it could not delegate its socialist tasks to the ANC, consistent with the fact that the tasks of the socialist revolution could not be delegated to the National Democratic Revolution."⁶

Certainly, the SACP will not intend to delegate the tasks of the socialist revolution to the NDR, but will strive to ensure that the NDR's strategic objectives are realised. The SACP (and hopefully all ANC members) is of the view emphasised by President Mbeki that "the ANC would respect the

right and duty of our ally, the South African Communist Party, to lead the struggle for the victory of the socialist revolution.... [as the ANC] never obstructed the SACP in its socialist objectives, and therefore joined the reactionary anti-communist forces."

It is certainly a reflection of reality that the ANC never sought to join the reactionary anti-communist forces, yet there occasionally appears rogue elements and innuendos in society (and within the ANC) not dissimilar from reactionary anti-communist forces.

These are reflected in continuous efforts to prove that the NDR has never been and cannot be a basis for socialist transition, and an odd emphasis that the ultimate realisation of the Freedom Charter cannot and should not be associated with a transition to socialism. This ideological current was identified in SACP's 2006 discussion document on state power as a "rupture", which came to alter the strategic objectives of the essentially working class led NDR and ANC led alliance.

We should consistently emphasise that the main motive force of the NDR is the working class, and that the leader of the alliance is the ANC.

This does not make automatic the ANC's leadership of the NDR, as attributing leadership of a revolution to an organisation is really mechanically devoid of scientific discoveries that fundamentally, revolutions are about fundamental change of class relations, not organisational relations.

Indeed, the ANC, as a mass movement is still the leader of the Alliance that leads and pursues the working class led NDR, mobilising all progressive forces in society to resolve the class, national and gender contradictions. The assertion that the ANC leads the alliance, while the working class leads the National Democratic Revolution is in no way contradictory, but mutually reinforcing in a struggle that intends to resolve the national, gender and class antagonisms.

In all references to resolution of class contradictions, the national liberation movement was not merely referring to some abstract "Better Life for All". While "Better Life for All" was the driving objective, the ANC was unquestionably committed to discontinuation of private ownership of the key means of production, particularly of the commanding heights of the South African economy as emphasised in the Freedom Charter.

The emphasis of all the key highlights mentioned above was mainly on ensuring that land, mineral wealth, banks and monopoly capital are owned and belong to the people as a whole, as envisioned by the Freedom Charter. The ANC had matured in the revolutionary struggles to understand and accept the reality that no struggle for national liberation can be class neutral.

A RECONFIGURED ALLIANCE ON A CHANGED TERRAIN OF STRUGGLE

Emerging out of the 12th National Congress, the SACP's resolution that there should be reconfiguration of the alliance is very much consistent with the aims of the NDR as part of the basis for the alliance. Certainly, this resolution should be subjected to discussions at all levels of the alliance.

The terrain of the struggle has objectively changed. South Africa has shed the predominant and aesthetic aspects of CST, and the revolutionary forces in the process. The democratic breakthrough has presented to the revolutionary movement with new platforms to ensure that the aims of the NDR are realised, including the state and Parliament. As a trusted and committed ally to the struggle for economic and political emancipation, the SACP should take part in these structures. This does not entail an end to the alliance.

The 12th National Congress mandated its structures and members to discuss the best possible way in which the SACP should independently and actively partake in structures of governance. The Congress emphasised that the alliance should remain the vehicle for the realisation of the NDR's strategic objectives.

In the process of this discussion, the ANC should play its leadership role in recognising that it cannot be correct that mobilisations for elections are collectively and jointly embarked on and intensified, yet one partner in the alliance is solely given the responsibility to legislate, govern and execute part of the tasks of the National Democratic Revolution.

Discussions in the 52nd National Conference of

the ANC should reflect on what could constitute a reconfigured alliance with the SACP, and avoid to flow in oblivion and discount an issue worth discussing.

NYIKO FLOYD SHIVAMBU is National Coordinator, Policy Development and Research for the South African Communist Party.

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CURRENT AFFAIRS



Have we failed the Party?

The crisis of capitalism and the challenge of building socialism in South Africa

Socialists should respond to the crisis of capitalism by re-building a strong, united, progressive movement with a disciplined and democratic party of the working class and the poor at its core, writes Phillip Dexter.

What if Marxists don't actually have all the answers? What if our understanding of the world, society, history and capitalism are naïve and simplistic? What would this mean for South African Marxists? This possibility does not detract from the desirability of socialism, but it does suggest that we exercise some restraint and humility when suggesting the way forward to achieving our goal of socialism. The moral basis of socialism is not on trial, but the practical application of Marxism is. We should have a longer view of history. After all, socialism has only been articulated in the last 150 years, capitalism has dominated development for over 3,000.

Joe Slovo, after the collapse of authoritarian

socialism in the USSR and its proxy states, led the charge in the necessary debate that was taking place by asking the question, "Has Socialism Failed?" He came to the honest conclusion that the South African Communist Party (SACP) and its leaders and cadres had, along with the various communist and workers parties that led these regimes, failed socialism. By not criticising the practices of the authoritarian socialist regimes and the parties that led them, the SACP and its cadres were complicit, if not in their various crimes and perversions of socialism, at least in being apologists for them. He urged that socialists debate the mistakes of the past with a view to strengthening the socialist revolution.

A robust debate followed in our country. It took place under exciting conditions; the mass-driven, final push for democracy, negotiations with the apartheid regime and then, under a new democratic dispensation. After the assassination of Chris Hani, the Party slipped into the doldrums. It then seemed to briefly come back to life for a while, with exciting campaigns, a simple, radical critique of the transition and even the beginnings of a new vision for the future. Sadly, after this brief "Prague Spring", the socialist revolution in our country is once again in a crisis. This time, the makings of the crisis are radically different. Unlike the authoritarian socialist regimes that were collapsed by their own people, the socialist revolution here is foundering during a period of democracy and freedom unprecedented for many socialist parties. Socialists occupy positions in government, the state, trade unions, CBOs and NGOs. There are even socialists in business. Perhaps the question we need to ask ourselves is, given these conditions, why has the socialist revolution not succeeded?

WHY SOCIALISM?

There are many people who during this period of capitalist triumphalism proclaim the irrelevance or the failure of socialism. We live in a country and in a world in which the majority of people are poor. In some cases this poverty is relative, measured in relation to the wealth accumulated by the privileged few. In other cases, this poverty is absolute, with such people abandoned to a miserable existence as bleak and as 'nasty, brutish and short' as anything Charles Dickens or Thomas Hobbes ever wrote about. The opulent lifestyle many of us take for granted is the direct cause of the environmental challenges that our planet faces. Wars in the Middle East, Africa and elsewhere have their origins in the greed that capitalism nurtures. Our children stand to inherit all of this – inequality, insecurity, misery, ignorance, disease and premature death. No reasonable person can deny the crisis of capitalism. For this reason, among many, socialism is not only desirable, it is essential.

Yet, it helps little to dramatise this crisis, as easy as it is to do so. While children defecate their stomachs out in the desert of the Sudan, the capitalist machine functions efficiently for the owners of capital; be they entrepreneurs, or workers through their pension funds. While small businesses go bankrupt as multinational companies flit around the globe, causing job losses for those previously employed, profits increase; the rich get richer and the poor stay poor, both relatively and absolutely. Our country's experience in the past 13 years bears this reality out. Freedom and democracy have brought disproportionate benefits to the wealthy, the propertied, the educated and those in proxim-

ity to political power. It was ever thus.

CAPITALISM'S RESPONSE TO ITS OWN CRISIS

Despite repeated predictions of imminent socialist revolution, both internationally and domestically, capitalism has proven to be resilient, constantly recreating conditions for the successful accumulation of wealth by the privileged. There is no doubt that capitalism as it exists today – globalised, digitalised and technologically mediated – is a different beast to that so thoroughly critiqued by Karl Marx. This is not to say Marx is no longer relevant. In many respects his critique is only really fully articulated by modern or late capitalism. Yet, it is impossible to deny that as capitalism is more pervasive globally today, it is more difficult to transform or to defeat. In many respects, the crisis of capitalism is only a crisis for the poor. For capital, it is an opportunity. For the well-off, it is a problem in another neighbourhood. This contradiction is one that has been as much part of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) as has the Freedom Charter.

Our analysis and programme as Marxists globally, and therefore locally, is inadequate. While we can offer a profound description and explanation of the conditions of the working class and the under-classes of the unemployed and those engaged in subsistence or survivalist economic activity, we have been unable to lead these people beyond the point to which the ANC has brought them. Our variant of a developing social democracy has brought relief for many from the vagaries of their existence under apartheid. This is no small feat. The criticism levelled at the ANC in this regard is, for the most part, simply hypocritical. Socialists have been active in the ANC and the Tripartite Alliance all along. The whinge that President Thabo Mbeki and the rest of the so-called 1996 class project has, through some Machiavellian manoeuvre, stopped them from implementing socialism is unbelievably telling. It points to the ineffectual nature of those apparently ranged in readiness to lead us to socialism. It has led many into temptation, for while we wait for socialism, the reality is that we must all live under capitalism.

We must admit that capitalism is the tide that moves us all along. Socialism is the idea that we have an alternative. Important as this idea is, we should not be drawn to voluntarism, opportunism, syndicalism or anarchism because we are frustrated at the lack of progress of the socialist revolution. What we should really do is ask ourselves, what have we done incorrectly? And, what have we not done that we should have?

One of the most interesting features of Marxism today is its estrangement from the physical sci-

ences. Marx, Engels and Lenin all found consolation in the apparent unity between the laws of the physical sciences and those of Marxism. The divergence between these is so apparent today, leading to one of two conclusions; either such unity was manufactured or the contemporary divergence is one of significance.

THE 'MASS-NEGOTIATED' NDR

South Africa's revolution, the mass-negotiated transition from apartheid to democracy, has thrown up challenges and contradictions that the very movement that has led this revolution, the ANC and its allies, has found difficult to address. Apart from the obvious ones, such as balancing land reform against property rights, more complex issues have presented themselves before the revolutionary movement. Most significantly, our national democratic revolution came about as a result of a global and domestic conjuncture that was unique. The collapse of the socialist revolutions of various Eastern European countries and of the attempt by these countries to extend their own revolutions by force of arms on other national states, created a critical moment in the then bipolar global system. This, together with the political stalemate and simultaneous economic collapse of the apartheid system, created conditions for a relatively peaceful transition. The impact of this context on the socialist programme of the communist and socialist forces in the NDR was profound. It created an opportunity to advance to socialism, but it was one that came at a price. It created the conditions for a unique opportunity to build socialism in democratic conditions, but this has been an opportunity that the working class and its allies have yet to fully take advantage of. The reasons for this are complex, but a simplified explanation is that they have been distracted or diverted by our own poverty of theory and our own failure to organise and campaign for socialism.

There is no doubt that had the former USSR and its surrounding proxy states survived, South Africa would look very different today. We would still be free of apartheid, but we would have probably gone through a bloody civil war, resulting in the ultimate victory of the revolutionary forces. There is no telling what damage would have been done to our people, our infrastructure and neighbouring countries had this been our path. There is no guarantee that we would have not had greater repression, and even a fascist balkanised white enclave in part of the territory of South Africa, similar to Israel. Alternately, we could have wound up a state perpetually predisposed to instability, due to the ongoing stalemate of the balance of forces, such as the state of Lebanon.

These scenarios were averted by the ability of the

ANC and its allies – the SACP and a progressive trade union movement borne of the forging of worker unity through years of struggle by SACTU and FOSATU, that gave rise to COSATU – to adapt to the new terrain on which the revolution had to take place. This terrain, one in which it was important for the movement to identify certain pressure points and the logical flows of processes as they unfolded, presented an opportunity for the revolutionary forces to perpetually apply pressure on the apartheid regime and the capitalist class to extract certain radical reforms from them. These radical reforms – unbanning the liberation movement, creating the space within which to debate and negotiate the future, and ultimately the democratic breakthrough – unfolded on a unique terrain. Unlike previous colonial struggles, the oppressor resided permanently in the zone that the revolutionary forces sought to liberate. These forces did not therefore seek to drive the oppressor out, but instead "locked" it in, forcing it onto the terrain most suitable for the working class and the poor – democracy.

It was also a terrain on which the masses played a direct role. The tradition of mass mobilisation, fostered through the years of the ANC-led defiance campaigns and boycotts and resuscitated by the United Democratic Front (UDF) after state repression forced these organisations underground, profoundly shaped the democracy we now have. This has created a political culture in which the political leadership takes the masses for granted at its own peril. To compensate for the lack of vision and leadership and to quell the desire of the poor for change, as is the case in many revolutions, socialists have substituted populism for the vision, theory and organisational hard work needed to build the momentum for socialism. This is evident from the dreary resolutions and excuses for a socialist programme that are now on offer as an apparent alternative to the ANC. Quite how we are to believe that the very members of the ANC who must surely share in the responsibility for the state of our own NDR have something unique to offer, is incomprehensible.

Our world is a very different one today, trite as such a statement may be. It is not necessarily unipolar, but we have a maverick state in the form of the USA that is able to destabilise us all. We have states such as Russia, that are not quite democratic but are robust national states that have the ability to destabilise the world. We also must contend with a massive authoritarian socialist state in the form of the People's Republic of China. We have religious movements that exercise an unhealthy influence on politics, whether Christian, Muslim, Jewish or Hindu in faith.

One of the features of our current reality is the apparent privatisation of society, whether in the

form of religion, lifestyle, and the simultaneous organisation of individuals into tendencies that are mass in character yet private or personal at the same time. Liberalism has a unique appeal to the well-off. It is self-evidently true to those who have achieved personal freedom, particularly freedom from want. It inspires others less privileged to break the property boundaries set up by capitalism to protect historical accumulation. Much of the crime we see in our society and more generally has its origins in this alienation.

REFORM AND REVOLUTION

This terrain, one on which the liberation movement has learnt to advance the NDR through a combination of legal processes and mass mobilisation, is a terrain of its own making. This terrain is to the advantage of the progressive forces. It is one on which the discourse is always 'Left'. The Freedom Charter is the hegemonic manifesto of this state. It is institutionalised in the Constitution, our Bill of Rights and much of government policy and legislation.

Progress has been made in achieving the vision of the Freedom Charter, but there is much to be done. For those of us who are socialists and communists in the ANC, our belief is that the Freedom Charter cannot be fully realised under capitalism. We must therefore continue to struggle for socialism. But how we define and struggle for socialism is crucial if we are to build a society in which freedom, democracy, health and even prosperity are there for all.

There has been an increasing tendency of late for socialists and communists to present a simplistic critique of the terrain on which the NDR takes place and the movement that leads the NDR as being one in which we can simply announce that we want socialism and that all that stands between the people and socialism is a fraction of the ANC leadership who are now allied to a deracialised bourgeoisie, the owners of monopoly finance capital. Such an analysis chooses to simply ignore the facts and our history. It is projected in the interests of a few leaders in the movement who seek to portray themselves as "true" revolutionaries over those who have "sold out". Of course, such claims to revolutionary purity are never actually backed up with any credible evidence, they are simply proclaimed as self-evident truths. Reality and experience show most of these claims to be selfish, far-fetched and dishonest.

INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

Many revolutions have gone the route of seeking a short-cut to socialism. Under certain conditions – Cuba, China or Vietnam spring to mind – such a short cut was the inevitable consequence of the

actions of imperialist forces and of the unity of the people in those countries to advance towards socialism, no matter the conditions. The ultimate success of these projects is still hanging in the balance, but we hope they will succeed and we must defend these revolutions, even if we are critical of some of their practices.

But in these and in many other countries, the route to socialism has been one that necessarily ended democracy, took away certain freedoms and cost these countries an enormous amount in the form of lives lost and infrastructure destroyed. In many instances these conditions put in place a dictatorship of populist, self-styled socialists whose programmes were usually not intended to benefit the people, or if they were, became so perverted as to make this objective impossible to achieve. These scenarios are not necessarily our future, but, at the very least, we need to be honest about the price that potentially must be paid to build socialism.

In other countries, such as France, Italy or India, communist parties broke with other progressive forces to attempt to win power at the ballot box on their own. In almost all these instances, these parties have eventually returned to build new relationships with those they severed ties with in the name of ideological purity. Such historical detours have been costly to the parties themselves and more importantly to the people they seek to represent. In the name of ideological purity, a socialist chimera and in the name of the people themselves, leaders have taken decisions that have cost the masses everything and themselves little. We should be wary of calls to action to replace leaders with "super-revolutionaries", so that these will, in the manner of religious leaders, show us the way to some socialist nirvana.

A STRONG, INDEPENDENT DEMOCRATIC PARTY

The NDR is not to be squandered lightly. While it is a revolution owned by all the progressive forces in our society, it is one that faces contradictions arising from the conditions under which it occurs. Because of the fact that South Africa is a capitalist country in a global system of rampant capitalist accumulation and even hegemonic capitalist ideology, these forces are very dominant in our society. There are many capitalists, small, medium and large, and even adherents of capitalist ideology in the ANC. Not all of these are capitalists by choice and certainly many of them are not hostile to the goals of improving the lives of our people. Many would consider themselves socialists or social democrats.

In the name of ideological purity, but usually in the interests of a few individuals, there has been an opportunistic critique of some individuals who

have accumulated private wealth but remained members of the ANC. Usually, if these individuals give donations to certain organisations, they are spared criticism, as are those trade unionists and political leaders who benefit from the spoils. Such hypocrisy is now par for the course in the NDR. There are also workers and unemployed people in the ANC who are social democrats. There are progressive people of faith in the ANC. Can socialism be achieved by antagonising all these people? It is doubtful. Even trade unions have undergone profound changes in the recent period. The traditions of selfless organisation, solidarity and of basic service to members are on the wane. Unions are often as much about business these days as they are about workers. Full-time trade union officials wield disproportionate power and the notion of worker control seems all but dead.

Socialist values are as important as being able to quote from Karl Marx. One of the most depressing features of the NDR of late has been the willingness of some to behave as if they are not accountable for their actions and that each time they are called to account or a suspicion is voiced, this is argued away as being part of a conspiracy against them because they are the only "true" revolutionaries left. If it were really that simple, if all that was needed to build socialism is to elect tried and tested leaders, then we would have had socialism already. After all, post-1990, we have been led by leaders of the calibre of Nelson Mandela, Chris Hani, Walter Sisulu, Thabo Mbeki, Jacob Zuma, Thenjwe Mtinso, Cheryl Carolus and many more. Instead of peddling this nonsense, socialists need to ensure that they are in the forefront of the hard work that needs to be done to build a tangible momentum for socialism.

Where do these weaknesses manifest themselves? The fact that we in the movement are focused on the palace politics of succession, while non-Congress aligned socialists lead the struggles and marches of the homeless and the poor, is one example. The fact that while we talk of worker unity we spend all our time trying to oust democratically elected leaders of the trade union movement is another. The fact that while we claim to be building an alternative socialised capital, the co-operative movement has collapsed and pension funds are stolen.

Socialism will only come about through honest, hard work. What does this entail? Among other

things:

- constantly developing Marxist theory so that that it begins to offer real answers to the current crisis of capitalism, in the form of clear policies, programmes and campaigns. We must spare the ANC, SACP and COSATU no privilege, but we must also ensure that we are honest and accountable in our critique. Our diversions are our collective diversions;

- re-building a strong, united, progressive movement with a disciplined and democratic party of the working class and the poor at its core. We need a renewal of strategic trade unionism that is non-racial and relevant. We need to focus more on single issue campaigns. The reality of life in our organisations is that it is boring, gender insensitive, boorish, full of bravado. We need to socialise our organisations;

- recruiting and politically educating individuals and instilling socialist values in them to ensure they are in the forefront of democratising the state, disciplining capital, running the various organisations of the working class and the poor, such as trade unions, community based, single issue and non-governmental organisations. Most importantly, such cadres need to be in the vanguard of socialising our society. There is a dearth of cadres who are ready to teach the next generation. Investing in people is the most important investment we can make;

- engaging the working class and the poor in regular and relevant campaigns that teach disciplined mass mobilisation and techniques of working among the people that ready the working class and its allies for political power. We must socialise society;

- strengthening socialist values by being in the vanguard of behaviour that seeks to unite progressive people, counters factionalism, conspiracy theories and gossip. The party must fight the system, not the people. It must learn and teach the art of revolution. Transparency, honesty, accountability, a service ethos, and fairness are all important.

Above all, we must defend democracy. The right to voice opinions, views and ideas no matter how important, radical, boring or irrelevant is essential to the creation of a culture that will foster the unity, cohesion and capacity to build socialism.

PHILLIP DEXTER is a member of the ANC National Executive Committee.

A hurdle race rigged against the poor

While globalisation provides the opportunities for rising wealth and poverty eradication, the unfair rules of the global trading regime protect the interests of the rich and powerful. Global solidarity to build a fair trade system is the choice we must all make, writes Fikile Mbalula.

Trade is one of the most powerful forces linking our lives, and a source of unprecedented wealth. Yet millions of the world's poorest people are being left behind. Increased prosperity has gone hand in hand with mass poverty. Already obscene inequalities between rich and poor are widening.

World trade could be a powerful motor to reduce poverty, and support economic growth, but that potential is being lost. The problem is not that international trade is inherently opposed to the needs and interests of the poor, but that the rules that govern it are rigged in favour of the rich.

If Africa, East Asia, South Asia, and Latin America were each to increase their share of world exports by one percent, the resulting gains in income could lift 128 million people out of poverty. In Africa alone, this would generate \$70bn – approximately five times what the continent receives in aid.

In their rhetoric, governments of rich countries constantly stress their commitment to poverty reduction. Yet in practice rigged rules and double standards lock poor people out of the benefits of trade, closing the door to an escape route from poverty.

For example, the rich countries spend \$1bn every day on agricultural subsidies. The resulting surpluses are dumped on world markets, undermining the livelihoods of millions of smallholder farmers in poor countries.

The full potential of trade to reduce poverty cannot be realised unless poor countries have access to markets in rich countries. Unfortunately, Northern governments reserve their most restrictive trade barriers for the world's poorest people.

Competition in the international trading system can be likened to a hurdle race with a difference: the weakest athletes face the highest hurdles. When desperately poor smallholder farmers or women garment workers enter world markets, they face import barriers four times as high as those faced by producers in rich countries.

LONG TERM COSTS AND LOST OPPORTUNITIES

Trade restrictions in rich countries cost developing countries around \$100bn a year – twice as much as they receive in aid. Sub-Saharan Africa, the world's poorest region, loses some \$2bn a year, while India and China lose in excess of \$3bn. These are only the immediate costs. The longer-term costs associated with lost opportunities for investment and the loss of economic dynamism are much greater.

From women workers in Bangladesh's garment factories, to workers in China's special economic zones and workers in the free-trade zones of Central America, to small farmers and agricultural labourers across the developing world, globalisation is generating forces which create some opportunities, along with huge threats.

Persistent poverty and increasing inequality are standing features of globalisation. In the midst of the rising wealth generated by trade, there are 1.1 billion people struggling to survive on less than \$1 a day – the same number as in the mid-1980s. Inequalities between rich and poor are widening, both between and within countries. With only 14% of the world's population, high-income countries account for 75% of global GDP.

Trade barriers in rich countries are especially damaging to the poor, because they are targeted at the goods that they produce, such as labour-intensive agricultural and manufactured products. Because women account for a large share of employment in labour-intensive export industries, they bear a disproportionate share of the burden associated with the lower wages and restricted employment opportunities imposed by protectionism.

When developing countries export to rich-country markets, they face tariff barriers that are four times higher than those encountered by rich countries.

While rich countries keep their markets closed, poor countries have been pressurised by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank

to open their markets at breakneck speed, often with damaging consequences for poor communities.

The international community has failed to address the problem of low and unstable commodity prices, which consign millions of people to poverty. Coffee prices, for example, have fallen by 70% since 1997, costing exporters in developing countries \$8bn in lost foreign-exchange earnings.

A NEW CAPITALIST CONSENSUS VS. THE POWER OF SOLIDARITY

Powerful transnational companies (TNCs) have been left free to engage in investment and employment practices which contribute to poverty and insecurity, constrained only by weak voluntary guidelines. In many countries, export-led success is built on the exploitation of women and girls.

Many of the rules of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) on intellectual property, investment, and services protect the interests of rich countries and powerful TNCs, while imposing huge costs on developing countries. This bias raises fundamental questions about the legitimacy of the WTO.

The WTO/IMF/WB represents a new capitalist consensus to override national sovereignty and democracy.

Reform of world trade is only one of the requirements for ending the deep social injustices that pervade globalisation. Action is also needed to reduce inequalities in health, education, and the distribution of income and opportunity, including those inequalities that exist between women and men. However, world trade rules are a key part of the poverty problem; fundamental reforms are needed to make them part of the solution.

Fair trade can only succeed if world trade rules are changed so that trade can make a real difference in the fight against global poverty.

As young people, we were also correct in saying the power of solidarity is critical to progress and development for the poor. As progressive organisations, we must work out to pinpoint the areas of solidarity in trade, focusing on agriculture, transport, communication, manufacturing and anything else that informs the tempo of the global economy, with the sole objective that these must be underpinned by fair trade.

It is in this context that we could safely say that globalisation is indeed good because then it would be embracing the world's people irrespective of gender, race, nationality or regional location.

A global campaign need to be intensified against these parasitic monopolistic capital under the precept of globalisation. The campaign must assume a character of:

- Ending the use of conditions attached to IMF-World Bank programmes which force poor coun-

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tries to open their markets regardless of the impact on poor people.

- Improving market access for poor countries and ending the cycle of subsidised agricultural over-production and export dumping by rich countries. In addition, changing WTO rules so that developing countries can protect domestic food production.

- Creating a new international commodities institution to promote diversification and end over-supply in order to raise prices to levels consistent with a reasonable standard of living for producers, and changing corporate practices so that companies pay fair prices.

- Establishing new intellectual-property rules to ensure that poor countries are able to afford new

Group of young anti-globalisation protesters in Australia.

technologies and basic medicines, and that farmers are able to save, exchange, and sell seeds.

■ Prohibiting rules that force governments to liberalise or privatise basic services that are vital for poverty reduction.

■ Enhancing the quality of private-sector investment and employment standards.

■ Democratising the WTO to give poor countries a stronger voice.

■ Changing national policies on health, education, and governance so that poor people can develop their capabilities, realise their potential, and participate in markets on more equitable terms.

THE CHOICE IS OURS

The existing trade system is indefensible and unsustainable. As part of the revolutionary ethos, no civilised community should be willing to tolerate the extremes of prosperity and poverty that are generated by current trade practices.

Free trade is unfair, the low wages and poor working conditions of foreign workers is unfair, the lenient environmental standards in less developed countries is unfair, the high profits of multinational corporations is unfair, as are virtually all of the actions taken by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

As a result of these trends, the gap between the rich and the poor has increased dramatically in recent decades. Today, the richest 20% of the world's population has 60 times the income of the poorest 20%.

Large parts of the developing world are becoming enclaves of despair, increasingly marginalised and cut off from the rising wealth generated through trade. Shared prosperity cannot be built on such foundations. Like the economic forces that drive globalisation, the anger and social tensions that accompany vast inequalities in wealth and opportunity will not respect national borders. The instability that they will generate threatens us all. In today's globalised world, our lives are more

inextricably linked than ever before, and so is our prosperity. As a global community, we sink or swim together.

The international trading system is not a force of nature. It is a system of exchange, managed by rules and institutions that reflect political choices. Those choices can prioritise the interests of the weak and vulnerable, or the interests of the wealthy and powerful. Trade is reinforcing global poverty and inequality because the international trading system is managed to produce these outcomes.

The rules of the game reflect the power of vested interests – but concerted public campaigning can change them. As the international campaign to cancel the debts of poor countries demonstrated, public action can force the interests of the poor on to the international agenda. And it can achieve real gains for human development.

Clearly, globalisation stands on the cross-road to global economic justice. Its manifestations are monopoly capital, capital concentration to the few, undermining of monetary sovereignty of a nation state, worker exploitation, and distorted trading regime. It is process, a system of exploiting economically weak countries by connecting the economies of the world, forcing dependence on (and ultimately servitude to) the western capitalist machine.

Ultimately, there is a clear choice to be made. We can choose to allow unfair trade rules to continue causing poverty and distress, and face the consequences, or we can change them. We can allow globalisation to continue working for the few, rather than the many, or we can forge a new model of inclusive globalisation, based on shared values and principles of social justice. The choice is ours. And the time to choose is now.

FIKILE MBALULA is President of the African National Congress Youth League.

INTERNATIONAL



Engaging the Diaspora as a force for a better Africa

The African Diaspora, composed of peoples of African origins living outside the continent, can be a critical motive force for the realisation of an African agenda for a better world, writes Eddy Maloka. This will require much closer working relations between civil society and government's in the Diaspora, African governments and regional bodies.

The African Union and South Africa have been hosting consultations with the African Diaspora in Europe, North America, the Caribbean and Brazil, as a build up towards a Ministerial Conference scheduled for November and the Summit of Heads of State and Government to be held in South Africa early next year.

DEFINING THE DIASPORA

The Executive Council of the African Union has defined the African Diaspora as "peoples of African origin living outside the continent, irrespective of their citizenship and nationality and who are willing to contribute to the development of the conti-

ment and the building of the African Union".

The strategic importance of the African Diaspora to Africa is a product of four factors that shaped contemporary Africa: the Trans-Atlantic slave trade, colonial rule, the anti-colonial struggle, and Pan-Africanism.

The Pan-African project evolved in the context of the anti-colonial struggles, and came to entail four elements: a sense among Africans on the continent and those in the Diaspora of themselves as "one" people because of common historical experience and destiny; the quest for the "regeneration", "awakening" or "renaissance" of Africa on the social, cultural and economic fronts as well

Table: Geographic Distribution and Comparative Weight of Key African Diaspora Constituencies

Diaspora region	Key country	Estimated Population number	Generations	State actor	Status
North America	USA	39,161,513	Descendents and immigrants	No	Excluded and marginalised
Latin America	Brazil	112,645,204	Descendents	No	Excluded and marginalised
Caribbean	Most	13,560,263	Descendents	Yes	Excluded and marginalised
Europe	UK, Brussels and France	3,512,183	Immigrants	No	Excluded and marginalised

as in global affairs; the "dream" of an Africa united in social, cultural, economic and political spheres; and the spirit of solidarity among people of African descent.

Objectively the Diaspora can be defined in terms other than Pan-African consciousness and activism, as illustrated in the Table above.

A number of conclusions can be drawn, namely that:

- The largest concentration of the African Diaspora is in the Americas and the Caribbean;

- African Diaspora immigrants are in parts of North America and constitute a dominant African Diaspora presence in Europe and, of course, Asia and the Middle East; and that

- African Diaspora communities are generally excluded and marginalised in their respective countries, with a section of those in the Caribbean the only ones in possession of the state machinery.

Therefore, compared to other Diaspora communities such as Indian, Chinese and Jewish, the African Diaspora is relatively weak both in political and economic terms. The continent's engagement with this constituency should take this into account. For example, large shipments of capital from the Diaspora should not be expected; nor is the African Diaspora in a position to decisively exercise geopolitical might in favour of the mother continent.

THE AFRICAN DIASPORA AS A MOTIVE FORCE FOR CHANGE

The engagement with the Diaspora, in this context, is not only part of the implementation of the objective of building a better world, but also fits into advancing the African Agenda.

Contributing to the building of a better world should entail confronting systemic inequalities at the international level, particularly in the ownership and distribution of resources and power (including weapons of mass destruction), working hard for a multi-polar world and striving towards the transformation of multilateral organs of global governance. The Diaspora, as both civil society agents and state actors, is one motive force that stands to gain from a world better than the one we have today where might is right and the poor have no share of the cake.

The African Agenda, for its part, is about the promotion of democracy on the continent, the

eradication of violent conflicts, advancing Africa's development and combating underdevelopment, poverty, diseases and illiteracy, protecting and affirming African culture and enhancing Africa's global standing. Africa, of course, has to lead in the realisation of this Agenda, but certainly not without partners outside the continent. Here, like with the objective of building a better world, the African Diaspora can make an invaluable contribution both as civil society agents and state actors.

But engagement with the African Diaspora is in no way limited to the contribution this constituency can make towards the African Agenda and the building of a better world. First, African Diaspora communities, for the most part, are confronted with problems of marginalisation and exclusion in their respective countries; their plight should be Africa's cause. This also applies to those in the Caribbean in possession of state power who, like the African continent, are marginalised and excluded at the global level.

Secondly, in spite of having being separated from their mother continent for centuries, African Diaspora communities constitute a significant African presence in their respective countries in, for example, their music, dance, dishes, mannerism, and religion. This strong and enduring cultural bond with the mother continent needs encouragement and nurturing.

And thirdly are issues of common concern between the continent and its Diaspora which are still on the global agenda whose resolution will depend in large part on collective action between the continent and its Diaspora. The principal example here is the legacy of slavery as a crime against humanity and the issue of Reparations.

A PROGRAMME FROM THE JAMAICA CONFERENCE

The Jamaica Conference of 2005 was one of the initiatives aimed at giving momentum to growing efforts at strengthening relations between the continent and its Diaspora. The Conference adopted the following Programme of Action:

- That the African Union (AU) and Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) should continue to develop a concrete mechanism for the institutionalisation of the relations between the two bodies;

- That African and Caribbean governments should

explore and develop concrete measures for promoting linkages between the two regions in the following priority areas: trade and investment, science and technology, travel and tourism, education and culture, health, and environmental issues;

- That African and Caribbean organs of civil society should explore and develop concrete measures for promoting linkages and collaboration between the two regions;

- That Africa and the Caribbean, through their regional organisations, should explore ways of harmonising international diplomacy in particular, by utilising the forthcoming UN Millennium Review Summit and the WTO Doha Development Round, to advance their agenda.

The African Diaspora Summit of next year should, building on inputs from regional Diaspora consultations and the Ministerial Conference, concretise the above Programme of Action into deliverables.

Many in the Diaspora consider themselves part of the Pan-African project, and many more are in the ranks of the progressive and anti-globalisation movements. In this context, engaging the Diaspora can be focused around six priority areas: the economy, particularly the promotion of capital flow to the continent; Diaspora tourism flow into the continent; Diaspora skills attraction and human resources development on the continent; cultural and information exchange, including joint Africa-Diaspora knowledge production initiatives; building strong inter-state partnerships with the Diaspora through bilateral relations and South-South co-operation; and promoting strong and active Africa-Diaspora cooperation in the international system and multilateral forums. Already, for example, remittances of African immigrants abroad to their families on the continent sustain many households and, in some cases, economies of countries. These remittances run into billions of American dollars per annum.

ENGAGING THE DIASPORA

Africa's engagement with its Diaspora has a long history, dating back to the Atlantic slave trade and the beginning of the Pan-African movement. However, it was with the transformation of the Organisation of African Unity into the AU that this engagement received a new impetus. Accordingly, the Protocol on the Amendments to the Constitutive Act of the African Union proposes in Article 3(q) an additional objective of the AU which is to "invite and encourage the full participation of the African Diaspora as an important part of our Continent, in the building of the African Union".

Whereas this Protocol is yet to enter into force, member states have already taken decisions at both Summit and Executive Council levels, to give effect to this proposal. The AU and some member states, including South Africa, are now actively

involved in engaging the Diaspora. At the level of the AU, the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC), is driving the Diaspora agenda, targeting civil society agents. There are provisions in the ECOSOCC Statute for Diaspora participation in the structures and activities of the organ. A co-ordination mechanism has been established in the various Diaspora regions for the facilitation of this participation.

On the part of African Diaspora actors, governments have been less visible in the engagement with the continent than civil society movements that have been very active on several fronts in Africa. One example here is the Rastafarian Movement. Indeed, the United Nation's Durban Racism Conference which was held in South Africa in 2002 provided the African Diaspora with energy, platform, and purpose in the engagement with the mother continent.

Currently, four issues dominate African Diaspora's engagement with Africa. Reparations for the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade dominate the four issues. In the Caribbean, governments and CARICOM have taken a clear and strong position in favour of the Reparations.

The second issue relates to the plight of the African Diaspora in Europe. This concerns the inhuman and racist treatment of people of African descent in that part of the world. This issue is not limited to discrimination in the labour market and society at large, but it is also racist, violent attacks on black people by right-wing elements there.

Thirdly, the African Diaspora wants to be granted "the right of return" to the mother continent. The argument here is that the African Diaspora descendents were forcibly taken from the continent as slaves and do not need visa to return "home". So, every African government should grant an automatic citizenship to any African Diaspora descend who land on their shores!

And fourthly, organised African Diaspora constituencies keep raising with the AU and African governments that the African Diaspora should be declared the 6th region of the AU. This issue has even developed into an urban legend: for some reason, there is a belief out there on the continent and in African Diaspora communities that the AU had already taken the decision to declare the Diaspora its 6th region. Meetings and conferences are being held across the world to prepare proposals for the operationalisation of the 6th region!

These four issues will certainly come out very strongly at the Ministerial Conference and the African Diaspora Summit. The good news is, however, that Africa and its Diaspora are ready to move beyond rhetoric to concrete and sustainable engagement.

EDDY MALOKA is in the Secretariat of NEPAD.

Azikhwelwa! — The Alexandra Bus Boycott

Zwelinzima Sizani spoke to veterans of the Alexandra bus boycott of 1957 and assesses the lessons of that heroic and victorious struggle.

Fifty years ago, the gallant people of Alexandra township came out to boycott buses. It was a time of heightened struggle, when 156 national leaders were facing a treason trial. The Alexandra Bus Boycott was among the many efforts of our people in demonstrating their resolve not to take their oppression and exploitation lying down. The community was united in its determination to face what was rightfully an unjust bus fee increment. The boycott brought to the fore the lessons of past campaigns, and built upon the lasting example of passive resistance pioneered by Mahatma Gandhi.

The boycott began amid the 1 Pound a-Day campaign of the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU). People were clearly unable to afford the one penny (or 25%) increase that the Public Utility Transport Corporation (PUTCO) decided to impose. SACTU shop-stewards played a critical role in supporting the boycott, including by organising lifts for the thousands of workers who had to trudge the 20 kilometres to and from work.

In the eyes of so-called 'opinion makers,' journalists in particular, every upsurge by the masses against tyranny is regarded as spontaneous. But if this boycott was spontaneous, then where did the names of Piet Madzunya, Florence Mophosho, Thomas Nkobi, Alfred Nzo and others mushroom from? These had already chiselled their teeth in political struggle led by the ANC.

Even though Madzunya (the Lion of the North) was to later jump ship to join the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), Nzo, Nkobi and Mophosho were to emerge as sterling leadership cadres of our people's movement. Alfred Nzo became the chairperson of the Alexandra branch of the ANC in 1956. As a result of his sterling work to organise the bus boycott, he was voted on to the regional and national executive committees of the ANC in 1957. Florence Mophosho was also a member of the Alexandra Bus Boycott Committee. Later, during the State of Emergency in 1960, she went underground and continued to work as an organiser for the ANC. In the course of her work she was arrested a number

of times and was banned in 1964.

One of the other outstanding Bus Boycott leaders to emerge within the ranks of the movement was Thomas Nkobi who was to become the first ANC National Organiser. He was later co-opted and then elected as the Treasurer General of the ANC after the death of another ANC and SACP stalwart, Moses Kotane.

The Alexandra Bus Boycott of 1957 was successful. PUTCO was forced to rescind the increments to the bus fare. The boycott demonstrated that the will of the people could change decisions that are arbitrary and not made in consultation with the masses. Decisions that overlook compelling economic conditions can be reversed through mass action.

After the ANC was banned by the regime and during one of the periods of the worst repression in the history of our country, PUTCO managed to re-impose the increases. Nevertheless, the memory of the success of the Azikhwelwa campaign could not be removed and was to shape the tactics of boycotts of later years, including the Orlando West Junior Secondary School pupils in 1976, and the boycott campaigns of the 1970s and 1980s.

Sam Baloyi and Peter Sihlangu were participants in the historic Azikhwelwa campaign. Today they still live in shacks in the sprawling township of Alexandra, which is presently undergoing a facelift by our democratic government. However, they are

enthusiastic about the future. They speak with nostalgia when they reflect on the type of unity that was displayed during the gruelling three months of daily footing to work.

The conditions of Alexandra Township then were very arduous due to a very high influx of migrants coming to the City of Gold. Many came to seek employment since life in Verwoerd's Native Reserves was nothing but day after day staring at the horizon waiting for nightfall.

The present conditions of lack of housing are a matter that needs to be addressed faster than the present Alexandra Renewal Programme is moving. The problem that is caused by residents of "bridging" electricity to avoid paying for the service also has to stop since it is a danger to the very same community. Electricity capacity has to be upgraded, and street lights have to be functional at all times.

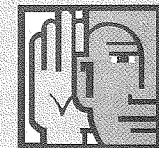
These veterans of the Bus Boycott say the youth of today has to focus on their education, for the authorities are doing their best for people to enjoy their freedom, and this comes with having the right skills and qualifications to be employable so as to further contribute in the development of their communities.

ZWELINZIMA SIZANI is Political Education Officer of the ANC Gauteng province.

*Azikhwelwa...
Alexandra
residents
walking to their
places of work
during the 1957
Bus Boycott.*



AN INVITATION TO UMRABULO READERS



READERS OF UMRABULO are invited to submit articles for publication in the Readers' Forum section. Articles may cover any topic considered relevant to the purpose of Umrabulo, including responses to previous articles. When submitting articles, please consider the following:

- Readers' Forum articles should be between 1,500-2,000 words in length.
- Umrabulo is aimed at a broad range of people within the ANC and democratic movement, but especially at branch members. Contributions should therefore use plain language. Jargon should be avoided, and specialist terms should be clearly explained.
- Contributions may be submitted in any South African language. Until resources permit otherwise, however, articles are likely to be translated into English for publication.

- Articles should be submitted together with the name and contact details of the author.
 - Articles may be submitted by e-mail, fax, post or by hand.
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 - The Editorial Collective reserves the right to decide whether or not to publish a contribution.
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Affirmative action is fair discrimination

Yandisa Nongena asks how we can let sleeping dogs lie when some still hold on to their ill-gotten gains

Much has been said about affirmative action. Those who feel they are victims of affirmative action seem to be ignorant of the past. On the other hand the beneficiaries of affirmative action are not doing justice in their defence of it, do not acknowledge that affirmative action is discrimination and in some cases do not want to be associated with it.

THE DETERMINATION OF AN ELEPHANT

A brief history of the conditions that led to huge imbalances in skills is necessary to understand where we come from. Consider skills acquisition of any person in modern society. Primary and secondary education is the necessary foundation on which further education is built. During colonial and certainly in the apartheid years, the system favoured white South Africans, ensuring they had the best education on which to build their future lives. Other races had inferior education thanks to the Bantu Education Act. Resources for black education were peanuts in comparison to the largesse with which white education was favoured.

Tertiary education while ensures that students acquire useful skills to contribute to society. Under apartheid, Blacks needed permission from the Minister of Education for admission to study toward scientific, technical and professional qualifications at university level. Furthermore, separate race universities were created through the Extension of University Education Act, Act 45 of 1959, which put an end to black attendance at white universities such as the University of Cape Town and Wits. Typically, non-white universities were under-resourced and could not offer medicine, engineering and other exclusive studies. Sadly, this under funding still happens under our government even though it might be difficult to prove thanks to the merged institutions.

Having completed tertiary education non-whites could only get jobs that whites were unwilling to

do or which were not reserved for whites. Moreover, those blacks who worked alongside whites were legally required to use separate, inferior amenities. Blacks were paid less and the little pay they received was spent on renting township houses (which they could never own) and commuting to those townships that were miles from work – thanks to apartheid spatial planning. While public transport was heavily subsidised, it could not compensate for the sad state of affairs for black workers. To add insult to injury, blacks were not allowed to strike and were denied labour rights.

Only those blacks with balls of steel and the determination of an elephant could bulldoze their way all through these hurdles. Our brightest left while the courageous joined the struggle.

Affirmative action, the only hurdle – if at all it is – that white South Africans are faced with, is informed by Employment Equity Act (EEA). This is not a statute to exclude whites. Rather it intends to give preference to blacks and to women of all races. It emphasises the development of these groups and in no way does it advocate blanket discrimination of white males. Where there are two candidates, one black and the other white, with similar qualifications and experience preference must be given to the black candidate. This is what affirmative action is about.

Those who really believe they have been discriminated against have recourse to the courts, which are more independent than apartheid courts. We have seen how, for example in the ESKOM case, courts do come down hard on those who do not follow the letter of the law. We have seen how our learned judges defend the independence of the judiciary.

IF YOU CAN'T MEASURE IT, YOU CAN'T MANAGE IT

If white South Africans are genuine and committed to South Africa they can take steps that will ensure

that colonial and apartheid legacies are eradicated in this country sooner than later. First, apply your mind to analysing the impact of the legacy of our past with the aim of identifying quick wins that can cause step changes in the economic landscape in order to reverse apartheid imbalances.

Second, question the assumptions about white people and black people. Reading historical accounts of business and politics in South Africa reveals gross nepotism, incompetence and corruption among whites.

Third, consider getting economists to build econometric models that would indicate the number of blacks that must be educated, trained and mentored to get to the employment demographics that are similar to national demographics. If econometric models to predict economic dynamics can be built, I see no reason why employment equity models cannot be built to inform us what has to be done to reverse the imbalances of apartheid.

In doing all this, the calls to remove affirmative action will be informed by progress made and all can see where progress is lacking. Calls for sunset clauses in EEA, to be triggered by progress made, can then be credible with such change monitored.

Lastly, as any management fundis will tell you, "If you can't measure it you can't manage it." It is incredibly stupid that some are calling for an end to racial classification, when racial classification is a necessary tool to measure progress in reversing the imbalances of the past. Do they really have liberal principles in mind or do they want to conceal the sad state of affairs their forefathers socially engineered?

There are also some among the beneficiaries of affirmative action who seem equally ignorant of the past and claim it is not discriminatory. The reality is that affirmative action is discriminatory. But it is discrimination that is justified and allowed by our constitution. This is an anomaly that we must live with until everybody makes a concerted effort to reverse the imbalances of apartheid legacy and we become a normal society. In a normal country with no history like ours the distribution of jobs should reflect the general demographics of the country.

JOIN HANDS AND ENGAGE POSITIVELY

Calls have been made to limit EEA on youth under the guise of "let sleeping dogs lie." This is unwise and will perpetuate the very imbalances we have

to reverse – how can we let sleeping dogs lie when some still hold on to their ill-gotten gains.

Some want everything to be left to the power of the market as is the case in US and UK. One should perhaps look at our post-1994 history and the response from corporate South Africa with all its resources and means to reverse the past imbalances. Government left it to the companies to reverse the apartheid imbalances out of their goodwill. Little, if anything at all, was achieved from that. What does that say about those with power and money to influence change?

Our government, like any government, has legislation as tools to effect change. It duly legislated on affirmative action through EEA. The response was moaning and groaning. The complaining still continues but loopholes are being exploited. Doing enough to meet compliance seems to be the end-game. We should not and will not accept that nonsense. Government has a mandate effect social change.

It is interesting that during negotiations for our political transition the politicians representing white interests felt strongly about protection and promotion of minority rights. If theirs was purely based on principle, then EEA would be encouraged on the basis of advancing the minorities in the world of work (ie. blacks).

The FW De Klerk Foundation has produced at least two papers which seem to support the idea of protection of minority rights. There might come a time, maybe not in our lifetime, where affirmative action might be for the interest of white minorities. I am sure sober and noble minds, black and white, will not hold back their support, for it would be the correct thing to do and in line with promoting diversity and protecting minorities.

Sadly, all this makes a number of whites lose credibility in the eyes of those who care about the future of this country. Fortunately, there are some white South Africans who have done and are doing their very best to make this country a better place. Your efforts are much appreciated. Join hands and engage this country positively to make your efforts snowball in making this country a really great place to be. May you hold your heads high and call yourselves Africans. Africa will proudly call you sons and daughters of the soil.

YANDISA NONGENA is a member of the ANC Eli Weinberg Branch in Johannesburg.

Affirmative action, white women and nation-building

If well handled, affirmative action will help bind the nation together and produce benefits for everyone, writes Tsakane Mahlaule.

In recent weeks we have been bombarded in both the print and broadcast media by various views on the rights and wrongs of affirmative action. Is this yet another storm in a teacup or an issue worthy of deeper consideration?

While much legislation and many programmes have been put in place to support the spirit of our Constitution, the limited changes in employment equity demonstrate the distance still to be travelled to achieve national democracy. The recent annual report of the Employment Equity Commission indicates clearly that improvements in black and female ownership and control of wealth are still limited, with overall proportions inversely related to our country's demographics. Added to this are ongoing disparities in land ownership.

While we have attained political power, economic power remains largely in the hands of a small section of our society, namely the white minority. The majority of South Africans are still separated by a wide chasm of income, skills, assets, spatial settlement patterns and access to opportunities. The majority of the poor in our country remain black and female.

HISTORICAL FACTS

Affirmative action means taking special measures to ensure that black people and women and other groups who had been unfairly discriminated against in the past, would have real chances in life. It signifies a concerted effort to enable them to overcome the obstacles that had been put in their way, to develop their capacities to the full or to be appropriately remunerated for their efforts.

The inequality in South Africa did not just happen accidentally by some supernatural intervention. It was the result of generations of deliberate state action. Policies that legalised job reservation benefited a small section of our society at the expense of the marginalised and poor majority of this country. This is what Race Classification, Job

Reservation and Group Areas acts were all about. During the apartheid era government and business discriminated against certain groups of people, particularly against people of colour, women, disabled people, etc.

A lot of times we seem to forget the Bantu Education monster that dictated the type of skills that Africans ended up with. White farmers got credits, loans and subsidies on a vast scale, while blacks got nothing. Black schooling was segregated and inferior; jobs were reserved by law and in practice for whites only. To say this wrong should be left uncorrected is tantamount to expecting the government of the day to be content with political power that doesn't come with economic back up.

The chances of getting on and enjoying the good things of life depended least on one's talents, energies and skills, but most on which 'Group Area' you were born in and which gender you were. How you fare later in life was fixed not by your determination or abilities, but by whether your parents are called Marshall, Marais, Mahlaule or Mohamed.

The Anglo-American corporation and other English, white businesses promoted Afrikaner companies to develop and grow during the 1950s. Their rationale was to get capitalist "allies" in the Nationalist Party fold to maintain and promote capitalist development and growth.

From 1994 the democratically elected parliament worked towards building national unity and reconciliation. South Africa had suffered greatly under apartheid, and the new leaders felt the country needed to take the path towards understanding and reparation, instead of retaliation and vengeance.

The ANC-led government committed itself to the active implementation of affirmative action strategies to redress the injustice imposed upon historically disadvantaged groups and regions. The Employment Equity Act of South Africa aims to promote and achieve equality in the workplace by advancing people from designated groups includ-



Two factory workers, one is white and the other one black

ing all people of colour, white females, people with disabilities and people from rural areas. In South Africa affirmative action is quota-based and therefore requires specific outcomes, which can be measured by a scoring system. This allows for flexibility in the manner in which companies could aim to meet their legal requirements in terms of representation of the previously disadvantaged groups. The government also pursued a vigorous programme to restructure the public service to reflect the national composition of the South African population.

Special emphasis was to be given to the realisation of women's emancipation. Historically, women were discriminated against and subordinated in every area of public and private life. They had inferior access to education and employment and were shut out from decision-making at all levels of society. With this observation in mind the ANC-led government acknowledged that they still had a long way to go in remedying this state of affairs. The government supports the principle of equal rights for women and men in all spheres, and the created special agencies to ensure that equal opportunity operates in practice.

Although I partly agree that we should keep looking forward to enable us to move forward, it is because of the past that we are where we are. Regardless of how forward-looking we may wish to be we cannot disregard our bad past and hope that it will come right without our deliberate efforts to change things for the better.

Righting these wrongs means vigorously implementing affirmative action. affirmative action is meant for people that were previously disadvantaged; consequently you cannot talk about it with-

out mentioning race and gender and to a certain extent class.

WHITE WOMAN, BLACK WOMAN

Recently, the question of whether to continue with the inclusion of "white women" as beneficiaries of affirmative action has been raging on. Equally strong and emotional arguments for and against this are being thrown around and the debate is engaging.

My questions are: How can the minority be the majority in business and the economy? Can we continue to justify why the minority is still a majority in business in a country that is clearly composed of a still disempowered majority?

A white colleague of mine once asked me why it is assumed that every white person comes from a privileged background. She went on to say that there are stinking rich, middle class and poor people in every race, culture and religion throughout the world and that it is perhaps time we all make a concerted effort to be more supportive of each other as we are in this together.

Did all white people benefit from apartheid and have loads of money, big houses and bigger cars? No, but they still had better schooling, better hospitals, and much better living conditions than blacks. Do all black people benefit from the new dispensation and can therefore have better houses and better opportunities for self determination within a conducive society? No, unless there will be further economic transformation with greater input and emphasis on the situation of the workers and the unemployed.

Do white women still need to be included when they have reached their quota? No. Let us now

concentrate on the other candidates until everybody has had their fair chance and only after that will we start to compete on an equal footing.

The oppression of women in South Africa usually takes the form of class, race and gender. Both white and black women were disadvantaged by gender; however black women had an extra disadvantage in the form of race which had far reaching effect. The quota included both these women. Now that the quota for the one group has been fulfilled it should be natural and common sense that the need to affirm them falls away.

To this day I still maintain that white women should not have been included as affirmative action candidates in the first place because they enjoyed preference in the past over other races, as they still do to this day. It cannot be correct that the same criteria are used to determine the suitability of a white woman affirmative action candidate and that of an African woman candidate.

There is evidence that most white-owned companies would rather give a senior position to a white woman to fulfil the AA quota vis-à-vis employing an African of any gender.

By extension, white women have and still enjoy privileges flowing from the apartheid white supremacist legislation.

The chances of a young African woman in South Africa today asking her ageing father for financial assistance or expertise to start a business would be futile. There are many historical factors that led to the father not being able to assist even when he would want to do so.

The young African woman is most likely the sole breadwinner for the family and is also struggling to take her siblings through high school. If the family is lucky she would be trying to get one sibling through a tertiary institution. In contrast, a young white woman would most likely have both parents to assist in kick-starting a successful business both financially and through holding her hand.

REJECT APARTHIED, AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF APARTHIED

The objective of affirmative action is to deal with the divisions and inequalities created by the past in a new, effective and principled way. It is not to replace one form of injustice with another but an action to demonstrate that it is not only apartheid that is rejected, but also the consequences of apartheid.

Affirmative action is not just a matter of doing right. It is a question of survival. If our country and every region and city in it is divided into manifestly rich and flagrantly poor areas, there will never be social peace. Without opening up the economy and making entrepreneurial activity more representative, the production of wealth in our country will take place on, and therefore we will

live in, an imbalanced society until the chickens come home to roost.

Affirmative action is a means through which to free the capacity and potential of millions of people who have never had a real chance to show their mettle. It widens the pool of candidates for any post and therefore lead to greater competence and not otherwise.

A further consideration, backed up by international experience, is that diversity in such key areas as education, law, health and the civil service is a value in itself. The variety and mixture of life experiences, the organic cultural and linguistic links with all communities and consequent sense of representivity can only serve to enrich and improve the functioning of the bodies concerned.

Affirmative action on its own cannot correct the imbalances borne through centuries of colonialism and decades of apartheid, however the legacies of this system should be resolved. Yes, South Africa suffered tremendously through the brain drain and we are now in the process of inviting back those whites that emigrated to contribute positively in rebuilding a country in which we shall all have equal opportunities. We should also continue with initiatives to retain whites that are willing to stay on while also building capacity and skills development for our previously disadvantaged citizens.

If well handled, affirmative action will help bind the nation together and produce benefits for everyone. If badly managed, it will simply re-distribute resentment, damage the economy and destroy social peace. If not undertaken at all, the country will remain backward and divided at its heart.

The processes of implementing affirmative action must be transparent, non-corrupt and accountable. This in itself may prove to be a challenge as human factors may tend to interfere and therefore render the process questionable.

I therefore reassert my view that affirmative action is a necessary evil to ensure that the wrongs of the past are remedied and that the gap that was created by years of legislated exclusion is bridged for the good of all its citizens. Furthermore, if affirmative action targets for White women have been achieved, isn't it about time that they start competing with other affirmative action non-eligible persons on a equal footing.

TSAKHANE MAHLAULE is a member of the ANC Braam Fischer branch in Gauteng.

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READERS' FORUM



Draft Strategy and Tactics: Masijule Nge Ngxoxo!

As part of ongoing debate on the ANC's Strategy and Tactics document, **Gunneth Kaaf** argues that the recent draft is in danger of losing touch with basic theory of the National Democratic Revolution.

The draft Strategy and Tactics discusses a vision of the society that has to be a product of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR). It then introduces relatively new wording in the form of a National Democratic Society. There is no problem necessarily with the phrase but this national democratic society is defined in sacrosanct and static terms. It is devoid of a proper class analysis.

The draft Strategy and Tactics does not give due recognition to the fact of the raging class struggle, its primacy to social contradictions and its potential to change society in fundamental revolutionary terms. Instead it asserts: "The NDR seeks to build a society based on the best in human civilisation in terms of political and human freedoms, socio-

economic rights, value systems and identity".

The basic social contradiction of modern society is class struggle as Marx and Engels put it in the Communist Manifesto: "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles... each time [the class struggle has] ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes."

The NDR is essentially a national struggle, even though it has class content and integrates the gender question as well. It therefore cannot be the final arbiter in social relations at large and bring about 'the best in human civilisation' or a society, as Marx and Engels describe it, in which 'the free

Delegate making a point during one of the Commissions that discussed the draft Strategy and Tactics at the National Policy Conference

development of each is the condition for the free development of all'.

That is a function of a class struggle. Instead of appreciating the class struggle in society broadly and within the NDR as the ANC has evolved to do, the draft Strategy and Tactics is hopeless and pathetic when it says: "A national democratic society is made up of various classes and strata... It should therefore be expected that in a national democratic society class contradictions and class struggle, particularly between the working class and the bourgeoisie, will play themselves out. As such, a national democratic state will be called upon to regulate the environment in which such contradictions manifest themselves, in the interest of national development."

The management of class contradictions is a perpetual endless exercise. How so? Because class struggle shapes society. And again, what about the leading role of the working class as a motive force in that national democratic society? Is it not it that while the NDR is multi-class, it is also has working class bias?

While the NDR is not a class struggle and therefore not aimed at radically changing society along new class lines, the ANC has evolved to appreciate the raging class struggle and thus the legitimacy of the demand for a socialist future. Hence the opening line of the ANC 1969 Morogoro Strategy and Tactics says: "The struggle of the oppressed people of South Africa is taking place within an international context of transition to the Socialist system..." The Morogoro document also says, "it is historically understandable that the double-oppressed and doubly exploited working class constitutes a distinct and reinforcing layer of our liberation and socialism and do not stand in conflict with the national interest".

As is fashionable these days this quote from Morogoro can be simply (and maybe correctly) dismissed as reflecting the optimism of the late 1960s. Global, regional and even national conditions are not optimal for a rapid advance to, and consolidation of, socialism in South Africa. Hence it will be important to also quote the ANC National Working Committee submission to the ANC/SACP bilateral in March 2001 when it said: "The ANC Morogoro Conference asserted that the working class is the dynamic link between national liberation and socialism. This assertion reflected both the acceptance on the part of the ANC of the legitimacy and logic of the struggle for socialism and, consequently, the extent to which progressive nationalism had permeated the ranks of the ANC."

Lest I am misinterpreted, let me emphasise that I'm not in any way suggesting that the ANC was ever directly committed to socialism or that it

should be directly committed to socialism. All I'm saying is that there is a class struggle that is raging in society to which the NDR has to relate and which will ultimately determine the kind of a society we will have. So if we take this into account the society we envision in the NDR can't be sacrosanct.

This definition of the goal of the NDR in static and sacrosanct terms and down-playing the social significance of the class struggle is ahistorical and not consistent with the philosophical understanding of social historical development that the ANC has grown to articulate.

It is clear that the NDR is not a panacea for all social contradictions and that the class struggle has immense possibilities for social change. We therefore cannot and must not conceptualise the vision of the NDR in sacrosanct and static terms, and blind ourselves to the implications of the class struggle to both the NDR and society at large.

DON'T CONFORM TO CAPITALISM!

There is also a tendency in the draft Strategy and Tactics to define the NDR closer to capitalism at best or as part of capitalism at worst. Just read carefully some of the formulations. It courageously restates our long held policy position that: "A national democratic society will have a mixed economy, with state, co-operative and other forms of social ownership, and private capital."

And then it changes or waters it down in the following sentence that reads: "The balance between social and private ownership of investment resources will be determined on the balance of evidence in relation to national development needs and the concrete tasks of the NDR at any point in time."

Between the social and private sectors which of the two will more be dominant in this mixed economy? The balance of evidence in relation to national development...What does that mean exactly? As a formulation for the ultimate vision of the NDR it is unclear and clumsy.

Even the hard-core market fundamentalists of the Democratic Alliance will still tell you about a mixed economy. The debate is therefore is not about the need for a mixed economy or not, but about how far do we assert the role of the state and social sector in the economy and still appreciate the role that market forces can play.

Assuming that the Freedom Charter remains the manifesto of the NDR – and incidentally nowhere in the draft Strategy and Tactics is direct reference made to the Charter – it is clearer in explaining balance between the social and private sectors in the envisioned mixed economy.

WHICH SOCIAL DEMOCRACY?

My other critique of the draft Strategy and Tactics

is the tendency of revisionism that you will come across in some of the pages of the draft Strategy and Tactics. By revisionism I mean a tendency to significantly alter the basic premises of the theory of the NDR.

For instance, in all policy documents of the ANC you will not encounter any mention of the concept of social democracy. Historically (post World War I) social democracy has been particularly blind to the colonial world, the third world and national oppression. This is why social democracy has never existed in name in South African left politics. It has been historically irrelevant to the dominant question in our South African society, the national oppression or racial oppression whose legacy we continue to tackle. Yet in the draft Strategy and Tactics social democracy is introduced without any explanation as to what it means.

In world history there have been many versions of social democracy; some reactionary, some progressive. We are told in the draft Strategy and Tactics that: "It [NDR] seeks to bring together ...the best traditions of social democracy". And again, we are told, "the ANC is a disciplined force of the left, organised to conduct consistent struggle in pursuit of a caring society in which the well-being of the poor receives focused and consistent attention. It seeks to put in place a combination of the best elements of a developmental state and social democracy."

What do the authors of the draft Strategy and Tactics mean by social democracy to start with? And what do they mean by best traditions of social democracy? The movement for Marxist socialism in the late 19th Century and in early the 20th Century referred to its self as social democracy. This was at a time of splitting with evolutionary socialists or capitalist reformists when the communist parties were formed. Capitalist reformists continued with the tag of social democracy while the communist parties of the Bolshevik tradition maintained consistency with revolutionary Marxism.

Again social democracy took another form after World War II, with the emergence of welfare states, particularly in northern Europe, in the reconstruction era following the war. Over time this project of social democracy did not prove to be sustainable hence it collapsed or suffered serious setbacks. Again in the later days of the 20th Century until recently, another version of social democracy that

emerged in Europe also tended to build itself as a particular form of socialism that is democratic (democratic socialism) given the failures and stagnation of the Soviet bloc socialism.

At times social democracy sought to build itself as a 'Third Way' in the post Cold War period. So I ask again; which social democracy are you proposing for the NDR?

Actually, the best of social democracy in historical terms is Marxist socialism. And that cannot obviously be the option for the ANC, at least at this stage, given the multi-class nature (although also working class bias) and the immediacy of the national question. The immediacy of the national question requires the rallying of a broad range of class forces and strata – including working class, the urban and rural poor, middle class, black business and white democrats under the leadership of the working class.

MASIJULE NGE NGXOXO, MAQABANE!

There has to be consistency of articulation and application of the notion of the leading role of the working class as a motive force of the NDR. To the extent that leadership is a subjective exercise, we need, as the movement, to consciously discuss how we build the consciousness and capacity of the working class to be able to fulfil its historic mission in the NDR.

We need to discuss ways of securing the interests and hegemony of the working class while it leads a variety of classes and strata for the success of the NDR. This is what revolutionary theory teaches us. The working class will not always, by itself, become conscious and build the necessary capacity for itself. The role of the ANC as the organisational leader of the NDR will come handy in this regard. The political economy of the working class must also find expression in the tactical measures and strategic goals of the NDR.

I'm deliberately raising these issues here in this manner because I think it is appropriate. Let's debate. Some comrades tend to make unsubstantial accusations like, "others want to turn the ANC into a Communist Party", instead of debating in a substantial way.

GUNNETT KAAF is an ANC member and the SACP Caleb Motshabi District Chairperson in the Free State.

The ANC and the Socialist International

Vulindlela Mapekuka argues that affiliation to the Socialist International represents a serious departure from all that the ANC stands for.

The Preface to the Strategy and Tactics adopted at the 51st National Conference characterises the ANC “as the leader of the national democratic struggle, a disciplined force of the left organised to conduct consistent struggle in pursuit of the interests of the poor”.

Before venturing into discussing the Socialist International and social democracy and their place in the general working class ideology we need to sketch the relationship between the ANC and the South African Communist Party. This is done with the aim of provoking a discussion on whether the ANC’s affiliation to the Socialist International is not irreconcilable with the fact that the ANC has an alliance with the SACP – a relationship that stretches for over eighty years.

A RELATIONSHIP THAT HAS STOOD THE TEST OF TIME

South Africa is the only place in the world that has seen such a close working relationship between a workers revolutionary vanguard party and a revolutionary national liberation movement. In its response of 19 June 2006 to the SACP document under the title ‘A Relationship that has stood the test of time’ the ANC raised very important points which define succinctly the essence of our alliance with the SACP. We said:

“Over more than eighty fighting years, the Communist Party has established itself as an honoured and leading force within South Africa’s democratic movement. The moral conduct and intellectual pedigree of communist cadres and the manner in which they conducted themselves within the liberation movement has earned the party a unique and central role in the ANC.

“From the ANC point of view, therefore, we have always valued the fact that to our left on the political spectrum is the SACP, which is friendly to the ANC and is ready to share programmes with the ANC to achieve common objectives.

“In the course of that history, the SACP has through its input and the conduct of its members, who are also members of the ANC, helped to shape the ANC itself. The ANC still regards the party as a great teacher. Through the positions it has taken, the Party has enhanced the ANC’s ability to lead the struggle of our people for freedom.”¹

These are not flattering comments, but an expression of the bond and mutual commitment by the ANC and the SACP to rid our country of the repugnant and diabolic system of apartheid.

The relationship between the ANC and the SACP was captured and articulated clearly by Moses Mabhida and President Oliver Tambo in their respective speeches marking the 60th birthday of the South African Communist Party in 1981. Comrade Mabhida said: “Our Party’s relationship with the ANC is based on mutual trust, reciprocity, comradeship in battle and a common strategy for national liberation. Our unity of aims and methods of struggle are a rare instance of positive alignment between the forces of class struggle and national liberation.”

On the same occasion OR Tambo said: “Our organisations have been able to agree on fundamental strategies and tactical positions, while retaining our separate identities. For, though we are united in struggle, we are not the same. Our history has shown that we are a powerful force because our organisations are mutually reinforcing.”

These views, expressed by the leadership of the two components of the alliance, people who were at the crucible of our liberation struggle, should be a constant reminder to all of us never to betray the course for which so many of our people laid down their lives. We also need to restate the axiomatic fact that the ANC and the SACP are the common heritage of all South Africans and that any attempt to drive a wedge between the two will have undesirable consequences.

PRINCIPLES OF THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL

A resolution of the 2002 Stellenbosch conference resolved to transform the Socialist International into a ‘vibrant, active movement for progressive change’ and to ‘strengthen our relations with the African chapter of the Socialist International’. The question is; what is Socialist International, and what does it stand for?

The Encyclopedia Britannica describes the Socialist International as an association of national socialist parties that advocates a democratic form of socialism. It goes on to say that in its declaration of principles it put chief emphasis upon the political aspects of socialism, notably democracy and civil liberty².

In the Declaration of Principles, under the heading ‘Freedom, Justice and Solidarity’, the Socialist International defines “Democratic Socialism as an international movement for freedom, social justice and solidarity. It says its goal is to achieve a peaceful world where these basic values can be enhanced and where each individual can live a meaningful life with full development of his or her personality and talents and with the guarantee of human and civil rights in a democratic framework of society”.

It goes on to say that “democratic socialists attach equal importance to these fundamental principles. They are interdependent. Each is a prerequisite of the other. As opposed to this position, liberals and conservatives have placed the main emphasis on individual liberty at the expense of justice and solidarity while communists have claimed to achieve equality and solidarity at the expense of freedom”³.

Under the heading, ‘A New international Culture for Political Dialogue’ it says “communism has lost the appeal that it once had to parts of the labour movement or to some intellectuals after the October Revolution and during the struggle against fascism. The crimes of Stalinism, mass prosecution and the violation of human rights, as well as unsolved economic problems, have undermined the idea of communism as an alternative to democratic socialism or as a model for the future.

“The Socialist International supports all efforts aimed at the transformation of communist societies through liberalisation and democratisation. The same support must apply to the development of centralised market mechanisms, struggles against bureaucratisation and corruption and, above all, the realisation that human rights and political openness are important elements of a dynamic and progressive society”.

The Socialist International is the international association of socialist and social democratic parties conducting a reformist line in the working class movement. It was founded in 1951 as the successor



of the Labour and Socialist International. In its founding congress in Frankfurt-on-the-Main it adopted a basic programmatic document entitled *Aims and Tasks of Democratic Socialism* which rejected Marxism as the ideology and theoretical basis of the working-class movement, class struggle and the struggle to establish the power of the working class; and proclaimed world-outlook neutrality, that is, the freedom of its member parties and organisations to base their activity on such theoretical and philosophical positions as they deem suitable”.

According to the Declaration, “Democratic Socialism” – the movement’s final goal – is attained by the gradually transforming of capitalism⁴.

THREE STREAMS OF SOCIALISM

At the beginning of the twentieth century the international working class movement was divided into three trends which differed in their character, goals and methods of struggle: revolutionary, reformist and centrists. The revolutionary trend was made up of “loyal, sincere, uncompromising fighters against capitalism, prepared to battle with it not only in words, but also in deeds, ready to make any sacrifice for proletarian forces, the exploited masses at large who seethed with indignation at the bourgeois system and who were increasingly eager to stage a revolution”.

The right-wing Social Democrats “took a reformist stand, objectively hindering the revolutionary struggle and helping to preserve the bourgeois system. They expressed the interests of the reformist,

An ANC representative, Farida Mohamed at the Council of the Socialist International in Geneva, held in June 2007.

opportunistic petty bourgeois which was afraid of revolution. By means of bribes and various favours the bourgeoisie essentially suborned right-wing Socialist leaders and compelled them to champion the salvation of the bourgeois system from revolution”.

The third trend was represented by the centrists under the leadership of Karl Kautsky, the leader of the Social Democratic Party of Germany. They occupied an immediate position between the left-wing and right-wing Socialist. “They recognised the need of the revolution in words but refused to support it in deeds” (A Contemporary World History 1917–1945).-

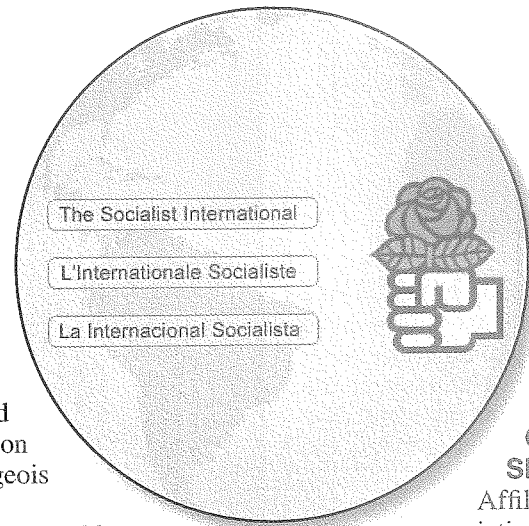
In the website of the Socialist International it lists Karl Kautsky and Edward Bernstein among its founder members. Karl Kautsky was the leader of the group that broke away from the Second International in 1914 and pursued a social chauvinist stand that supported the imperialist governments in the war and eventually formed the ‘Yellow International’.

The purpose of this article is not to critique Karl Kautsky and company but to pose a question about the rationale for the ANC’s affiliation to the Socialist International. Are there any palpable benefits for the ANC in affiliating to the Socialist International?

Of course we need to state categorically that within the ranks of the ANC’s political ideologues we are beginning to hear voices of former Marxists proclaiming that they have ruptured with Marxism, that we need to make a conscientious effort to understand what Karl Kautsky stood for, and that the Paris Commune was not a sufficient sample or data to make a strong case for Karl Marx’s formulation of the concept of the ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’.

Are these comrades joining Professor Robert Heilbroner of the New York School when he raised his glass of champagne with a toast of victory for capitalism at the news that the Soviet Union had collapsed? He went on to assert that capitalism organises the material affairs of society more satisfactorily than socialism. Are we telling ourselves that we have found the panacea in social democracy to remedy all the ills of capitalism?

I hope that there will be some vigorous discussion on this and other related subjects without converting *Umrabulo* into a Marxist discussion forum. However, we need to say without equivocation that the discussion of Marxism-Leninism is as much important to the members of the ANC as it is to communists. Many of us when we joined the



ANC were baptised in Marxism-Leninism and it would require a serious brain transplant to extricate us from it.

COMMON OBJECTIVES AND SHARED BELIEFS

Affiliation to institutions and associations is usually based on identified common objectives and shared beliefs.

As the ANC is a member of the Socialist International are we to assume that we ascribe to all that the Socialist International stands for? Is it our objective as the ANC to liberalise and democratise communist societies? If so, what about our statement contained in the 19 June 2006 response which said that communists, wherever they are, represents the high ideals of communism and the liberation of all mankind from the bonds of oppression.

This assertion stands in contrast to what the socialist international stands for – reform of capitalism. Is it possible for us as the ANC to respect and embrace what the SACP stands for – liberation of all mankind from the bonds of oppression- and simultaneously commit to democratise and liberalise communist societies? Does this not represent political debauchery of the worst kind on the side of our organisation?

As the ANC we have resolved to “transform the Socialist International into a vibrant active movement for progressive change”. The question that begs for an answer is; what is it that we see progressive in the Socialist International and it is progressive in relation to what?

One must concede that the Socialist International has had some leaders like Willie Brandt who, while they can not be characterised as revolutionary, were nonetheless, relatively progressive. Similarly, there are commendable things that the Socialist International has done like pushing for the scrapping of the debts of the most poor countries and providing grants to those who are destitute. But in terms of how they see the future of the well-being of the workers and the ordinary poor masses they represent something anathema to their aspirations.

South Africans, under the leadership of the ANC, has won the admiration of the entire world for achieving a miracle, that of transforming South Africa from a racially polarised country into a democracy that is the envy of many. This is a political feat that no one ever imagined. I do not think that we can conjure the spirits of our forefathers to achieve another miracle of transforming the Socialist International – a movement that was embedded with reaction from the time of its inception.

HARVEST THE FRUITS OF OUR COLLECTIVE SWEAT

The policy recommendations to the 52nd National Conference says that the issue of social democracy needs further discussion in the ranks of the ANC. As outlined by President Thabo Mbeki at the opening of the National Policy Conference, “the historic evolution of our society has meant and means for the ANC that to secure the victory of the National Democratic Revolution our movement must draw into the common struggle our country’s democratic forces, our socialist forces, and our country’s proletariat”⁵.

The ANC must continue to retain this character of a broad national democratic movement with room in its ranks for cadres with differing ideological beliefs – be it communist, non-communists, social democrats or pagans. As our freedom is the product of the contribution of all forces that were engaged in the struggle, particularly the alliance partners, it is crucial that we continue to involve and value everyone as we harvest the fruits of our collective sweat.

As we walked together uprightly, side by side, on solid ground during the tortuous road to freedom we must continue to close ranks, exercise vigilance, and not allow anything extraneous to ourselves to open gaps and weaken our resolve.

Our affiliation to the Socialist International represents a serious departure to all that the ANC

stands for and does not even represent the ideological outlook of its dominant components. Our adoption of measures like the basic services and social grants must not lead us to think that we are indebted to the Socialist International to the point of us wanting to declare that we are a social democratic movement. We have said that we are a liberation movement tasked with the responsibility of liberating our people from the vestiges of colonial oppression.

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NOTES

1. African National Congress, Managing National Democratic Transformation, 2006 ANC Response to SACP Discussion Document, [see www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/misc/2006/anc_sacp.html]
2. Encyclopedia Britannica, 2005.
3. Socialist International, Declaration of Principles, 1989
4. What's What in World Politics – A Reference Guide.
5. Thabo Mbeki, Address at the Opening Session of the ANC Policy Conference, 2007

Now is not the time to go it alone

*The break-up of the Alliance would never be in the interests of any of the Alliance partners, writes **Thando Ntlemeza**. Instead, such a move would undermine and compromise both our collective historical gains and the forward movement of the National Democratic Revolution.*

Revolutionary politics has throughout history emphasised the importance of flexibility and pragmatism in achieving revolutions. Within this context, the ANC, the SACP and progressive trade unions together defined the character and trajectory of the national liberation struggle.

Throughout its existence, the ANC worked with organisations of workers, a step that was viewed as necessary to advance the liberation struggle in South Africa. During the first decades of its political life, the ANC drew workers' organisations of Coloureds and Indians into the national liberation struggle. This convergence of the oppressed people was forged out of the necessities of the struggle against white domination and it was never sectarian or racist.

In fact, the South African struggle embraced all those poised against white domination, including democratic-minded whites, who embraced a revolutionary ideology of the liberation struggle. These liberation forces agreed on unity of purpose and action, which resulted in unity of strategies and tactics in pursuit of the liberation struggle. While classic methods of workers' struggle, such as strike, were incorporated in the strategies and tactics of the ANC, skills acquired and employed in the liberation movement found application in workers' struggles. Aspects of the national liberation ideology and those of workers' ideology became fused together into the National Democratic Revolution, a revolutionary strategy which would guide people's struggle for liberation, freedom and democracy.

Therefore, views to the effect that the Alliance is a 'marriage of convenience' which is only necessary for elections can never be accepted. These views cannot be accepted because we understand that our alliance "...is not merely a paper alliance, created at conference tables and formalised through the signing of documents and representing only an agreement of leaders. Our alliance is a living organism that has grown out of struggle. We have built it out of our separate and common experiences."¹

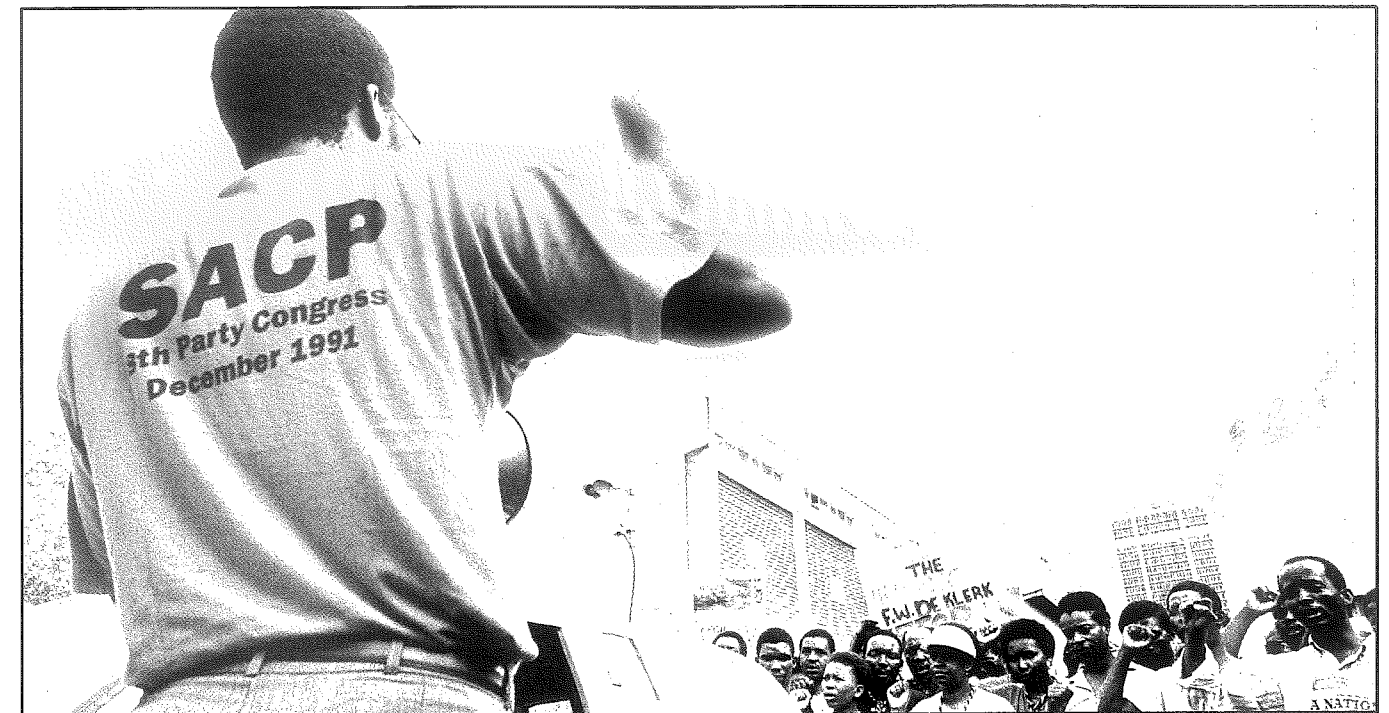
Neither can we assume that unity of purpose and action discarded any possibility of ideological struggle within the National Liberation Movement. Ideological struggle is inescapable in any liberation movement in which various and different classes articulate their interests.

Within the ANC, there are revolutionary democrats of various persuasions namely progressive nationalists, communists, socialists, social democrats and even narrow nationalists and agents of the enemy of the revolution. Even dialectical materialism tells us that organisations reflect the class dynamics of the society in which they exist and operate. As a multi-class movement, the ANC is required to mobilise and drive all the motive forces of the revolution in the same direction. While the primary task of the ANC remains the eradication of the primary contradictions created by the apartheid system, it is also expected to master the art and science of managing contradictions among the people.

However, some within and beyond our alliance want us to believe that the ANC has abandoned the working class and thus prioritises the capitalist class. Advocates of this view go further and suggest that the ANC governs alone "...without seeking any assistance or (is not) willing to take advice from the SACP".²

For this reason, they argue, the SACP should "go it alone" and contest elections independently of the ANC, which effectively means that the Party must contest against the ANC during elections. In fact, the track record of the ANC speaks volumes about the ANC's prioritisation of the poor and working class, despite weaknesses of policies and programmes. However, such failures and weaknesses do not provide evidence that the ANC is favouring the capitalist class.

Moreover, in the current political conjuncture the breaking-up of the Alliance would never be in the interest of any of the alliance partners. Instead, such a move would undermine and compromise both our collective historical gains and the Na-



tional Democratic Revolution going forward. This would be so because such a move would effectively confuse and divide the motive forces of our revolution, in particular African workers and rural poor. True revolutionaries never promote tendencies that undermine unity and solidarity of the working class.

There are even those who are of the view that the ANC should have never, in the first place, been allowed to lead struggles of the working class. This extreme view is advocated by some comrades within the Young Communist League and SACP, who argue that those who were in the leadership of the Party at the time made a fundamental mistake by letting the ANC lead the struggles of the working class. They believe that having the ANC as a leader of the Alliance is based on a mistaken assumption and understanding that a nationalist organisation is able to lead the struggles of the working class, if at all, beyond the national struggle.

This shows failure on the part of the advocates of this view to understand that leadership should be determined by societal contradictions of a particular phase of the struggle.

Leadership of the Alliance derives from a common acceptance that though national oppression was sustained through economic exploitation of blacks in general and the African majority in particular; the dominant contradiction in the apartheid South Africa was the national question.

Even now, while the fundamental contradiction is the class contradiction, the national contradiction remains the dominant contradiction – which dominates virtually all facets of our society. In the main, the ownership and control of wealth and income, the poverty trap, access to opportunities and so on are still defined in terms of race and gender. Given this reality, leadership of the Alliance is not premised on any mistake, whether material or otherwise.

Anyway, at this stage the working class in our

country has not yet reached the level of class-consciousness, which would enable the vanguard of the working class to contest and emerge as victorious in the elections without losing workers and the poor to non-working class organisations. Some believe that this lack of class-consciousness manifests itself "among the leadership in both the trade union movement and NLM and at times in [the] party leadership". In these circumstances, the Party "cannot contest power in a society dominated by ignorant mass of people, with a leadership that lacks the grasp of class consciousness"³.

Because we have studied revolutions we are supposed to understand that a new revolutionary situation cannot be expected to develop exactly like a previous one. However, while theories of changing society are not abstract schemas or dogmas that are applied at any given moment despite the nature of concrete situation, there are the so-called revolutionaries who try to fit the situation to the schema. They do this because they fail to recognise that an analysis that was relevant at one time and place is no longer valid because the objective situation has changed.

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NOTES

1. Speech of O R Tambo on the occasion of the anniversary of the SACP in London, July 1981
2. Khaya Magaxa (January 2005) Deepening and Advancing the National Democratic Revolution As a Movement Forward to Capturing State Power for the Benefit of the Workers and the Poor.
3. Magaxa

