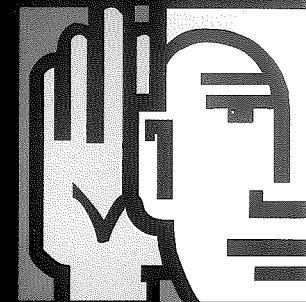


NUMBER 31
August 2008



UMRABULO



LET'S TALK POLITICS

The ANC after
Polokwane

Unity
Renewal
Action

ALSO IN THIS EDITION:

SA political economy

Myth of coloured
marginalisation

Tribute to Chris Hani

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

Call for contributions

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

Subscriptions

To subscribe to Umrabulo, complete and return the subscription form at the back of this edition. Subscribers receive Umrabulo quarterly by normal post. This service is available to both South African and international subscribers.

Editorial Collective

Editorial Collective: Joel Netshitenzhe
Pallo Jordan
Naph Manana
Spongy Moodley
Mandla Nkomfe
Fébé Potgieter
Mduduzi Mbada
Michael Sachs
Steyn Speed
Donovan Cloete

Contact Information

Address: Umrabulo
PO Box 61884
Marshalltown
2107
South Africa
Telephone: 086 717 7077
Fax: 086 633 1437
e-mail: umrabulo@anc.org.za

Picture Credits

PictureNet Africa: cover, 17, 21, 25, 30, 41, 43, 49
ANC Archives: 3, 7

The contents and views expressed in Umrabulo do not necessarily reflect the policies of the ANC or the views of the editorial collective.

Umrabulo on the web : www.anc.org.za

Contents

COVER THEME

- 3 A period of renewal of our values and practices
President Jacob Zuma
- 6 To Polokwane and back
Reflections on the 52nd National Conference
Kgolane Rudolph Phala

CURRENT AFFAIRS

- 17 Mapping the South African political economy
Does politics drive the economy or vice versa?
Joel Netshitenzhe
- 21 The devil is in the detail
Challenges facing the movement and country in international trade negotiations
Rob Davies
- 25 The myth of coloured marginalisation
Christian Martin

INTERNATIONAL

- 28 Class, ethnicity and the construction of a fragmented Kenya
Simon Kimani Ndungu
- 32 Political party internationals as guardians of democracy
Rodger Hållhag

TRIBUTE

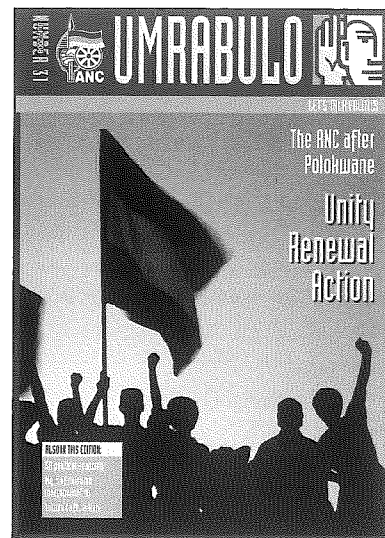
- 40 To know how to die
A tribute to Chris Hani, Isithwalandwe
Tokyo Sexwale

HISTORY

- 43 Turning point at Cuito Cuanavale
Ronnie Kasrils
- 48 The enduring voice of revolutionary youth
Malusi Gigaba

BOOK REVIEW

- 54 Pioneers of a new intellectual age
Mandla Nkomfe



Editorial

Unity. Renewal. Action.

While many outside the ANC have seen the period after the Polokwane Conference in December last year as a time of uncertainty, for those inside the movement it has provided a clear direction on the tasks and programmes for the next five years. It has provided clarity on the ANC's policy, its leadership, and its programme of action.

The members of the ANC have spoken. The task now is to implement the decisions that they have taken. We must undertake this work at the same time as we tackle some of the problems that manifested themselves in the run-up to Polokwane.

In his contribution in this edition, ANC President Jacob Zuma speaks about the divisive practices that accompanied the democratic contestation for leadership positions. While an important and necessary component of the internal life of the ANC, the manner in which some people conducted themselves contributed to a climate of mistrust. He warns against allowing divergent views on the choice of candidates to solidify into permanent camps that become engaged in a factional struggle.

Whatever people's views about policy or leadership or other matters, the challenge now is for all members and leaders to work together to implement the decisions of Polokwane. Throughout its 96 years, the ANC has weathered the most violent and dangerous of storms because it has managed to maintain its unity and coherence, and because it has always adhered to democratic internal practices. Hence the call for unity.

Polokwane also highlighted developments within the movement over the last few years that undermine its capacity to effectively prosecute the National Democratic Revolution. It pointed to an erosion of the values and character of the ANC. In far too many instances, the principles of selfless and service are being overshadowed by the pursuit of power, influence and material advancement.

In the absence of a clear political programme, branch activities are being reduced to mere administrative units, sometimes only convening to discuss nominations for conferences. Political education, ideological debate, and membership recruitment suffer. Hence the call for organisational renewal.

One of the most important lessons of political struggle is that the best way to build unity is through action. The most effective way to renew the political values and democratic practices of an organisation is through engaging its members in a political programme of action.

The ANC has such a programme. It was developed in Polokwane, and has specific tasks for all members, including those deployed in government.

At the core of that programme is the eradication of poverty and the creation of decent jobs. There are specific programmes that government is expected to undertake. The resolutions of Polokwane envisage a state that is suitably resourced and equipped to play a greater role in stimulating economic growth and ensuring that the benefits of growth are shared among the people.

But this is not merely about waiting for the state to deliver. Neither the members of the ANC nor the people themselves can afford to be mere bystanders as public representatives and civil servants go about their work. The people must be active agents of their own liberation, mobilised to direct, reinforce and complement the programmes of government. They must be organised to develop their own initiatives at a local level.

This is where ANC branches come in. At the centre of the programme of each ANC branch should be the mobilisation of the community to improve the quality of life of all residents. This should extend from the establishment of street committees to make our homes and streets safer to the development of community vegetable gardens that can improve food security. It should include campaigns to ensure all children attend school and that schools are properly equipped for effective learning and teaching. It should include campaigns around healthy lifestyles, access to quality health care, and awareness around the prevention and treatment of HIV and AIDS.

The ANC emerged from Polokwane stronger and more united, and with a renewed sense of purpose. The challenge now is to translate that energy into action that advances the struggle for a better life for all.

COVER THEME



A period of renewal of our values and practices

*Despite all the difficulties of the recent period, the ANC has emerged from its Polokwane Conference determined to strive tirelessly to rebuild and strengthen this movement, writes **President Jacob Zuma**.*

The implementation of the resolutions taken at the ANC 52nd National Conference in Polokwane takes us a step further towards the ANC centenary celebrations in 2012. The centenary must find us in a state where we truly live the description of the movement made in our conference resolutions.

We said that: "Over the 95 years of the existence of the ANC, the movement evolved into a force for mass mobilisation, a glue that held our people together, and a trusted leader of the broadest range of social forces that share the vision of a non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous South Africa."

In the Secretary General's Organisational Report

to Polokwane, we called upon the incoming NEC to initiate a period of renewal of the values, character and organisational practices of the movement.

We made this call on the basis of the evaluation made in the report on the state of the organisation, and an analysis of the key challenges that the organisation faced. We discussed in that report some of the practices that have manifested themselves in the organisation in recent times. Some of these related to the leadership contest that took place in the build up to, and during, Polokwane.

Others have far deeper roots in the conditions the organisation has operated in following the advent of democracy.



Conference has given us the responsibility to harness the collective abilities of all seasoned cadres to build the organisation.

We said, among others, that:

■ The ANC is not, has never been and will never be a faction.

■ When elected leaders at the highest level openly engage in factionalist activity, where is the movement that aims to unite the people of South Africa for the complete liberation of the country from all forms of discrimination and national oppression?

■ When money changes hands in the battle for personal power and aggrandisement, where is the movement that is built around a membership that joins without motives of material

advantage and personal gain?

■ When the members of the ANC themselves engage in factionalist activity, media leaks and rumour mongering, how can we expect the membership of our movement to carry out their duties to observe discipline, behave honestly and carry out loyally the decision of the majority and the decision of higher bodies?

At its first meeting the ANC National Executive Committee (NEC) discussed the impact of the leadership contest on the organisation, on the national leadership of the organisation and on the unity and coherence of the movement.

The task that faces the organisation is how to initiate, guide and sustain this period of renewal. This is not a task we can approach lightly. It is fundamental to repairing, rebuilding, strengthening and uniting the organisation as we undertake the programme outlined by the Iekgotla.

It is critical that we act decisively and with determination on this matter. If not, the NEC will find itself at the end of its term of office having to report exactly the same problems that were identified in Stellenbosch in 2002, at the National General Council in Tshwane in 2005, and in Polokwane. We need to affirm the values, culture and political traditions of the movement.

During the course of preparations for Polokwane, and in particular as part of a fiercely contested leadership election process, there was a tendency even within the leadership to define comrades according to whatever views or positions they may have taken, or perceived to have taken.

Comrades were grouped together and assigned some sort of label, in most cases to undermine or discredit them. One of the consequences of this is that leaders of the movement, cadres with a wealth of experience, political understanding and organisational depth, are reduced in the eyes of their comrades to merely being representatives of one or other faction.

If we allow this to continue, we would see a situation where some comrades' views could be

disregarded because they bore the wrong label. Their contribution would be viewed with suspicion.

We would have replaced the dynamic and open political debate that is a hallmark of our movement with a sterile contest between set positions of different groupings. The task we face is to ensure that this practice of labelling comrades ends. This is politically unhealthy, and organisationally destructive.

We need to attend to the immediate task of consolidating the leadership of the movement at all levels. We cannot afford a situation where some leaders of our movement are, as a consequence, left outside of the programmes and activities of the organisation.

If we are to successfully implement our conference programme, and advance the National Democratic Revolution, we need to harness the experience, energies, skills and knowledge of all our cadres. We have a great many tried and tested leaders of our movement, some of whom are in the NEC and others not. It is essential that all of them are part of the life of the movement.

Conference has given us the responsibility to harness the collective abilities of all seasoned cadres to build the organisation. It has mandated us to heal whatever divisions may have occurred within the organisation.

How, in practical terms, should we go about fulfilling this responsibility? The period of renewal must involve a thorough report back to our structures on the deliberations and outcomes of the Polokwane conference.

It is important that we communicate this directly to our members so that they can understand and internalise the decisions of Polokwane, and do not need to rely on media coverage to form their views of what happened.

We need to put in place, as a matter of urgency, a nationwide political education programme that focuses on the politics and values of the ANC. The members of the NEC, supported by members of the PECs, need to undertake that political education programme.

Most importantly, we need to implement the mass campaigns agreed upon at the Iekgotla. The best form of unity is unity in action. The best way to develop political consciousness is to engage comrades in political work.

We have identified a number of priority issues on which we need to campaign among the masses, namely education, health, crime and electricity. We need to properly structure and sequence these campaigns, using the campaigning techniques we put to such good effect during elections. These campaigns must have clear objectives and be understood by all members.

All leaders at all levels and all public representa-

tives should be deployed in a systematic manner to do mass work. We could, for example, consider setting aside one week every quarter during which every NEC, PEC and REC member, MP, MPL and councillor addresses community meetings or takes part in door-to-door campaigns. We cannot approach political work in the same hands-off manner that has become the norm in recent years. We need to make time for this.

It will assist us to reach the target we are setting ourselves, to reach the year 2012 with a membership of one million or more!

In his report to conference, the Secretary General noted the volunteer work of hundreds of thousands of ANC members during the election campaigns of 2004 and 2006. He said the volunteerism demonstrated that the membership joined the ANC not in order to achieve selfish reward, but to serve their nation and their community in the struggle for a better life.

We will need a revival of this spirit of volunteerism as we fight to increase our majority in the coming elections. During each period of elections we are faced with a barrage of questions as the ANC. Although these questions are now standard, we should not be complacent. We have triumphed in the past, and we do not doubt our capability of winning more and more people to the ANC.

Some of the questions raised in 1994, among others, were whether or not the ANC was going to triumph over apartheid forces. We did.

In 1999, the theme of our detractors was service delivery, arguing that people would desert the ANC as it had failed to meet the needs of the poor. They were wrong again. In 2004 prophets of doom said people would definitely not vote for the ANC and cited many issues they claimed we had failed on, and we surprised them with 70% of the vote.

Our detractors will soon start asking many ques-

tions, such as whether or not the ANC is going to deliver services better after Polokwane, and will the majority be increased or decreased in 2009. We need to be ready to answer these questions firmly and decisively, and lead the debate.

STRATEGIC POLITICAL CENTRE

We have said that the ANC is the strategic political centre, and have agreed on the need to affirm this principle in approaching the strategic tasks of deploying cadres to various centres of power.

But we need to ask what this means in practice. How do we reaffirm the ANC as the strategic political centre, and what responsibility does that place on the leadership?

Are we equipped to provide strategic leadership to the many processes that ANC cadres are leading across society – in national departments, parliament, local councils, chambers of commerce, trade unions, community organisations, schools and institutions of higher learning?

It is not enough to distribute the Polokwane resolutions, the January 8th statement and the *NEC Bulletin* and expect cadres to lead the fundamental transformation of society in a coherent, coordinated and effective manner.

Despite all the difficulties, we emerged from Polokwane determined to strive tirelessly to rebuild and strengthen this movement. Going forward will therefore not be a difficult task.

JACOB ZUMA is President of the ANC. This is an edited extract from his Political Overview at the NEC meeting of March 2008.



How do we reaffirm the ANC as the strategic political centre, and what responsibility does that place on the leadership?

To Polokwane and back

Reflections on the 52nd National Conference

*The divisions within the ANC that appeared in Polokwane are indicative of broader problems faced by a liberation movement in power. But, argues **Kgolane Rudolph Phala**, the ANC has shown it has the capacity to overcome such challenges.*

The historic 52nd National Conference of the ANC has come and gone. It was the largest ANC conference ever, with the ANC itself being at its biggest ever. It was also unprecedented in the problems that faced the ANC around it. Before and during the conference there were activities that were un-ANC, that attack the values and principles of the ANC and devalue its image. Nevertheless it was a successful conference in more sense than one. It and its aftermath invokes the old adage: the ANC has faced tremendous problems and on each occasion it emerged from them stronger and more united.

This is the point that ANC Secretary General Gwede Mantashe articulated eloquently when he said, "In response to this doom and gloom, one ANC member described the movement as being like an ocean, with the ability to cleanse itself – a party with a depth of historical experience, capable of rising to the occasion and taking appropriate decisions when it matters most." (*Mail & Guardian*, 11 January 2008)

Since the Mafikeng conference of December 1997, successive ANC Presidents, Secretaries General, January 8th Statements and National General Councils (NGCs) have reported about a cancer eating at the ANC as a consequence of the changes of 1990 and 1994. Whether the 52nd conference was successful or not depends on whether it has dealt with this cancer threatening the very existence of the ANC. Part of the responsibility of the present generation of leadership and membership is to ensure that the ANC survives and remains a powerful and dependable tool in the hands of the people of South Africa.

As the Secretary General reported, "the process of preparing for this 52nd National Conference has revealed the manifestation of numerous problems and deficiencies that require urgent correction. This challenge of renewing our values and correcting the wrong practices that have emerged in the recent

period will be the critical work that the incoming NEC must urgently confront". (*Organisational Report. ANC 52nd National Conference*)

The Report says further that, "the confidence and expectations of our progressive forces in the world, place an obligation on the ANC to build its capacity as an effective instrument for change and good governance".

In this article, which is a rejoinder to Jeremy Cronin's, 'Are liberation movements bound to become bureaucratic and stagnant after independence?', we will quote at length ANC Presidents, Secretaries General, January 8th Statements, National Conference resolutions and National General Council reports on how they have characterised the problem and how they have elaborated a response to it.

In his article Cronin explains, "At our National General Council in July, the Secretary General's report, and the input of the President raised many critical and honest questions about the state of our movement. Problems of careerism, factionalism and of a growing social distance between leadership and our social base were among the problems noted. These inputs were welcomed by the NGC delegates and, in the course of commissions, practical measures were discussed to overcome the problems.

"Many of the intra-organisational challenges that we face are clearly related to the fact that the ANC is now in power. It is important to realise that we are not unique in confronting these kind of challenges. Progressive political formations often battle to sustain their revolutionary trajectory once they are in power. From India, through Mexico and Central America, to Algeria, Guinea Bissau and Southern Africa it is possible to think of once heroic national liberation movements losing their way after independence. But it is not just liberation movements that confront the challenges of power. The ANC is, in short, not the first progres-



sive political formation to have to confront the challenges, temptations and dangers of being in power." (*Umrabulo* 9, November 2000)

This article will therefore look at what happened in the ANC in the run-up to the 52nd National Conference, what transpired at the conference itself, what is the understanding of what the ANC stands for, what are the values of the ANC and how has the conference dealt with the myriad of accumulated negative tendencies that began to take root in the movement post-1994.

AT POLOKWANE

Sunday Times editor Mondli Makhanya dramatised the eve of the 52nd National Conference as follows: "The road to Polokwane is a hazardous one, particularly at this time of the year, when those from the nation's northern regions head home and others venture in that direction for religious ceremonies. It was particularly hazardous last weekend as the skies opened and the ANC faithful headed out to dethrone one king and crown another". (*Sunday Times*, 23 December 2007) He then continues about the ANC succession debate: "Every aspect of our public life became a battleground as the two camps vied for supremacy. As Polokwane drew closer, the war got uglier and rules of engagement were ditched". Nothing could be further from the truth.

The 52nd National Conference was perhaps the most divided conference of the ANC. The *Mail & Guardian* concurs, "With little more than a week to go before the ANC Conference, the cleft in the Party appears to be deepening and sniping between factions more acrimonious and personal." (*Mail & Guardian*, 7 December 2007)

This is the conference that has seen ANC vet-

eran Winnie Madikizela-Mandela suggest a truce in the leadership tussle, while the Sandton ANC branch treasurer Votani Majola applied for a High Court order to have the conference postponed and some ANC regions in the Free State Province were interdicted on the eve of the conference. There were also reports of fist fights in some branches during nominations. An ANC regional office in Limpopo Province was broken into during the nominations process.

It was also for the first time an ANC Conference received so many pre-conference prayers. One was organised by the South African Council of Churches (SACC) in Mankweng; another by the ANC Limpopo in Turfloop; others took place in the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu Natal and Gauteng. The conference itself received unprecedented well-wishers messages from the ZCC and St Engenas churches.

It was also for the first time probably in a very long time, if ever, that all the office-bearer positions from the President down were hotly contested with two distinct and mutually-exclusive NEC lists. It was also a first that the chairperson of conference was heckled and shouted down. It was for the first time in an ANC conference that two different and contradicting songs were sung by two distinct groups taunting each other at each moment throughout conference.

Joel Netshitenzhe was referring to these when he pointed out to the last National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting of 2007 that, "there is certainly a serious incongruity in the current political dynamics that requires the attention of the NEC. To illustrate the seriousness of this matter, let us briefly paint a picture of the manifestation of some of these problems: As we all know, in the current

Advancing in unity towards 2012.

nomination processes for the leadership, two lists have emerged, punted quite openly by organised groupings within the movement – except for one individual (in different positions), the names for the officials are completely different... There have been references to the possibilities of money, some intimidation and promises of government positions being thrown into the electoral pot.” (Netshitenzhe November 2007)

He goes on: “In addition, in the recent period, the public campaign to condemn some leaders within the movement and glorify others has intensified. It is quite possible that either of the groups involved in this can ratchet-up examples to prove their point. That is not the central issue. The question is whether this does at all reflect the kind of ANC we know and should have!”

Mazibuko Jara adds: “The politics of grievance inevitably spirals up to plots, counter-conspiracies, hype and sensation, all driven by the need to deliver the next blow against the other side. The end result of such a detour is systematic political demobilisation, loss of democratic values and undermining democratic impulses in broader society. Politics becomes a kind of theatre in which the people are disempowered spectators with the periodic illusion of choices: which show to watch, when to applaud, failing which they can grumble in protest or fall asleep.” (Mail & Guardian, 30 November 2007)

Some commentators, analysts and soothsayers have suggested that the divisions and wrangles in the ANC in run-up to the 52nd National Conference are both exaggerated and normal ANC squabbles that occur from time to time when conferences happen. Some have even given examples with other difficult conferences of the ANC in relation to either leadership matters or policy direction. They quote the 1930, the 1949, the 1969 and the 1991 conferences.

The reality is that the ANC’s problems are exacerbated by the fact that the ANC has never been this big, with more than half a million card-carrying members and millions of supporters, and most importantly in charge of state power. All these previous conferences happened within a relatively smaller ANC and involved in struggle against the apartheid regime.

In the 1930 conference, President Josiah Gumede was defeated by Pixley ka-Isaka Seme, because, “he became increasingly radicalised and began to advocate communist positions within the ANC, which was still dominated by educated professionals, ministers of religion and traditional leaders with little appetite for mass mobilisation and revolutionary activism”. (Michael Sachs: ‘Gumede and Seme: Two wings of a great movement’, *Umrabulo* 13, December 2001) The ANC was divided and totally weakened throughout the 1930s.

In the 1949 conference, the ANC Youth League,

as a consequence of the fertile political environment of the 1940s, wanted a radicalised ANC that has a programme of action to mobilise people to fight oppression. ANC President AB Xuma did not agree with a programme that would mobilise the people to march, demonstrate, picket, strike, stay-away, boycott, defy and actively fight the apartheid regime. The leadership then was content with deputations, delegations, petitions and memoranda to the regime. Dr Xuma was defeated by Dr JS Moroka in the conference, which adopted a militant programme of action that radicalised the ANC and led to the roaring fifties.

The 1969 Conference was a very successful ANC conference held at Morogoro in Tanzania. There were however very tough political debates and discussion on the strategy and tactics of the struggle and the way forward. It was as a direct consequence of the differences that took place in the political discussions at this conference that some senior NEC members began to behave waywardly, attacked the integrity of the ANC leadership and finally had to be expelled from the ANC. Some members of the ‘Gang of Eight’ had differed with some of the policy positions that the ANC took at Morogoro, but the conference was a huge success that rejuvenated the freedom struggle, invigorated freedom fighters, strengthened the ANC, gave the movement a better articulation of the situation and led a successful democratic revolution to 1990 and 1994.

The 1991 conference was the first ANC national conference to be held following its unbanning in 1990. It was a very successful conference in preparing the ANC for governance and in ensuring that the movement responded adequately to challenges of the time in relation to state-sponsored violence, sanctions against the regime, the issue of armed struggle and ongoing negotiations with the regime. The difficulty in the run-up to the conference was the divisive contest for the ANC deputy-presidency by Thabo Mbeki and Chris Hani. Ultimately veteran Walter Sisulu was elected Deputy President and the conference went very smoothly.

It is a faulty argument to compare the historic 52nd National conference with any previous so-called ‘problematic’ conference. It was an ANC conference like all others, but the severity of the divisive difficulties that faced it were unprecedented. That it is also because: “The type of behaviour on the first day of conference communicated a message of an ANC at war with itself. The heckling of the Chairperson and ill-discipline in general are behaviour that is foreign to ANC. People may differ on candidates but they don’t have to tear the organisation apart”. (Thabo Mbeki, *SABC2* TV interview, 23 December 2007)

Nevertheless the 52nd National conference was also a successful conference in its own way. It did all a conference should do: elect leadership, receive

reports, adopt resolutions, discuss policy and pass a powerful conference declaration. As *City Press* had predicted: “In a country of about 48 million people... the responsibility of representation falls to a group of 4,075 men and women who will decide not only what policies the ANC will follow, but more importantly elect the leaders to implement them. It is from among these leaders that the next President of this country will come”. (*City Press*, 16 December)

Former President Thabo Mbeki in his, ‘Letter from the Outgoing President – From Limpopo to 2012!’ says it even better: “[T]he conference concluded successfully, having adopted important policy decisions on a wide variety of matters and elected a National Executive Committee. These decisions and leadership will guide the activities of our movement over the next five years, until the end of our centenary year, December 2012.” (*ANC Today*, Vol 7 No 50, 21 December 2007)

All manner of analyses, interpretations, studies and research about the 52nd National Conference abound. Some, like Adam Habib, regard what happened at the conference as, “a rebellion against Mbeki’s administration and leadership of the ANC. There is a powerful layer within both the tripartite alliance partners and in the ANC that feels that this transition has benefited the rich more than it has the poor and the marginalised... I think, also, there was a strong feeling in the Party that there was manipulation of state institutions, that institutions are used against some people much more vigorously than they are used against others and there is a feeling very strongly in the party that rules were deployed differentially against different people”. (*The Times*, 6 January 2008)

Ben Turok was even astonished: “There may have been talk of a tsunami, but no one predicted the outcome at the ANC Polokwane Conference. The removal of a substantial part of the top echelon of the ANC leadership is without precedent and undoubtedly a jolt to the country and the ANC itself. The raw facts are astonishing. Six of the most important personalities in the ANC and government stood for election to the six leading positions and were all voted down. In addition, almost all Ministers and Premiers were denied a place on the National Executive Committee (NEC) and therefore the National Working Committee (NWC), the highest decision-making bodies operating between conferences.” (*Sunday Times*, 6 January 2008)

THE BEST OF WHAT THE ANC STANDS FOR

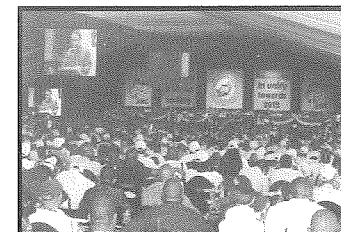
“The ANC emerged as a product of a historical moment in the evolution of resistance against colonialism, a subjective expression of an objective historical movement for change. At each stage of the development of this historical movement, the ANC’s leadership and cadreship were able to adapt

to the demands of the moment, mobilise the people and place the organisation at the head of popular resistance. Thus the organisation developed as a people’s movement in theory and in practice, recognising that a leadership role is earned, and not decreed. In its approach to the country’s problems, the ANC has striven to identify those issues that would result in sustainable solutions.” (‘ANC – People’s Movement and agent for change’, *Umrabulo* 8, May 2000)

The understanding of what the ANC is and stands for must not be warped, otherwise even reflections on its 52nd Conference would be lost and lofty. “From its foundation, the African National Congress has served as the Parliament of the African people and an agent for unity of the African people. To this day, it continues to occupy the honoured and representative of the interests and aspirations of the masses of our people, black and white.” (President’s Report, 51st National Conference, December 2002) “The ANC, as the leader of the national democratic struggle, is a disciplined force of the left, organised to conduct consistent struggle in pursuit of the interest of the poor.” (Preface to the Strategy and Tactics, 2002)

Part of the explanation why the ANC continues to win an overwhelming majority of votes in successive elections and has millions of supporters is because, “no political formation in South Africa today can boast the depth and breadth of branch organisation that forms the mass base of the ANC. Regardless of how difficult the terrain seems, whether in a vast or mountainous rural area where our members constitute a minority, the spread of our branch organisation is unmatched. The ANC’s ability to maintain a relatively vibrant organisational infrastructure at the grass-root level over the past seventeen years since its unbanning is one of the critical factors in the success in transforming society and sustaining the national democratic revolution.” (Organisational Report, 52nd National Conference, December 2007)

And what makes the ANC tick is also that, “In the election campaigns 2004 and 2006, hundreds of thousands of ANC members volunteered their time and energy towards the realisation of our overwhelming victory. These volunteers were drawn mainly from the poor and the unemployed and were composed largely of women and youth. Their selfless dedication to the movement offered without the expectation of material advantage or personal gain is a shining example of the kind of service and loyalty upon which our organisation has been built over 95 years. It indicates that the vast majority of ANC members join the organisation not in order to achieve selfish reward, but to



The historic 52nd National Conference of the ANC... was the largest ANC conference ever, with the ANC itself being at its biggest ever.

serve their nation and their community in the struggle for a better life."

This analysis is important so that there can be a better understanding of the genesis of the problems of careerism, opportunism, corruption, factionalism and patronage that threaten the character, the values and the future existence of the African National Congress. It may also help us understand how the elitist tendencies found their way into this glorious people's movement, because, "April 1994 was a historic break-through in the struggle for democracy, a consequence of active support to the course of democracy by the mass of the people, and a cumulative result of decades of struggle, this victory signified a decisive departure from a colonial system spanning over three centuries. The accession of the ANC to government was therefore not merely a change of parties in political office. The interim constitution and the formation of a government based on the will of the people was a revolutionary break with the past. A qualitative element of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) had been accomplished." (Strategy and Tactics, 1997)

That is why, as Zola Skweyiya explains, "Our duty is not just to go to Polokwane, but to think beyond it to what kind of ANC we shall have. Individuals come and go, but principles of the ANC will always be there. It should not be about individuals, which is our main problem now, but about what Oliver Tambo, Albert Luthuli and Nelson Mandela stood for. We are faced on a daily basis with hunger, homelessness and abuse of women. These should be the issues in Limpopo." (Mail & Guardian, 30 November 2007)

It is therefore very important for members, cadres, supporters, allies and leaders of the ANC to always remember that, "The ANC came into existence before any of us. It will outlive all of us... Our historic task is to carry this precious torch through the brief time we are given on earth, and pass it on undiminished to the generation that will follow. That torch, whose flame keeps aloft the hopes of our people, burns on the fuel of our own selfless contributions, which rest upon our acceptance of the values and conduct of our forebears: courage, generosity, honesty, self-sacrifice, humility, truthfulness, integrity and temperance. These are the values that must reside in the membership of the ANC, which the life of our movement rests." (ANC National General Council, June-July 2005)

The struggle for a non-racial, non-sexist, united, democratic and prosperous society is still on and the ANC is the spear and shield in that struggle of the entire people of South Africa. The people are in the midst of the construction of a South Africa that belongs to all who live in it, where there is peace and friendship, where all are equal before

the law, where all enjoy equal human rights, where there is work, houses, security and comfort. It is in their interest that the ANC lives and leads.

THE GNAWING CANCER

The struggle for a democratic South Africa has driven many people to fight for freedom. It is therefore selflessness, service to the people, solidarity, humility, discipline, respect, volunteerism, courage, collectivism, honesty, generosity, integrity, truthfulness and temperance that were pillars valued as principles that guided ANC members and leaders over the years. These pillars of strength were at the core of what the ANC stood for. It was so also because then being a member of the ANC increased one's chances of being harassed, arrested, detained, banned, banished, exiled, imprisoned or even killed. Joining the struggle for freedom was choosing a path of life-long suffering.

In 1990 and 1994, that situation changed. Being a member and, even better, a leader of the ANC increases one's chances of being a recognised and highly regarded in the community. Also because the ANC is the political party in power since 1994, being its member or leader also brings a possibility of being elected or appointed a councilor, Member of Parliament, Director-General, Mayor, Municipal Manager, Minister, Ambassador, Premier or even a President. Alternatively one could be a very wealthy black economic empowerment partner. That is why since 1990, but even more so since 1994, tendencies began to take root in the ANC which were foreign to the ANC. These negative values included factionalism, careerism, opportunism, elitism, selfishness, crass materialism, ostentatiousness, rumour-mongering, suspicion, individualism, bureaucratic indifference, arrogance of power, patronage, corruption and abuse of state organs. These have a capacity to stifle the ANC. That is why successive Presidents, Secretaries General and National General Councils took time to alert the movement about these negative tendencies.

One of the negative tendencies about which little is said is where people in positions of responsibility in our movement and government have the audacity to appoint people to positions for which they do not have either the necessary political acumen or capacity. This is where people get appointed mayors, managers, MECs, premiers, or ministers, positions they would normally not occupy. This then feeds on factions and infighting within ANC structures and also weakens the ANC's hold on state power and delivery of services to people.

These ills and negative tendencies are summarised in the January 8th Statement 2008 as, "while the ANC's organisational strengths have included an ability to broaden its appeal beyond

its traditional support base and adapt mass work under new conditions, it has acquired a number of 'accumulated weaknesses'. As conference indicated, these weaknesses include:

- An inability to effectively deal with new tendencies arising from being a ruling party, such as social distance, patronage, careerism, corruption and abuse of power;
- Ineffective management of the interface between the movement and the state;
- A flawed approach to membership recruitment;
- A decline in ideological debate among cadres; and
- A lack of institutional resources to give practical effect to the movement's leadership role.

"In the run-up to conference, the process of leadership contestation seriously tested the ANC's unity and cohesion, core values, character, and tried and tested organisational practices."

In his Organisational Report to the 52nd National Conference, then Secretary General Kgalema Motlanthe emphasised that these are the ills of being a political party in power and the ANC should devise means to respond them adequately. "Since many of the BECs are composed largely of members who are unemployed or poor, there is great potential for manipulation by careerists and factionalists who pursue personal or sectarian agendas... In this context we should recall Lenin's warning to the 10th Congress of CPSU in March 1921: 'No profound and popular movement in all history has taken place without its share of filth, without adventurers and rogues, without boastful and noisy elements. A ruling party inevitably attracts careerists.'

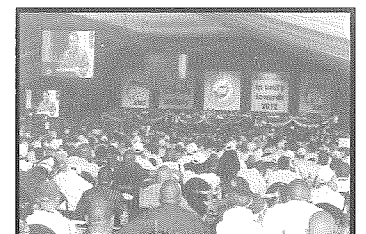
"As a profound and popular movement, which is also a ruling party, the African National Congress, will not be immune from these tendencies. The point however, is to ensure, through continuous political education, that the noble values and norms of the African National Congress remain the dominant and defining characteristics of our movement. In order to achieve this we must devise mechanisms that combat and defeat the negative tendencies that Lenin identified and warned against."

The first of the ANC leaders to openly talk about these negative tendencies was former president Nelson Mandela. In his political report to the 50th National Conference in 1997, he stated that, "Later in this report, we will discuss the intrusion of this self-same media within our ranks, during the last three years, to encourage our own self-destruction, with the active involvement of some who are present here as bona-fide delegates to the conference of a movement to which they owe no loyalty... In reality, during the last three years, we have found it difficult to deal with such careerists

in a decisive manner. We, ourselves, have therefore allowed the space to emerge for these opportunists to pursue their counter-revolutionary goals, to the detriment of our movement and struggle. During this period, we have also been faced with various instances of corruption involving our own members, including those who occupy positions of authority by virtue of the victory of the democratic revolution... Clearly we have to take all necessary measures to purge ourselves of such members and organise ourselves in a way that will make it difficult for corrupt elements to gain entry into our movement".

President Mandela was joined in the same conference by Acting Secretary General Cheryl Carolus, who further reflected on the matter: "The competition within the organisation for positions in government has added a new dimension to the contestation of ANC leadership positions. Election to an ANC position is viewed by some as a stepping stone to positions of power and material reward within government. While such views might be inevitable, we need to ensure that personal ambition is sufficiently tempered by the needs of the organisation and the demands of the National Democratic Revolution. The organisation needs to develop mechanisms which will ensure that the contestation of leadership positions does not divide the organisation and does not detract from the key programme of the movement". (Organisational Report, 50th National Conference, December 1997)

The problems and reactionary tendencies that afflicted the ANC since 1994 and that threatened its survival as a movement of the people multiplied in the period up to 1999. In the January 8th Statement 1999 the ANC said, "at our 50th National Conference in Mafikeng, in December 1997, our outgoing President, Nelson Mandela, drew attention to certain problems that had emerged within our organisation. These related to the fact that certain elements had managed to gain entry into the ANC who, in reality, should not be members of this organisation which, for almost nine decades, has devoted itself to the liberation of the people of South Africa. This minority among our members are wolves in sheep's skins whose purpose is not the betterment of the lives of the people. Their objective is to prey on the people and on society, for personal benefit. We find these enemies of the people throughout the structures of government, from the local to the national level. These are elements who joined other rogues we inherited from the previous administrations, who are responsible



"In the run-up to conference, the process of leadership contestation seriously tested the ANC's unity and cohesion, core values, character, and tried and tested organisational practices."

for the corruption in the public service which your movement, the ANC, is determined to uproot and fight with the means at its disposal. On this important 87th year of the African National Congress, we must make this one of our central tasks, to remove from our ranks these rotten eggs which our society lays every day. We must rid ourselves these elements so that they no longer tarnish the image and reputation of hundreds of thousands of honest members of the ANC who work everyday to advance the cause of all the people of our country."

The same matters were repeated with more clarity by then Secretary General Kgalema Motlanthe in the ANC's Annual Report for 1999: "What emerges in most local areas is a very poor image of the ANC and its membership that are seen to be:

- Disinterested and uncaring for the masses but mainly interested in personal gain and power.
- Divided, ill-disciplined and greedy.
- Not interested in and not participating in matters affecting their communities.

■ Unable to be part of, mobilise or lead the communities in their endeavours and campaigns to change their own lives.

■ Keeping away all those who have a potentially meaningful role to play in the ANC, in particular and in leading the transformation agenda in general."

The National General Council of July 2000 also confirmed that the movement is under threat from within itself, by elements that burrowed into its body. It said: "We have attracted into and continue to retain opportunists and careerists within our ranks. These are the people who join the movement not because they respect or support any of the strategic objectives I have mentioned. They join with the great ease that our procedures as a mass movement permit, with the sole aim of furthering their personal careers and using the access to state power we have as a ruling party, to enrich themselves". (President's Report to the NGC, July 2000)

The NGC went further, to warn the movement about the impact of state power and the 1994 breakthrough on the ANC as a whole: "Our programme is not only about transformation of material conditions, but also about engendering new social values. Failure to build a new person, among revolutionaries themselves and in a more diffuse manner, in broader society, will result in a critical mass of the vanguard movement being swallowed in the vortex of the arrogance of power and attendant social distance and corruption, and ultimately themselves being transformed by the very system they seek to change."

Cronin later explained that, "the question that we posed to ourselves at the NGC was not only whether there are such tendencies, but what we can

do to reverse them. It is obvious that one of the underlying causes of bureaucratic stagnation relates to the very real managerial and technical challenges facing any modern party. These challenges are compounded when such a party is in power. However, an effective understanding of the danger needs to analyse, also, the social base of the political party or movement. Where the dynamic interaction between the mass base and the political party is disrupted or breaks down, then bureaucratic tendencies within the political party are likely to be accelerated and exaggerated." (*Umrabulo* 9, November 2000)

In 2001, the National Working Committee (NWC) drafted a document on the election of leadership, titled, 'Through the Eye of a Needle'. The document sets out a number of principles, guidelines, requirements and challenges in electing leadership at all levels of the movement, including deployment into governance and other spheres. Outlining the negative challenges that have emerged in the new terrain, it says, "Because leadership in structures of the ANC affords opportunities to assume positions of authority in government, some individuals then compete for ANC leadership positions in order to get into government. Many such members view positions in government as a source of material riches for themselves. Thus resources, prestige and authority of government positions become the driving force in competition for leadership positions in the ANC."

"Government positions also go hand-in-hand with the possibility to issue contracts to commercial companies. Some of these companies identify ANC members that they can promote in ANC structures and into government, so that they can get contracts by hook or crook. This is done through media networks to discredit other leaders, or even by buying membership cards to set-up branches that are ANC only in name."

"Positions in government also mean the possibility to appoint individuals in all kind of capacities. As such, some members make promises to friends, that once elected and ensconced in government, they, would return the favour. Cliques and factions then emerge within the movement, and around personal loyalties driven by corrupt intentions. Members become voting fodder to serve individuals' self interest." (*Umrabulo* 11 June 2001)

In August 2002, in an interview with Helena Sheehan, Cronin raised some of the problems he saw facing the ANC: "I think these are tendencies now of what some of us refer to as the Zanufication of the ANC. You can see features of that, of a bureaucratisation of the struggle... There are levels of disorganisation, demobilisation, disappointment, demoralisation... so if there is marginalisation, shouting down, suppression of views and perspectives, it might have to do with individuals who are

nasty, with Stalinist tendencies. It might have to do with a lack of imagination or any number of factors. But finally for me, a class analysis is also an important tool for understanding what we are living through. I think it is almost characteristic of a lot of left people including comrades inside of the SACP and COSATU, is that there is the assumption that we are living through a kind of tragedy, the sort of Stalin era is a version of it, or what has happened in Africa with ZANU and so forth, is another". These are the challenges that come with being a political party in power and must be creatively dealt with.

On 14 June 2005, the then ANC Deputy President Jacob Zuma was released from his responsibilities as Deputy President of the country, as a consequence of the judgement in the Durban High Court in the case of the State vs Schabir Shaik and others. As a consequence of the divisions that grew in the movement ANC President Thabo Mbeki and Deputy President Jacob Zuma presented a report to the NEC of 9 September 2005 in which they said, "We wish to assert that there is one ANC and therefore reject the notion that individuals should be required to choose sides, on the basis of the absolutely false assertion that we lead two contending factions within the movement. We therefore urge in the strongest terms possible, that no one should use the President or the Deputy President to mobilise for or against either, and for or against any other leader of the movement."

The subsequent NEC meeting resolved to, "expose and fight factionalism in our structures, and encourage members to report to the Secretary General's office any rumour-mongering that seeks to undermine the unity and cohesion of the movement, so that this poison be addressed honestly and openly within the structures of the ANC." (NEC Resolution, 18-20 November 2005)

As articulated by President Mandela and elaborated by Cheryl Carolus and Kgalema Motlanthe, the acquisition of state power in 1994, while supposed to be a huge advantage, also creates internal and new, formerly unknown, problems for the ANC.

The Strategy and Tactics document adopted by the 52nd National Conference elevates the matter even higher: "Political incumbency also presents a myriad of problems in the management of relations within the organisation. Patronage, arrogance of power, bureaucratic indifference, corruption and other ill arise, undermining the lofty core values of the organisation: to serve the people!" Hence columnist David Bullard could lament loudly that, "We are no longer the miracle nation of 1994. Instead, we are rapidly becoming a global freak show." (*Sunday Times*, 6 January 2007)

In an interview with the *Financial Mail* in January 2007 Motlanthe reiterated the matter point-

edly: "This rot is across the board. It's not confined to any level or any area of the country. Almost every project is conceived because it offers opportunities for certain people to make money. A great deal of the ANC's problems are occasioned by this. There are people who want to take it over so they can arrange for appointment of those who will allow them possibilities for future accumulation." (*Financial Mail*, 19 January 2007)

Something drastic must happen to turn the tide of an ANC that may go down the drain and finally be so weakened that it ceases to be a significant institute in society. For the ANC to remain a movement of the people work must be done to ensure that the noble values, the norms, organisational practices and character of the ANC are retained. The tide must turn because, "The ANC came into existence before many of us. It will outlive all of us. Our historic task is to carry this precious torch through the brief time we are given on earth, and pass it on undiminished to the generation that will follow. That torch, whose flames keep aloft the hopes of our people, burns on the fuel of our own selfless contributions, which rest upon our acceptance of the values and conduct of our forebears: courage, generosity, honesty, self-sacrifice, humility, truthfulness, integrity and temperance. These are the values that must reside in the membership of the ANC, which is the foundation upon which the life of our movement rests." (ANC, NGC 2005)

THE THREAT OF COUNTER-REVOLUTION

In the previous few paragraphs, we elaborated at length about the degeneration, decay and corrosion of the character, values, norms and ethics of the ANC. We have explained at length how state power exaggerated these difficulties. Can counter-revolutionaries be blamed for these tendencies?

The traditional understanding of counter-revolution within the movement is any action or inaction that seeks to delay, derail or reverse the national democratic revolution. It also includes elaborate analyses of the potential social forces and the potential institutional forces for counter-revolution.

Netshitenzhe says counter-revolutionary threat is partly responsible for the movement's problems. "The last critical matter on social cohesion relates to our experiences on the manifestation of counter-revolution. In the recent period, we had been drifting towards the conclusion that there were no serious organised counter-revolution in our society, save for weak extremists such as the Boeremag. Yet in the last 18 months or so, things have happened which demonstrate the existence of organised groupings which seek to initiate, foment, encourage and aggravate difficulties the movement faces. Who are these forces and are we both as the

ANC and the government geared to deal with the danger they present?" (Netshitenzhe, NEC presentation, November 2007)

In all the divisive and destructive difficulties that have thrown themselves in the leadership succession dispute in the run-up to the 52nd National Conference, "one thing is certain: forces of counter-revolution both within and outside the country have isolated these issues, to exploit them to maximum effect in weakening the ANC and the Tripartite Alliance. They have embedded themselves into the terrain and use 'stratcom'-type tactics to achieve their aims."

The NEC is also of the view that counter-revolution plays a role in the problems the movement is facing. "It is understandable that there should be pain within the movement regarding the difficulties faced by our Deputy President. The danger is that, incorrectly handled, the situation can worsen, further dividing and weakening the movement and the forces of fundamental change. We do appreciate the genuine sense of solidarity among cadres within the movement with the Deputy President. However, we need to be vigilant against unhealthy forces who seek to attach themselves to this campaign. Some of the forces would be driven by opportunism, others by counter-revolutionary agendas to weaken the ANC and undermine transformation and yet others attempts to hide behind the campaign to pursue illegal and corrupt activities." (Report of the President and Deputy President to NEC, 9 September 2005)

Former President Thabo Mbeki reiterated the point: "I mention these two instances, the e-mails and the 'browse' document both to draw the attention of conference to the fact that the forces that opposed our movement in the past have not abandoned their objective to defeat us and to emphasise the importance of empowering our members with the necessary political maturity to enable them to see through such maneuvers." (President Political Report, 2007)

The 1997 Strategy and Tactics notes that, "upmost in the immediate objectives of these counter-revolutionary forces is to disorganise, weaken and destroy the ANC, the vanguard of the NDR, both from within and from outside its ranks. It is in the interest of these elements that the masses of the people should be left leaderless and rudderless, and thus open to manipulation against their own interests. The networks used by the regime, especially in its 'dirty war' both within and outside South Africa remained intact after 1994, either burrowed within the state machinery or concealed in front companies and other private enterprises."

Can the ANC successfully blame counter-revolution for careerism, opportunism, greed, corruption and patronage in its ranks? In its document on the

balance of forces the NEC makes the point that, "indeed the ideology and cultural worldview propounded by various representatives of the white upper classes today form the bedrock of dominant national thinking. They are premised on crass individualism, sexism, the notion that the ends justify the means in terms of self enrichment and the belief that the past is irrelevant to the present and the future." (*Umrabulo* 9, November 2000)

One of the potential institutional forces for counter-revolution is the security forces, where transformation had been very slow and 'dirty-tricks' elements of the past are burrowed. Events in that sphere have not been encouraging in recent times. The security cluster has seen a lot of upheavals and in the process many heads have rolled. Those include the:

- resignation of Bulelani Ngcuka as National Director of Public Prosecutions,
- resignation of Linda Mti as Commissioner for Correctional Services,
- resignation of Vusi Mavimbela as Director-General of the National Intelligence Agency (NIA),
- suspension of Vusi Pikoli as a National Director of Public Prosecutions,
- suspension and dismissal of Billy Masetlha as a NIA Director-General,
- arrest of Gerrie Nel, the Gauteng head of the Directorate of Special Operations (Scorpions),
- charging and extended leave of Jackie Selebi, the National Commissioner of the South African Police Service (SAPS).

That is why the SACP has raised its voice on the matter: "We are deeply concerned and worried about what seems to be a very messy and deteriorating state of our criminal justice system." (SACP press release, 15 January 2008)

Another potential institutional force for counter-revolution is the media: "The majority of media establishments are owned or controlled in terms of content, by forces whose agenda is either to weaken the ANC and precipitate its long-term defeat, or to shape an ANC that satisfies their interests." (*Umrabulo* 9, November 2000)

Netshitenzhe underlines the point that "the capacity that the movement currently has for political education, ideological discourse and narrow communication tasks is way below what the task of transformation requires. If this is not corrected, the NDR will certainly gradually lose its fulcrum and frame of reference, ideal inimical to fundamental change will become dominant, and the ANC itself will get transformed by the system it seeks to change." (Netshitenzhe, November 2007)

The ANC would not be the first liberation movement to corrode. But the collapse of the ANC would spell doom for the country and the region. "These are many instances in Africa and elsewhere in the world which show what happens when, on

becoming a ruling party, a genuinely popular national liberation movement, such as ours, loses contact with the people and its leaders transform themselves into a self-centered ruling elite. We have seen how this has, in some instances, led to military coups and in others, opened the space for peaceful capture of political power by reactionary forces that have taken advantage of the genuine grievances of the people." (Political Report to NGC, July 2000)

The ANC membership and leadership, particularly in the various spheres of governance, must at all times act to avoid the negative tendencies and ensure that the democratic revolution survives and prospers.

POLOKWANE'S AFTERMATH AND THE FUTURE

The historic 52nd National Conference of the ANC has come and gone. What is left is to correct the damage done in the run-up to it, both internally in the ANC and in broader society. The negative tendencies that are growing in the movement must be uprooted, the ANC returned to its glory; counter-revolution must be defeated and the degeneration of the revolution must be ended.

Part of that work will mean intensifying political education at all levels of the movement; take the necessary disciplinary actions against those ANC members and leaders who transgress; implement 'Through the Eye of a Needle' both in leadership elections at all levels and in deployment of cadreship; in governance deepen and advance a better life for all South Africans; and build a strong, vibrant, civic orientated and powerful ANC.

The Declaration of the 52nd National Conference was telling in this regard: "On occasion some of us seemed to veer away from dignified conduct that has always been a hallmark of the ANC. Collectively, we are wiser than when we converged in Polokwane five days ago. The dictum, the ANC lives, the ANC leads, will ring even truer in the coming years."

Political education is not a panacea to solve all our problems. It must be employed with other methods to reclaim and strengthen the membership and the ANC. On occasion it is not that the individuals involved in divisive, factional and other tendencies lack political education. There will be no success if political education is treated as a be all and end all in this regard.

It is not all doom and gloom, as the Carolus told the 50th National Conference: "At the time when many progressive organisations, both within South Africa and internationally, are facing organisational decay or even collapse, the ANC needs to count among its strengths the fact that it has properly constituted organisational structures and that the vast majority of them are functioning effec-

tively."

But: "The development of the ANC cadre is one area where the organisation must respond more effectively. The deployment of large numbers of experienced and skilled cadres to government and other areas has diminished the contribution they have been able to make to the induction, political education and training of new recruits and leaders."

The 1985 Kabwe Consultative Conference in the report of the commission on cadre policy and ideological work stated: "A prerequisite for the success of a revolution is the existence of a strong revolutionary organisation. The strength of a revolutionary organisation lies not only in numbers, but primarily in the quality of its cadres. Hence in the development of our organisation, cadre policy occupies a central role."

The 51st National Conference agreed: "The limited political consciousness has impacted negatively on our capacity to root out corrupt and divisive elements among ourselves. For the movement to renew itself as a revolutionary movement we have to develop specific political, organisational and administrative measures to deal with such destructive elements." (Secretary General's Report, December 2002)

The role of the NEC in the providing leadership to the entire movement in between conferences is also key. In the past few years that key organ has not provided leadership to the structures and members of the ANC as it should have, partly because it was itself divided in the leadership succession tussles.

Motlanthe reported on this to the 52nd National Conference: "Nevertheless, the depth and value of discussions could have been improved. In particular, despite providing a forum for airing a range of views, the ability of the NEC to arrive at clear conclusions and an unambiguous path forward has been lacking. Another key shortcoming of the NEC is the general lack of participation of NEC members in the mass work of the organisation. Although certain individuals are an exception to this rule, in general the collectives deployed to provinces have not functioned effectively, nor have NEC members taken proper cognisance of the obligations to build the organisation on the ground."

The 2007 Strategy and Tactics says: "To carry out the NDR in the current phase requires a progressive National Liberation Movement which:

- understands the interconnections between political and socio-economic challenges facing society,
- leads the motive forces of the NDR in pursuing their common aspirations and ensuring that their sectoral interests are linked to the strategic objectives;
- masters the terrain of electoral contest, utilises

political power to advance the objectives of the NDR and wields instruments of state in line with these ideals reflected in the national constitution; ■ organises and mobilises the motive forces and builds broader partnerships to drive the process of reconstruction and development, nation-building and reconciliation; and

■ conducts itself, both on its internal practices and in relation to society at large, in line with the ideals represented in the NDR and act as a microcosm of the future."

Cronin better articulates a response to these ills, challenges and negative tendencies as follows, "at the NGC we committed ourselves to strengthening our organisational discipline, to build a dedicated and informed cadreship, and to countering careerism, not by pretending that there are not many thousand of full-time professionals in our movement, but with more thoughtful career-pathing, collective team-building, and cadre-development." (Umrabulo 9, November 2000)

Kader Asmal emphasises the point: "Throughout its history, the ANC has had a remarkable capacity to heal itself and move on. This resilience has been reflected on a number of occasions." (Mail & Guardian, 30 November 2007)

Mbhazima Shilowa concurs: "Whoever comes out on top will have to spend several years healing and unifying the ANC. The onus will be on the victors to show magnanimity and on the vanquished to respect the democratic process." (Mail & Guardian, 30 November 2007)

The newly-elected ANC President, Jacob Zuma, in his closing address to the Polokwane conference, emphasised that the leadership must deal with the accumulated weaknesses of the organisation. He explained that "in the political and organisational reports, comrade Thabo Mbeki, former president of ANC and comrade Kgalema Motlanthe, former Secretary General, referred to the many unresolved issues that still plague the organisation. The occurrences of the first day of conference were indicative of internal problems that needed to be sorted out without delay. The leadership must not fail to address problems within the organisation.

All these are to ensure that the survives, that it grows to be even more powerful when it reaches its centenary on 8 January 2012; so that the slogan 'ANC Lives, ANC Leads' resonates loudly in the minds and hearts of the people of South Africa; and that this precious vessel of the people is handed intact to the next generation.

KGOLANE RUDOLPH PHALA is a member of the ANC and SACP provincial executive committees in Limpopo.

REFERENCES

- ANC Strategy and Tactics, 50th National Conference, 16-20 December 1997, Mafikeng
- ANC Strategy and Tactics, 51st National Conference 16-20 December 2002. Stellenbosch
- ANC Strategy and Tactics, 52nd National Conference, 16-20 December 2007. Polokwane
- ANC President's Political Report to the 50th National Conferences
- ANC Secretary General's Organisational Report to the 50th National Conference
- ANC President's Opening Address to the National General Council in July 2000, Port Elizabeth
- ANC Annual Report, 1999
- ANC January 8th Statement, 1999
- ANC January 8th Statement, 2008
- ANC Kabwe National Consultative Conference, Report of the Commission on Cadre Policy and Ideological Work, 1985, Kabwe, Zambia
- ANC Today, Volume 7 Number 50, 21-27 December 2007. 'Letter from the outgoing president - From Limpopo to 2012!' Thabo Mbeki
- ANC Secretary General's Report to the National General Council, July 2000
- 'Through the Eye of the Needle - choosing the best cadres to lead transformation', Umrabulo 11, June 2001
- ANC Secretary General's Report to 51st National Conference, 16-20 December 2002, Stellenbosch
- ANC President's Political Report to the 51st National Conference, 16-20 December 2002, Stellenbosch
- ANC Secretary General's Organisational Report to the NGC, June-July 2005, Tshwane
- ANC President's Closing Address to the NGC, June-July 2005, Tshwane
- ANC President and Deputy President's Report to the NEC, 9 September 2005
- Resolution of the NEC, 6-20 November 2005.
- Presentation of Notes for Political Overview to the NEC, Joel Netshitenzhe, 18-20 November 2005
- ANC President's Opening Address to the National Policy Conference, June-July 2007, Midrand
- ANC President's Political Report to the 52nd National Conference, 16-20 December 2007, Polokwane
- ANC Secretary General's Organisational report to the 52nd National Conference, 16-20 November 2007, Polokwane
- Declaration of the 52nd National Conference, 16-20 November 2007, Polokwane
- City Press, 16 December 2007
- COSATU Discussion Paper 9, National Conference, 2006
- Financial Mail, 19 January 2007
- Mail & Guardian, 7 December 2007
- Mail & Guardian, 30 November 2007
- Mail & Guardian, 11 January 2008
- SABC interview with President Mbeki, 23 December 2007
- Sunday Times, 23 December 2007
- Sunday Times, 6 January 2008
- Sunday Times, 6 January 2008
- The Times, 6 January 2008
- Umrabulo 8, May 2000
- Umrabulo 9, November 2000
- Umrabulo 11, June 2001
- Umrabulo 13, December 2001

CURRENT AFFAIRS



Mapping the South African political economy

Does politics drive the economy or vice versa?

In a political economy such as ours, distorted by the social engineering of apartheid and colonialism, the bi-directional relationship between politics and the economy is more pronounced than in other settings. This, writes Joel Netshitenzhe, calls out for a social compact in pursuit of a common vision.

The question of whether politics drives the economy or vice versa has been debated over the ages by philosophers such as Plato, Kant, Hegel, Marx and Engels; and we cannot claim that they found definitive answers.

In works such as *Phenomenology of Spirit and Philosophy of Right*, Friedrich Hegel asserts the primacy of consciousness over matter and speaks of "...the State as the moral Whole and the Reality of Freedom, and consequently as the objective unity of these two elements".¹

He further argues: "Since the state is mind objectified, it is only as one of its members that the individual has objectivity, genuine individuality, and an ethical life...and the individual's destiny is the living of a universal life".²

Karl Marx counters this in *The German Ideology* by arguing that, "[i]n direct contrast to German

philosophy which descends from heaven to earth, here we ascend from earth to heaven..."

"...men, developing their material production and their material intercourse, alter, along with their real existence, their thinking and the products of their thinking."³

Friedrich Engels brings us closer to some balance in his *Letter to J Bloch* when he asserts: "The economic situation is the basis, but various elements of the superstructure - ...political, juristic, philosophical theories, religious views... - also exercise their influence upon the course of the historical struggles and in many cases preponderate in determining their form."⁴

In summary, one can therefore argue, firstly, that politics is an intense expression of economics; secondly, that in everything we do there is some material self-interest; and thirdly, that we should

however avoid reductionism. As Engels argues, in what emerges as a historical development there is a parallelogram of forces – an intersection of a multiplicity of wills – that influences the final outcome.

EVOLUTION OF POST-1994 POLITICAL ECONOMY

Coming back to actual practice: how do these assertions relate to the evolution of South Africa's political economy since 1994? What are the critical issues to look out for as we chart our way forward?

The first category of major trends since 1994 is that we have put in place a robust constitutional democracy with a culture of human rights that is not dependent merely on the conduct of one elite or the other, be it political, judicial, economic, civil society or otherwise. There are checks and balances that incorporate the parallelogram of intersecting wills to which Engels referred. None of these sectors enjoys the monopoly of wisdom or power and, perhaps, therein lies the health of our democracy.

Yet we have to continue agonising whether the constitutional system can withstand pummelling from contradictory factors thrown up by the dynamics of our political economy.

Our society is characterised by poverty and inequality. And these do beget impatience as shown in, for instance, some of the strikes that we experienced in the past two years where violence became endemic; and the mass demonstrations that we have seen around conduct of municipal councillors which have resulted in some cases in wanton destruction of public amenities.

The anger that society harbours around crime and the perception that our constitutional freedoms are being exploited by criminals does encourage responses informed by the temptation towards bloodlust – with all of us clamouring for quick fixes.

So the fundamental question here is: is our Constitution too advanced for our practical reality?

Can, for instance, the criminal justice system as a whole enjoy or improve its legitimacy if there are perceptions of partiality or a deliberate campaign to encourage such perceptions? We are all aware of the protestations in some political circles when investigations and prosecutions affect senior political leaders; or in other circles when judicial commissions threaten to expose malfeasance: judges become tools in political campaigns, we are told. And so, a tendency develops even at leadership levels to approve only of investigations or judgements that we like.

The second category of major trends is that we have made massive progress in establishing a

healthy macroeconomic environment and actually growing the economy. From the annual average of 3% GDP growth between 1994 and 2004, we have experienced an average rate of 5% since 2004.

But the current confluence of high inflation, interest rates and current account deficit does pose a serious question about trend growth – the actual capacity of the economy to grow at a higher level. Attached to this is the response of business to opportunities and the issue of trust. Why is it that cement companies responded with such hesitation when the government announced the massive infrastructure programme, such that we currently have to import cement from abroad due to capacity constraints? Why is it that we are unable to provide, from local production, the mass of cheap furniture, white goods and electronic appliances needed by the growing middle 'class' and more employed people as the political economy changes?

The third category of major trends is that facts and figures do confirm that we have reduced poverty in its various dimensions (income, assets and services). We can refer here to social grants, school enrolment and literacy, water and sanitation, electricity and housing. But how do we deal with the perennial challenge of quality: such as passes in higher grade mathematics which are only now starting to approach 1994 figures; the location of subsidised housing projects further and further away from workplaces; and the problem of electricity which raises the issue of long-term planning capacity.

These three instances make the point that since 1994 we have had quantitative and qualitative movement forward; but each step raises strategic questions which, if not systematically addressed, can precipitate stagnation and pose the danger of reversal.

DISTILLING MAJOR LESSONS

This brings out in even bolder relief the major lessons about the interaction between politics and economics in the South African setting.

What has emerged quite starkly is that we need to build a state with constantly improving legitimacy and the capacity to lead society in pursuit of a clearly articulated national vision. Beyond references to a non-racial, non-sexist and democratic society, can we fashion a kind of Vision 2025, about where the country should be in terms of all areas of human endeavour?

Such a state should act in provision of community and economic infrastructure to crowd in the private sector and lead in building partnerships across society. It should have the organisational and technical capacity to direct national development.

In other words, we need a uniquely South Afri-

can developmental state, which in addition to the above, should also be a strong agent of redistribution: in the provision of public goods and social security especially for the poor. It should be able to pursue pro-poor growth and pro-growth poverty reduction. The World Bank illustrates this inter-linkage (in its work on Latin America), arguing that a 10% rise in poverty leads to a 6% decline in Gross fixed Capital Formation and a 1% fall in GDP growth.⁵

Further, while recognising the critical importance of macroeconomic and microeconomic interventions including an industrial policy, the state needs to pay attention to extra-economic factors that do have a critical impact on economic growth. For instance, recent research conducted on behalf of The Presidency shows that beyond the issues that arise in current discourse around crime, it is a critical inhibitor to the thriving and survival of small and micro-enterprises.

Research done by the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) released a few years ago show that trust between the political and economic leadership corps is a critical driver to investment decisions. When all is said and done, the research pointed out, the question about 'the real policy intentions' of the government arose over and over again – irrespective of what government was actually saying and doing. This reflects the anomaly of the South African situation in which the political and economic leadership groups do not have the same background, outlook and culture (though the political leadership has started learning to play golf).

We also need to recognise the reality that economic growth does not necessarily lead to social cohesion.

On the one hand, growth can lead to worsening inequality and undermining of social cohesion. The intense strikes of security workers and public servants in 2006 and 2007 respectively, that we referred to earlier, do reflect real and relative poverty – the latter among the lower middle strata such as teachers and nurses – as their peers in senior positions in the public and private sectors experience massive improvements in their conditions of life.

On the other hand, specific experiences can impact negatively on public mood and subtract from investor confidence. For instance, data in the past 14 years point to a decline in incidence of most crimes. This declining trend was manifest in actual practice and, since the turn of the century, in perceptions; until 2006 during the security workers' strike and the many crime incidents in that period. Perceptions seemed to worsen during 2006 and 2007 with more high profile crimes and the rise in incidence of house and business robberies

that generate a profound sense of insecurity. These specific crimes are not unrelated to economic growth, higher levels of economic activity, and improvement in assets among, and expansion in the numbers of, the middle and upper strata.

What these lessons indicate is the profound dynamic of bi-directional causality between politics and economics that the political, business and worker leadership cannot ignore. To exercise leadership in forging a common national vision, leaders of all social partners should be prepared to identify those interests of their sectors that help propel the common interest; they need to understand the country's political economy and work together to transform it for the better.

POLITICS AND ECONOMICS POST-POLOKWANE

Let me reflect briefly on the interplay between politics and economics after the 52nd National Conference in Polokwane. What does Polokwane tell us about challenges going forward?

A study of policy processes in government and the ANC in the past two years or so would have shown that 2007 coincided with major nodal points in the development of macro-policy. The main ones in this regard include: major reviews of policy in such critical areas as industrial policy and comprehensive social security; completion of processes to finalise key programmes such as comprehensive and sustainable poverty reduction; clarification of conceptual issues such as the attributes of a South African developmental state; and recognition of the need more systematically to attack inequality.

As such, at the level of policy, Polokwane was not a bolt from a blue sky. If the new government is able to identify critical issues to forge a compact among all social partners, we should see new and better results.

What about the outcome of the elections? It is too early yet for historians to claim fully to fathom this phenomenon. But somewhere in the mix of the social distance that developed between the leadership and membership; of the impatience among the lower middle strata on inequality; of the overwhelming sense of leadership change that a historical moment occasions in the social psychology; and of the conduct of rogues who used strange methods to bat for any of the slates – somewhere in this combination, shall we find answers.

This though is neither here nor there. The critical challenge is to identify the issues around which a social compact can be developed. Six critical areas come to mind:

■ build a developmental state: with a clear understanding of its attributes including the extent to which it should be 'embedded' among social part-

ners while at the same time being 'autonomous' of narrow class interests;

■ speed up transformation of the economy: moving beyond narrow definitions of empowerment to address the fundamental question about the structure of the economy and its productive capacity, including the role of small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs) and cooperatives;

■ intensify the fight against poverty: including internalising the critical premise that employment and self-employment, which include agricultural reform and rural development, are the most sustainable ways of attacking this scourge;

■ systematically build social cohesion: among others by improving the social capital of poor communities, improving the legitimacy of the state, addressing inequality and revamping the criminal justice system;

■ forge a new value system: inspired by the need to build a caring society, and to intensify the fight against corruption in government and the political leadership as well as the temptation among business to acquiesce to blatant demands for backhanders as they court political masters; and

■ progressive internationalism: including solidarity in building a better world as well as dexterity on the part of business to take advantage of opportunities in Africa and further afield.

It is around these issues that Vision 2025 can be fashioned.

To sum up: there is bi-directional causality between politics and economics and this is even more pronounced in a political economy such as ours distorted by the social engineering of apartheid and

colonialism. The critical challenge is to forge a partnership among all social actors, a social compact in pursuit of a common vision. We need to move beyond the shadow-boxing, narrow sector demands and the blame game that characterise current interactions in the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC) and elsewhere which the social partners seem to revel in.

Such a compact will require recognition of the strategic national interest that should revolve around issues of growth, reduction of poverty and inequality and building social cohesion. It will require an appreciation that it is in the nature of pursuing a common vision that there will be give and take.

JOEL NETSHITENZHE is a member of the ANC National Executive Committee (NEC).

NOTES

- 1 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hegel>
- 2 <http://www.iep.utm.edu/h/hegelsoc.htm>
- 3 <http://www.marxists.org/...1845/german-ideology...>
- 4 <http://www.marxists.org/...works/1890/letters...>
- 5 WB (Latin American & Caribbean Studies) – Poverty Reduction and Growth: Virtuous and Vicious Circles

CURRENT AFFAIRS

The great trade tussle

Challenges facing our movement and country in international trade negotiations

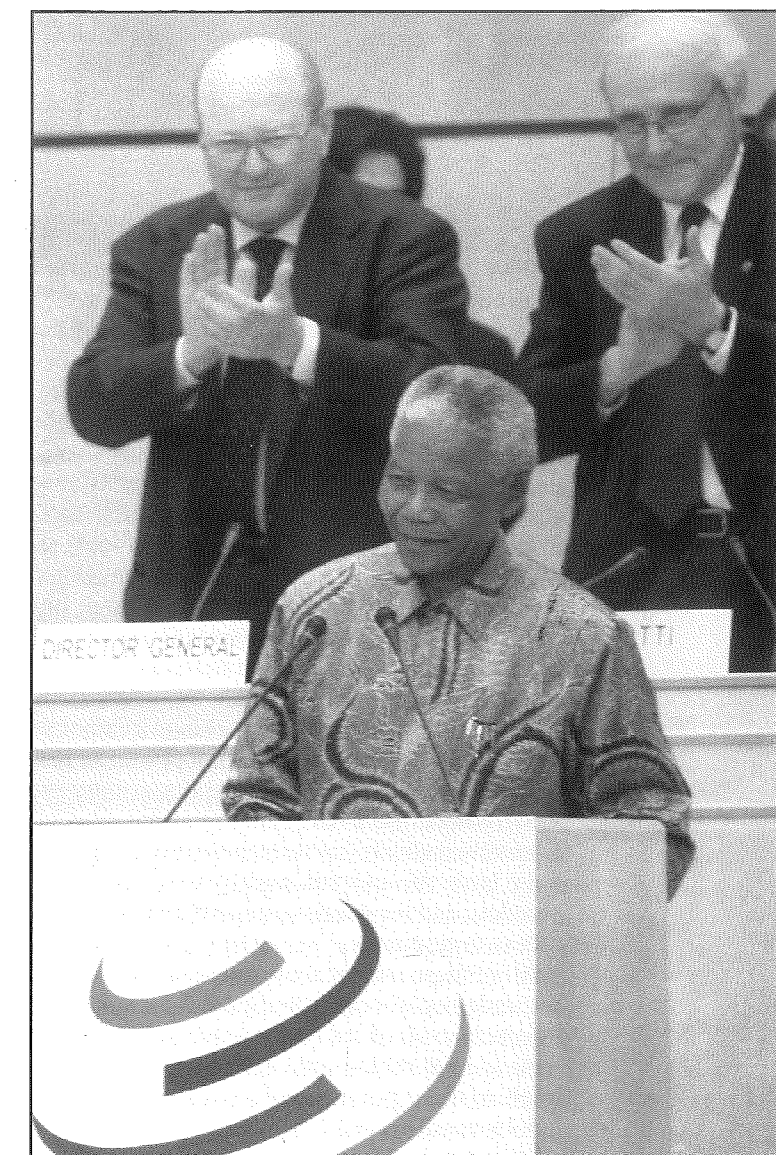
Enormous challenges are being confronted in trade negotiations as we attempt to defend and preserve the perspectives on trade and tariff policy mandated at Polokwane. The way these processes unfold will have major implications for our country for many years to come, writes Rob Davies.

"Men make their own history, but not in circumstances of their own choosing."

Karl Marx, The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte.

The resolution on economic transformation adopted at the 52nd National Conference in Polokwane states: "In general, industrial policy should lead our overall approach to sector development, whilst trade policy should play a supporting role and be sensitive to employment outcomes." This view is similar to that enunciated in the government's National Industrial Policy Framework, which states, "...our fundamental approach is that tariff policy should be decided primarily on a sector-by-sector basis dictated by the needs and imperatives of sector strategies".

Both perspectives are strongly rooted in a rec-



ognition that while globalisation has been associated with a lowering of tariff and other barriers to the freer movements of goods and capital across national borders it has been a highly uneven and unequal process. In particular, developing countries have found themselves coming under strong pressures to make sharp tariff reductions involving significant adjustment costs, only to confront the continued existence of major barriers in areas where the developing world is competitive (namely in agriculture). At the same time, the lessons of recent economic history that have seen the rise first of the East Asian Newly Industrialising Countries (NICs) and more recently of the BRICs (Brazil, India, China) as industrial powers, is that a strategic approach in which tariff policy is informed by industrial policy, and which needs therefore to

▲ **Former President Nelson Mandela gets a standing ovation after addressing the general assembly of the WTO.**

defend "policy space" to provide some degree of continued tariff support to emerging as well as vulnerable sectors, is essential in promoting economic development.

However, the world of international trade negotiations (both multilateral and bilateral) is not one in which these perspectives are widely shared by the governments of the advanced industrialised countries of the North. These economies, moreover, have recently found themselves facing significant competition from the BRICs. Developing countries like China, India and Brazil have emerged as major forces in international trade, now accounting for 37% of world trade and poised to reach 50% in the near future. The rise of the BRICs as industrial powers is, firstly, posing competitive challenges to established industrial powers in many industrial sectors. Secondly, the stage of industrialisation that the BRIC economies are now in is relatively resource-intensive and this is underpinning both the current high prices for mineral products, and the intense competition for long term access to resources.

All of these factors are posing major challenges for trade negotiators from South Africa. The way in which some of the major processes unfold will have considerable implications for our ability to implement the policy perspectives we agreed to at Polokwane. This article will seek to highlight some of the issues and challenges confronting us as a country and a movement in two major ongoing trade negotiations – the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Doha Round negotiations and the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) negotiations with the European Union. Both processes have underscored a reality that international trade negotiations are about hard bargaining with parties that have, and will pursue, vested commercial interests. Both these cases have also been examples of processes where developing countries have won the battle over the broad declaratory frameworks, only to find that in the detailed negotiating processes, these broad principles have surprisingly little impact on positions actually taken. Both are therefore cases of the angels being found in the generalities, and the devils in the detail.

WTO DOHA ROUND NEGOTIATIONS

The Doha Round was supposed to be, as the declaration adopted at the WTO Ministerial in Doha in 2001 put it, a process where "the needs and interests of developing countries would be placed at the heart of the work programme". Indeed, developing countries only agreed at Doha to another round of trade negotiations, on condition that developmental concerns would prioritise and shape the process.

In particular the Doha Declaration held out the

promise that for the first time agriculture would be subject to serious multilateral disciplines. Agriculture, and agro-industries, are sectors in which many developing countries enjoy actual or potential competitive advantages over developed countries. Yet precisely because of this, farmers in the developed world have long been shielded by a combination of subsidies and high tariffs that have prevented developing country competitors from realising their comparative advantages. The Doha Declaration spoke of setting a date for the elimination of all export subsidies, and of agreeing to a "significant reduction" of production subsidies and high tariffs particularly on products of export interest to developing countries. On industrial tariffs (or Non Agricultural Market Access, NAMA, in WTO jargon), the Doha Declaration spoke of removing high tariffs particularly on products of export interest to developing countries. The latter were not, however, able to secure this as an exclusive focus and the compromise was that there would also be (less severe) cuts in high industrial tariffs in larger developing countries. Other important subjects were to include a special "Aid for Trade" package for developing countries, revision of rules and trade in services.

While there is currently some renewed momentum to try to conclude the Doha Round after seven years of negotiations, the process has been extremely protracted with many deadlines being missed. The fundamental reason for this over the years has been the inability or unwillingness of the large subsidisers and protectors of small, inefficient agricultural sectors in the rich world to come to the party with significant enough reform proposals. Even the proposals for modalities on agriculture, which are currently on the table at the WTO, which we welcome as steps in the right direction, will still leave in place a significantly distorted agricultural global trading system which will continue to impact to the disadvantage of developing countries.

At the same time we have seen the very same players directing ultra ambitious demands for market opening in the industrial sectors of so called "advanced developing countries". While this is directed particularly at the BRICs (whose industrial sectors are increasingly becoming more dynamic than those in established industrialised countries), South Africa has found itself particularly vulnerable in this process. During the apartheid period, our country was classified in the GATT, the predecessor of the WTO, as a developed country. This historical injustice meant that during the Uruguay Round, we took commitments required of developed countries. The net effect of this is that our average bound industrial tariffs (the legal maximum allowed) are much lower than

those of other so-called "advanced developed countries". Moreover, those bindings apply to all members of the Southern African Customs Union (SACU), which includes one least developed country (Lesotho), and three Small Vulnerable Economies (Botswana, Namibia and Swaziland), which would otherwise not be required to make formula cuts in the NAMA negotiations.

Our existing low bound rates mean that the application of the Swiss Formula proposals currently on the table would cut deeply into our actual applied industrial tariffs on a scale significantly larger than that of the developed world and indeed of many others in the developing world.

To put the contrast sharply: the US would find itself on current proposals reducing its bound rate of what is acknowledged as "overall trade distorting support" (agricultural production subsidies) from \$22 billion to between \$13 and 15 billion. Yet it has recently actually been spending much less – an applied rate of \$11 billion, which with the current food price rises has been reduced to \$7 billion. This means that the US would come out of the Round on current proposals with "headroom" between its applied and bound rates for agricultural production subsidies.

The application of the current proposed formula and coefficients on industrial tariffs would, however, imply cuts for South Africa and SACU in actually applied (and not just bound) rates of 30% or more on between 16 and 27% of tariff lines. Sensitive sectors (such as clothing and textiles, and industrial policy priority sectors) would not, moreover, be able to be shielded from these cuts by "flexibility" proposals currently on the table.

Faced with the prospect of such an outcome, our delegation has fought hard in the WTO process to secure an understanding that an outcome where a country like South Africa would have to make significant cuts in industrial tariffs in return for only modest benefits in agriculture, cannot be regarded as a developmental outcome. At the Hong Kong Ministerial, we fought long and hard and were partly instrumental in securing the adoption of Paragraph 24 of the Hong Kong declaration, which said that the level of ambition in agriculture and in NAMA must be comparable.

We also launched in the Hong Kong Ministerial in 2005, the NAMA 11, which is a grouping of a number of developing countries vulnerable to ambitious formula cuts. Other members of the group are Argentina, Brazil, India, Indonesia, Namibia, Philippines, Tunisia and Venezuela. Through the NAMA 11, we have been able to build recognition of our case to the point where no one can now fail to acknowledge that South Africa would be required to pay disproportionately ac-

cording to proposals that have been put forward by the majors.

What remains is to ensure in the detailed negotiating processes that may unfold in the near future that (1) there is an equitable balance between the commitments the major subsidisers make in agriculture and developing countries as a whole make in NAMA and (2) that the historical injustice of South Africa taking "developed country" commitments in the Uruguay Round is corrected in the specific obligations imposed on us in this Round.

ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT NEGOTIATIONS

In the Economic Partnership Agreements with the European Union we have had to confront a situation in which in order for ACP [African, Caribbean and Pacific] countries to secure improved access for their products to the European Union market, they have had to make substantial commitments to the European Union in areas where the European Union has manifested strategic ambitions. South Africa, as a non-beneficiary of Cotonou preferences, was in fact under no legal obligation to participate in the EPA negotiations, but took a decision to do so in the interests of harmonising with other members of the region our relationship with a major trading partner. However, in the process we have found a number of the obligations sought by the EU, and accepted under pressure by some of our neighbours, have such serious implications for our economic policy, that we have at this point been unable to initial the interim EPA agreement.

The fundamental issues of contention have not, in fact, been in the area of trade in goods. In the Southern African Development Community (SADC) EPA configuration, by building on the Trade Development and Cooperation Agreement which South Africa signed with the European Union in 1999 and which through the mechanism of the SACU, was extended to Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland, as far as the entry of EU goods was concerned, we reached an agreement in which all other members of SACU obtained duty-free, quota-free access into the European Union market, while South Africa would have obtained some improvements in terms of access for some fruit and fish products.

The problems which we faced had to do mostly with matters of trade rules. The European Union indicated that it was not willing to agree to enhance market access unless there were simultaneously negotiations resulting in agreements on so-called "new generation" (or so-called Singapore issues), such as investment, competition policy and transparency in government procurement. The argument put forward was that rules about such matters were

essential to enhance the attractiveness of ACP regions as investment destinations. The problem which we had with that proposition is, firstly, that we do not as the SADC EPA configuration, consisting of SACU members plus Mozambique and Angola, have in place common rules or common procedures on any of those matters, and indeed the European Union only developed common positions at an advanced stage of its own integration process when it became an economic union.

Secondly, we became aware that these matters have been identified in strategic papers of the European Union as matters which they would want to address as so-called "beyond the border" matters, judged necessary to make market access for European companies across the world real and valuable. The specific demands in each of these areas have accordingly been to insist that regulatory authorities act to defend European interests against preferences for domestic producers, and also to act on their behalf against so-called domestic monopolies. We encountered a series of demands in the interim EPA arrangement which would have allowed the European Union to exert significant influence on our economic governance in a highly partisan and non-developmental manner.

The EPA councils would have emerged as powerful new bodies, potentially trumping either SADC or SACU. Apparently, technical definitions of "parties" would create a situation where if any of us had any complaint against the European Union, we would have to get the concurrence of all of us, whereas the European Union would be able to act against all of us if it had a complaint against any of us. A so-called "More Favoured Nation" clause has also proved to be an important sticky point. This would require of us, that if on a line by line basis, we extend anything better to any other country or group of countries that has more than 1% of world trade, we must then extend the same to the European Union. This would amount

to recognising the European Union as our prime point of reference, and would impede the important ability that we need to be able to diversify our trade and to construct relations with other important developing countries.

All of these issues remain outstanding, and the resolution of these is the basis on which we would be able to become part of the signatory of a full-on EPA. During a meeting of the SADC EPA configuration with the EU in March, we agreed with EU Commissioner Peter Mandelson, that there would be a process to discuss and negotiate these matters further. This process is ongoing and it remains to be seen whether or not it leads to some resolution in the near future. If not, the unfortunate consequence would be that we will have different arrangements with the EU within the Southern African Customs Union, including a situation where Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland as members of the SACU have agreed to enhance access for the European Union on around 500 tariff lines while the fifth member (South Africa) has not. If we are not part of the process then this in itself will create enormous problems both for customs administration in, and the overall coherence of, SACU.

Both in the WTO and in the EPA negotiations enormous challenges are being confronted in attempting to defend and preserve the perspectives on trade and tariff policy mandated at Polokwane. In some cases deeper issues of economic governance and how we position ourselves in the face of a rapidly changing global economy are also at stake. The way these processes unfold will then have major implications for our country for many years to come.

ROB DAVIES is an ANC Member of Parliament and a Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry.

CURRENT AFFAIRS



The myth of coloured marginalisation

Coloured communities can most effectively counter marginalisation by remaining actively involved in the struggle to transform society and deepen democracy, writes Christian Martin.

In recent times, the South African public has been inundated with vigorous debates and views around the issue of the perceived marginalisation of the coloured community in the South African body politic. In many ways, this issue borders on two long-standing debates in the movement and South African society at large. These debates are, first, the national question and, second, the politics of race and colour in South Africa.

Coloured communities have always taken active part in shaping South African society alongside the rest of the fighting masses of our country. They have always been part of the march towards freedom and democracy. The emphasis here is 'active participation'. In debating the issue, while it important to ask hard questions, we must however handle the matter with the sensitivity and honesty it deserves.

LEARNING FROM OUR PAST

Jack and Ray Simons wrote in 1968 in the preface of their book, *Race and Class in South Africa*, "Three centuries of white settlement – phased by colonial wars, expropriations of tribal lands, slavery, forced labour and industrialism – had produced a variety of human types, an integrated multi-racial society and a way of life shared by some members of all racial groups. Colour prejudice was endemic and deeply ingrained among whites; but their policy of racial discrimination, though vicious and degrading, differed in degree rather than in kind from the discrimination practised elsewhere under colonial rule.

"If racism was most bitter and intense in the south, it experienced a measure of compensation in a countervailing radicalism that stretched across the colour line in pursuit of an open-ended, non-

racial social order. Nowhere else in Africa did so many whites, Asians and Coloured participate with Africans in a common struggle against class or colour oppression. A peaceful transition to parliamentary democracy without colour bars seemed plausible to some observers, as the tide of decolonisation began to swell at the end of the war."

In amplifying the point made by Jack and Ray Simons about a common struggle against oppression, I would like to cite some anecdotal evidence on how people of Willowmore in the Eastern Cape felt about their situation, but also about the United Democratic Front (UDF).

Speaking about elections for the tricameral parliament, one resident commented thus: "*Ek het by die stembus gestaan. Ek het die Bybel en die stemmery bymekaar gebring – tussen daar's 'n gaping. Toe bring ek die UDF en die Bybel saam – dis net kontak! Toe gaan ek verby die stembus!*" (As I stood at the ballot box, I brought together the Bible and voting together – there was a gap in between. I then brought the UDF, the Bible and voting together – it was just contact! I then decided to walk past the ballot box.)

Tant Alla had this to say: "*Die UDF is soos 'n nuwe lig. Al is jy oud is, as jy UDF hoor dan wil jy spring!*" (The UDF is like a new light. Even though you are old, you want to jump when you hear UDF.)

Oom George said: "*Ons nou sien dat ons kan saamstaan. Ons is lief vir mekaar, ons staan bymekaar. Ons moet voorentoe gaan, al gaan dit swaar wees, ons moet voorentoe gaan. Al gaan ons almal tronk toe, hulle wat agterbly moet voorentoe gaan. Ons het so ver gekom.*" (We see now that we can stand together. We love each other, we stand together. We must go forward, although it will be difficult, we must go forward. Even if we all go to prison, those that stay behind must go forward. We have come so far.)

This is an indication of how ordinary people felt about being part of the struggle for liberation and how prepared they were to sacrifice for the noble cause. They did not complain about being isolated, but celebrated involvement.

UNDERSTANDING THE COLOURED COMMUNITY

Writing in 1993 Max Ozinsky and Ebrahim Rasool said: "**We as the coloured people** (my own emphasis) and communities have, to some extent, been privileged through certain laws, in particular, the Coloured Labour Preference Act. Since the repeal of this law, but not only because of its repeal, coloured people have been faced with significant unemployment... a spiral of unemployment, poverty, crime and gangsterism exists in many of the coloured areas (especially in the West-

ern Cape). The effects of this poverty are widespread inability to pay rent and basic municipal services, resulting in electricity and phone cuts, as well as evictions. Increasingly, people lack money for food... reliance on social welfare is a major aspect of people's lives."

The features described by Ozinsky and Rasool are the same socio-economic features that define the conditions of the African sections of the working class and the poor. These are the same conditions that made struggle heroes like the former president of the South African Coloured Peoples Congress (SACPC) James La Guma, his son Alex, Basil February, Gerald Hawkes and many more who laid down their lives so that the human race can prosper.

Ozinsky and Rasool further argue that the coloured group is heterogeneous and has always been, but the effects of apartheid legislation forced people into convenient categories and this has led to some kind of identity.

Apartheid has had two contradictory effects on the coloured communities: Firstly, it physically forced together dispersed groups of people through racial classification, while dividing existing communities and redefining them with the Group Areas Act. It restricted access to resources and facilities on a racial basis and divided these coloured people from Africans. Secondly, however, there are differences in the way in which different sectors went through these experiences. The resulting consciousness that emerged from the experience has not been uniform.

This difference in consciousness was and is still resonant within and among the coloured peoples and communities on the one hand, and between African communities and coloured communities on the other hand. This had also cast suspicion on the coloured people who joined the struggle for liberation by those who saw themselves as being 'privileged'. This 'privileged' group often found itself being an intermediary in the racist relationship between whites and the rest of the oppressed. The reality is that apartheid, through its racist laws, marginalised the African majority including the coloured people. However, the coloured people together with African masses refused to be marginalised and took the fight to the racist enemy.

Have the feelings of suspicion and marginalisation disappeared with the advent of the democratic order? No, they have not. Let's take an example of 'affirmative action'. According to Ozinsky and Rasool: "For many businesses affirmative action means employing only African people. This is completely in contradiction with the understanding of Affirmative Action that we have as the ANC-led Alliance. In our view, affirmation action should be non-racial and should apply

to those who have been oppressed and disadvantaged by apartheid. However this application of affirmative action by big business has a negative effect on the consciousness of many coloured people. It reinforces the impression that the end of apartheid [has] materially disadvantaged them." These are the kind of notions that feed into perceptions that coloured people are being systematically marginalised.

ROLE OF COLOURED COMMUNITIES IN THE DEMOCRATIC DISPENSATION

The founding principles of our constitution derive from our noble document developed and adopted by the people of this country in their diversity in 1955, the Freedom Charter. The key strategic issue facing all of us is to not look at those things that have a potential to divide us, but to focus on building solidarity between the African and coloured sections of the working class and the poor so that we can give meaningful expression to the objectives of the Freedom Charter.

In spite of the divisions created by apartheid, there exists an objective basis for this solidarity in the common experiences of oppression and the struggle against it. The task of building non-racialism within and outside the structures of the democratic movement remains a daunting challenge that needs our conscious and continuous emphasis.

To this end therefore, the arguments advanced above indicate that there is no stage in history when we as coloured people have been isolated or marginalised in the activities that shaped the South African society, except by the apartheid captains. If there is anyone or anything that would marginalise us, it would be ourselves through our actions and inaction.

Actions by which coloureds could marginalise ourselves include exercising our voting rights incorrectly. When you vote for someone or a party, you are actually entrusting that person or party with the responsibility to look after your interests. Therefore, when you exercise your vote you must ensure that you vote for a person or party that has the capacity, authority and power to do things that will change your life for the better. Voting incorrectly therefore means to vote for a party that has no capacity, authority and power to implement and effect change.

The other thing that can marginalise us is not to exercise our voting right. This we can do by staying at home and not voting. By not voting you are actually giving away your power to decide. In other words, you are marginalising yourself. We can change all this by first registering to vote in the coming elections and making our voices heard through our votes.

Inaction in this context means not to take active part in structures and organs of people's power that are meant to strengthen our democracy. These structures include, among others, ward committees, schools governing bodies, community policing forums, and hospital boards and clinic committees.

In addition, members of the ANC in these communities should be instrumental in establishing functioning and strong branches of the ANC. This will help in ensuring that people engage themselves in addressing local issues directly affecting communities. This will also help in establishing structured linkages and relationships with other community structures or organs of civil society.

If we are not active in these structures, we must not complain about being marginalised. Our democratic government has created an environment conducive for everybody to participate in building a South Africa that truly belongs to all through progressive legislation and policies. It is then up to everyone, every community irrespective of colour or creed, individually and collectively to take advantage of such an opportunity and contribute in giving effect to our noble constitution and the Freedom Charter.

The biggest enemy facing us as coloured people is 'self marginalisation' through our inactiveness in decision-making structures and not being involved in struggles to resolve people's concerns. The issue is not about coloured people being marginalised but rather that we as coloured people are to a large extent inactive in taking advantage of the opportunities provided by the democratic order. These views are not conclusive but rather work in progress towards demystifying the issues around the coloured populace.

CHRISTIAN MARTIN is Public Works MEC in the Eastern Cape.

Class, ethnicity and the construction of a fragmented Kenya

The current situation in Kenya is a product of the failure of its post-independence leaders to de-tribalise power and democratise society, writes Simon Kimani Ndungu.

"A government that is isolated from the people, because government and wealth are in the hands of an elite that is taking power to itself, will plunge our country into pain and tragedy."

Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, Not Yet Uhuru, 1967

December 30 2007 marked a watershed moment in the history of Kenya and will forever remain etched in the minds not only of Kenyans, but also the whole world, as the day Kenya descended into virtual civil war.

In this article, I use Kenya's post-colonial history to demonstrate that the current conflict is essentially an outcome of two major factors: political elitism and the intersection of class and ethnicity. I look at the role played by Kenya's first two presidents, Jomo Kenyatta and Daniel Arap Moi, in ethnicising the country's politics, the economy and society, and in fostering a post-colonial middle class that has retained power since 1963. I also look at how the current president, Mwai Kibaki, far from making a decisive break with Kenyatta's and Moi's brand of rule, merely embraced and polished what his predecessors had so crudely employed to fragment the Kenyan society.

The December 2007 post-electoral violence was inevitable given that for more than four decades the poor have been conscientised into believing that social, economic and political alienation is primarily a function of ethnicity, and that it is only by having a member of one's own ethnic group as the head of state that a person and his or her community stands a chance of achieving freedom and prosperity.

MAU MAU AND THE STRUGGLE FOR LAND

Kenya's struggle against British colonial rule had primarily been a struggle for land, land from which

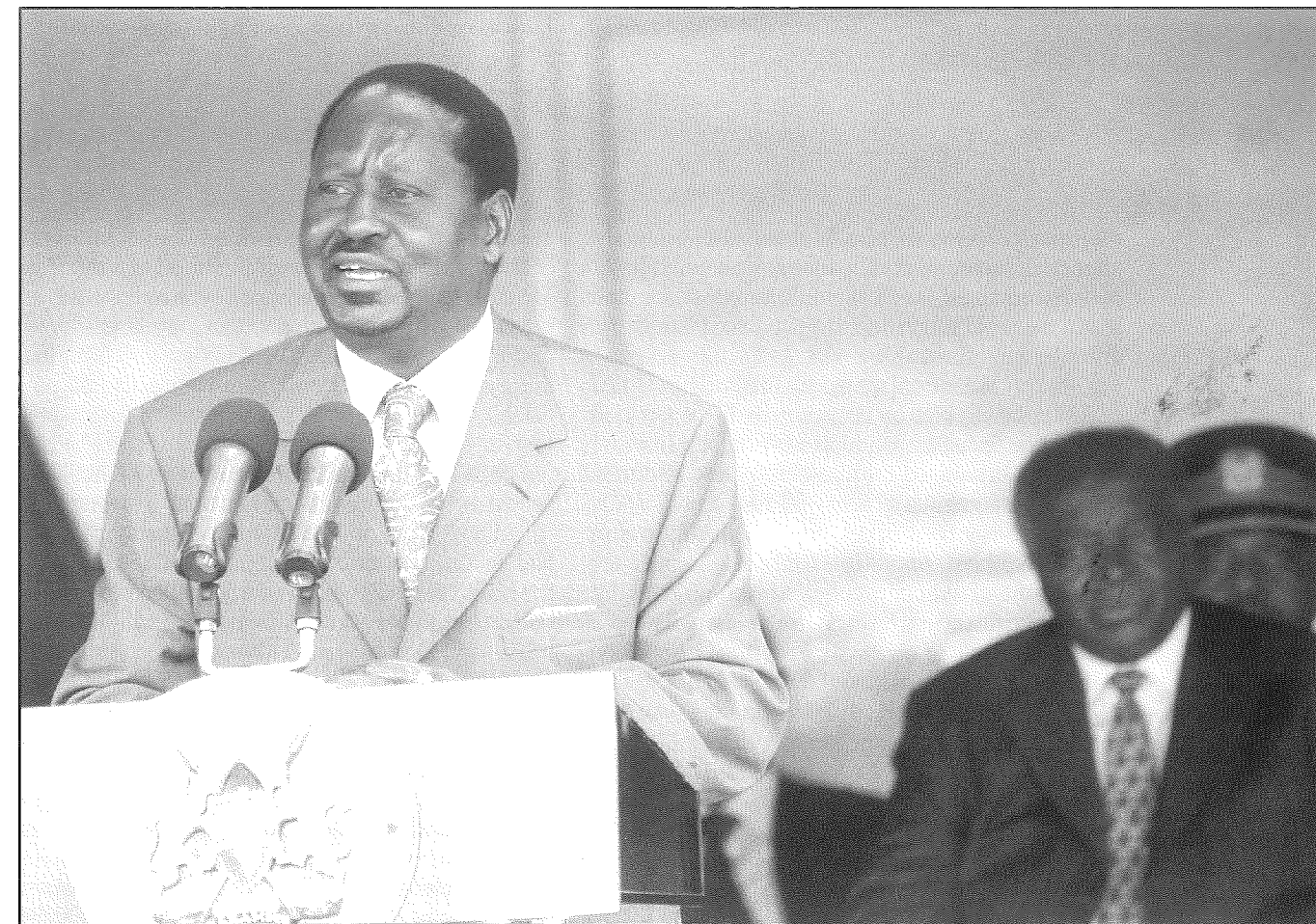
the majority African population had been dispossessed since the early 1900s. As in the case of Zimbabwe and South Africa, Kenya had a large, powerful and assertive white settler class that had established itself in the colony courtesy of free land and easy credit from the British government.

Most of the arable and fertile land in what are now the Central and Rift Valley provinces was made freely available to white farmers. Consequently, the traditional inhabitants of these lands such as the Kikuyu, the Maasai and the Kalenjin found themselves evicted and confined to native reserves, from where successive colonial policies and laws on land and taxation compelled them to become sources of cheap labour for the burgeoning agriculture economy. The Mau Mau uprising in 1952 was a direct response to colonial repression. Alongside political freedom, the principle demand of the Mau Mau was the return of land from white colonial settlers. The term '*Mau Mau*' was a code-word used by fighters in the forest; their real name being the Land and Freedom Army.

While controversy continues on whether the Mau Mau insurrection was the single biggest contributory factor towards the end of British colonial rule in Kenya, there is no doubt that it forced a re-think of British policy about the inevitability of majoritarian rule in the country. The dawning of this reality seems to have brought with it recognition that direct colonial rule was no longer possible, and that the best strategy for Britain was an arrangement that would protect British interests after independence.

POST INDEPENDENCE: CLASS AND ETHNICITY

For the majority African people, the act of independence in 1963 signified not just freedom from racist discrimination, but also a return of their land,



economic prosperity and social upliftment. Four decades later, many people still remain as they had been in 1963, poor and bitter. Most of the big farms transferred immediately after independence with the help of the Land Bank went, ironically, not to the peasants, but to white farmers, many of whom had conveniently adopted Kenyan citizenship, and a new black political elite. Inevitably, this new elite became an economic elite and used its access to state resources to acquire vast tracts of land and properties owned previously by white settlers.

It is not surprising then that by 1967, Oginga Odinga would comment, wryly, how ministers and top civil servants were "competing with one another to buy more farms, acquire more directorships and own bigger cars and grander houses". Ideologically, Kenyatta's government tied its fortunes to the West rather than the East and in 1965, it adopted a neo-liberal macroeconomic policy framework called "*Sessional Paper No 10 on African Socialism and its Application to Planning in Kenya*". Leys (1975) sums up the paper correctly when he says its historic function was "to formulate a 'developmental' ideology adapted to 'comprador' interests".

Sessional Paper No 10 designed a post-colonial economic framework consisting of a private, a public and a cooperatives sector. It also divided Kenya into two distinct areas: high and low potential economic zones. Infrastructure and industries were located in the high potential zones where also agricultural development (with its new core of

emerging black farmers) received strong state support. Low potential areas were largely ignored.

Since colonial spatial planning had ensured that development took place only in the areas occupied by white settlers, it was not unexpected that the high potential areas overlapped neatly with what had formerly been the white highlands in the Rift Valley and Central Provinces, and also the urban areas of Mombasa, Nairobi and Kisumu.

Acquisition of economic power by the new land and property owning class went together with the centralisation of political power by Kenyatta's regime. Few changes were done to the repressive and centralised system of government inherited almost intact from the colonial regime. The same arsenal of provincial commissioners, district commissioners, district officers, chiefs and headmen that had so well served the colonial administration was retained and became one of the most effective weapons of dispensing patronage, as well as silencing dissent.

Political power also meant that Kenyatta, with the advice of a highly influential cabal of rich and powerful Kikuyu conservatives from his home village of Kiambu (dubbed the "*Kiambu Mafia*"), was able to allocate top government and civil service jobs mostly to members of his ethnic group. Critical government positions such as defence, internal security, finance, the police, the army and the central bank were placed in the hands of Kenyatta's close Kikuyu allies.

At the end of Kenyatta's rule in August 1978 the

Kenyan Opposition leader Raila Odinga addresses parliament after being sworn in as Prime Minister.

majority of Kenyan people were economically alienated, poor and disillusioned. Vast numbers of people remained landless while urbanisation had led to the rapid migration of young people into the cities looking for employment. In the cities, young job seekers were confronted by the harsh realities of joblessness given an economy that still retained its narrow focus of production for a small white and black urbanised middle-class. Leys captures the reality facing many Kenyans in the mid-1970s when he says their lives were "[a] continuing prospect of hard, unproductive labour mainly for the benefit of others, accompanied by growing inequality, insecurity, social inferiority and the virtually complete absence of political rights".

It was this fragmented and repressed society that Moi inherited upon Kenyatta's death in August 1978.

MOI AND THE NEW MANDARINS

When Moi assumed the mantle of leadership in 1978 he was acutely aware that he was not in control of the state since political and economic power lay in the hands of the late Kenyatta loyalists. Moi thereby set to assert himself by eliminating the power of the Kikuyu civil and entrepreneurial class through dismissals, demotions or transfers of senior Kikuyu civil servants from the public service, the unscheduled recall of their commercial loans, and denial of state tenders and trading licences.

In addition, Moi considerably strengthened the executive vis-à-vis the judiciary and parliament, and began to play an influential role in economic policy planning. As Ikiara *et al* observe, Moi soon became "[t]he main actor both in the making and execution of policy. By and large, major policy pronouncements of the government were directly or indirectly influenced by the president." (quoting Orwa, 1994)

A few years after Moi's climb to power, the civil service had been transformed into an enclave of ethnic patronage with large numbers of Moi's minority Kalenjin ethnic group occupying key government positions. Well-connected individuals – both Kalenjin and non-Kalenjin – continued to acquire land, properties and business interests, while nepotism and corruption thrived. And like Kenyatta, Moi surrounded himself with a coterie of Kalenjin political and economic power brokers who would soon be named the "Kabarak Mafia" (after Moi's home village).

While Kenyatta's regime had been characterised by "intolerance and ethnic chauvinism in political, cultural and intellectual life", as Shihanya rightly comments, Moi's regime became synonymous with political repression, corruption and economic ruin. What would change Moi's political fortunes how-

ever was not internal opposition but rather the end of the Cold War. In place of the blind support that Moi had so generously enjoyed even as his government tortured political detainees and murdered opponents, his Western backers now demanded democracy (albeit liberal), human rights and political accountability. In place of the endless loans that his regime continued to acquire even as he ran the country into the ground, they now demanded prudent economic management and fiscal austerity. In a word, Moi, like Mobutu of the then Zaire, had become yesterday's big man, and the clamour for political change in the early 1990s left him no option but to accede to demands for political pluralism.

Conceding to multi-partyism was one thing but allowing genuine political reforms was quite another. Widespread vote rigging, electoral violence, politically instigated ethnic clashes and a divided opposition ensured Moi's victory in the 1992 and 1997 general elections. However, 2002 proved to be a turning point for Moi and the Kenya African National Union (KANU) when they lost the elections to the newly-formed National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) led by Mwai Kibaki.

POLITICS OF CONVENIENCE

NARC was a loose coalition of divergent elite interests whose shared thread was a common hatred of Moi. A power-sharing deal was brokered on the eve of the 2002 elections in which the ethnic groups with the most grievances would see their leaders occupying important seats in the new government. Thus after NARC's electoral victory, Kibaki, a Kikuyu, became president while Wamalwa Kijana, a Luhya, became the vice-president. Raila Odinga, a Luo, became the minister of roads and public works and Charity Ngilu, a Kamba, the minister of health.

The new ruling party made much capital about its commitment to eliminate corruption, respect civil and political rights and kick-start economic growth. Notably, NARC's economic policy deviated little from the framework that Kenyatta had used for 15 years and subsequently Moi had inherited and presided over for 24 years. Within six months, it had become clear that the new government had no political will to tackle corruption or indeed create equal opportunities for everyone and reduce unemployment.

Two years after claiming victory, Kibaki and Raila fell out with each other and corruption, nepotism and cronyism in the state machinery became a serious bone of contention among local and international observers. In such a climate there was little prospect that a new constitution agreed to by NARC's leaders prior to the 2002 elections would be accepted. Kibaki's call at the end of 2005

for a national referendum to adopt the constitution turned out to be a humiliating defeat for him and the NARC faction that he controlled. He then dismissed Raila and his supporters from government. Worryingly for what was to come two years later, Kibaki's defeat in the referendum was quietly presented by his political opponents as a defeat of the Kikuyu as a whole, as the death-knell of what had been construed as many years of Kikuyu domination in politics, the economy and society.

CONCLUSION

Since independence, class and ethnicity have intersected powerfully in Kenya leaving practically all ethnic groups convinced that control of political power at the presidential level means access to wealth and influence for the tribe. In *Citizen and Subject*, Mahmood Mamdani presents a powerful analysis of the limits to democratisation in post-colonial African society. After carefully assessing the failure by African governments to democratise civil society and detribalise rural power, Mamdani says in the African context, elections are not just about representation, they are also about class and ethnic interests. Electoral politics are: "About more than just who represents citizens in civil society, because victors in that contest would also have a right to rule over subjects through Native Authorities, for the winner would appoint chiefs, the Native Authority, everywhere. More than the rule of law, the issue in a civil society-centred contest comes to be who will be master of all tribes."

The failure to 'democratise and detribalise power' by mainstream nationalists, as in the case of Kenya since independence, has resulted in politics being about which ethnic group is in control of the state and therefore national resources, and which one is not. Mamdani comments that a Kenyan political scientist once remarked to him as follows: "The ethnicity of the president is the surest clue to the ethnic tinge of the government of the day." It should not be surprising that the masses of poor people, long alienated from mainstream political, social and economic participation, and long educated by a political and economic elite that their alienation is primarily a function of their ethnicity, see the capture of state power by one of their own as the only guaranteed way of achieving liberation.

Kenyatta's policy of elevating a small band of Kikuyu tribesmen and women into political and economic power tainted the entire Kikuyu ethnic group with the brush of nepotism, corruption and political and economic patronage. Moi's rule was

geared primarily at elevating a narrow group of Kalenjin tribesmen into positions of political and economic influence to cut down what he saw as Kikuyu domination. The rise of NARC in late 2002 had seemed to many like a revolutionary unity of class interests, but the reality was that it was essentially an amalgamation of upper and middle class interests for the sole objective of removing Moi from power.

One should not be surprised therefore that as soon as this goal was achieved, Kibaki hurriedly took refuge in the arms of his close ethnic allies, while the tapestry of tribal praxis long-shaped by many years of implementation still characterise the state and society. The leadership of Raila Odinga's Orange Democratic Movement may seem like a revolutionary unity of disenchanted ethnic groups but is in fact a mixture of many former Moi loyalists and known tribal warlords. Stripped of its pretence, it stands bare as a crude blend of political and economic power brokers who at one time or the other served Kenyatta, Moi or Kibaki. The rural and urban poor have remained as they have been since independence; poor and economically alienated.

Inevitably, the question that remains to be answered is what is the alternative?

SIMON KIMANI NDUNGU is a member of the ANC Sonia Bunting Branch in Johannesburg. He was born and brought up in Kenya before moving to South Africa in 1998.

REFERENCES

1. Ikiara, G *et al* (2001). Kenya: Formulation and implementation of strategic trade and industrial policies. Available at www.idrc.ca/en/ev-71256-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html. Accessed on 7 February 2008.
2. Leys, L. (1975). Underdevelopment in Kenya. London: Heinemann.
3. Mamdani, M. (1996). *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the legacy of late colonialism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
4. Odinga, O. (1967). *Net yet Uhuru*. Nairobi: Heinemann.
5. Shihanya, B. (2003, November 16). How to curtail a brain drain in Kenyan universities. Sunday Times. Available at www.nationaudio.com/News/DailyNation/16112003/News/News%20Feature.html. Accessed on 8 February 2008.



Political party internationals as guardians of democracy

Party Internationals – groupings of like-minded political parties – should set themselves the goal of becoming the prime guardians of worldwide democratisation, writes Roger Hällhag.

The gains of the world wave of democratisation in the 1990s are yet to be consolidated. Some democracies are not being seen to deliver according to voters' expectations. Anti-democratic ideas and autocrats have made a comeback in some countries. The meaning and means of democracy promotion have become controversial. Even so, the tremendous gains in political freedom across the world over the past two decades are real. The proliferation of freely formed political parties is a key feature. Now political parties need to make the effort – and be given the chance and time – to build effective, lasting democratic governance.

It is in the nature of any political party to reassert the particularity of its mission, character, and leadership ambitions. But leaving aside the details of daily politicking, political parties across the world show remarkable similarities. They follow comparable logics and share sources of inspiration

in terms of identity, organisation, policies, and communication techniques. Successful parties have always been role models. The Party Internationals are channels for such broad convergence. Instant and universal access to political news adds force to this. With economic and cultural globalisation a common stage has been created (some say, imposed) for politics and policies – although this also brings with it the threat of nationalism and “anti-globalisation”.

The five existing party-based world organisations represent this global landscape of convergence into political families. At the same time, there are many political forces in the new multifaceted world that do not fit in. Moreover, the meaning of party names can vary considerably.

The mainstream parties of the right and the centre-right are divided between the International Democrat Union (IDU) and the Centrist Democrat

◀ *Sitting of the Africa Committee of the Socialist International in June 2008.*

International (CDI). IDU is a “working association of over 80 Conservative, Christian Democrat and like-minded parties” founded in 1983.

Only 32 of these are full member parties; 20 are European, five Latin American, and three Asian, with the major parties of the Right in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States completing the picture; 16 parties are observers or associates (five European, six Caribbean and Latin American, four African and DP/Mongolia), making a total of 48 members. Another 48 political parties are more loosely associated with the Conservative Democrat family through inclusion in Regional Unions: 20 are European, 10 Latin American, six Caribbean, 10 African, and there are two more from Fiji and Nepal.¹

Unlike in other Internationals, Asia-Pacific has a leading role, with Australia's long-serving – now former – Prime Minister and Liberal Party leader John Howard as President, and Kuomintang (Republic of China),² GNP (South Korea), and UNP (Sri Lanka) providing Vice Chairmen. Others posts are held by the key parties in Norway (host to the secretariat), Germany (both CDU and CSU), Spain, Czech Republic, Colombia, and Canada, as well as by leaders in developing regions – Renamo (Mozambique), PU (Guatemala).

IDU is thus a fairly coherent grouping around the strong centre-right parties in the West. Association with ruling or leading opposition parties in developing regions is largely missing or in some cases – DP and FDC in Uganda and Jamaica Labour Party – vague.

Formed in 1961, the Centrist Democrat International (CDI) dropped “Christian Democratic” from its name in 2001 to broaden its appeal. Its principal acquisition in terms of non-Christian parties is Istiqlal, the largest and oldest party in Morocco.

CDI has a wide membership, including numerous small parties, with 86 full members and 13 observers: 51 members are European, 30 are Latin American or Caribbean, 13 African, and the rest come from Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines, South Korea, and Lebanon. CDI is presided over by Pier Ferdinando Casini of UDC (Italy), with former Mexican President Vicente Fox of PAN as Co-President. Casini is also President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and a former Parliamentary Speaker.

In contrast with the two Co-Presidents, the European Vice Presidents are also members of IDU – with the exception of PSD (Portugal) and SDK (Slovakia). They represent FIDESZ (Hungary), CDU (Germany) (CSU is not in CDI), PP (Spain), and HDZ (Croatia). Other leaders with overlapping allegiances are PC (Colombia) and Renamo (Mozambique). Member parties found only in CDI are D25 (ex-PFL) and PSDB (both Brazilian), PDC (Chile), and Christian Democrats from the Benelux countries and Scandinavia. Two rather particular

Table 1: Membership of Political Party Internationals

Type of membership	IDU	CDI	Liberal	Socialist	Green
Full members	32	86	57	102	75
Observer/associate/consultative members	16	13	20	44	6
Total	48	99	77	146	81
Other indirectly associated parties	48	-	7	-	-
<i>Member parties per region</i>					
Europe	25	51	44	59	41
The Americas	13	30	10	36	11
Africa	4	13	17	31	15
Asia and the Pacific	6	5	6	20	14
North Africa and the Middle East	-	3	5	13	1

ruling member parties are the Peronist PJ (Argentina) and PDP (Nigeria). In Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg Christian Democrats dominate the centre-right and IDU has no member parties.

CDI has its secretariat in Brussels together with the European People's Party (EPP), and the EPP President is an ex officio CDI Vice President. EPP constitutes the largest group in the European Parliament and includes almost all mainstream right-of-centre parties in the European Union (EU). But IDU conservatives still maintain their own European Democrat Union.

These complex relations on the Right reflect a protracted tension between seeking political strength in unity (at national or international level) and real political differences. Christian Democratic traditions of communitarian or social conservatism do not blend easily with the right-liberal economic and social policies of many parties dominating the modern Right.

Liberal membership is delineated more clearly. Since 1947 the Liberal International (LI) has gathered parties standing for classical political, economic, and cultural liberalism around the political centre. Only a few, such as LP (Canada), Venstre (Denmark), and Framsókn (Iceland), have become big players in their countries. Others, such as FDP (Germany), Lib-Dems (UK), and some Belgian and Dutch parties, have had to negotiate in order to attain power.

There exists a professed internal tension between a “Right” (Venstre,³ VVD (Netherlands, Germany, Sweden, most of Central Europe) and a social liberal “Left” (Canada, UK, Belgium). In Denmark and the Netherlands this debate has long been expressed in terms of competing liberal parties, all LI members. Traditional liberal identity and the debates about it have been diluted by the admission of parties from developing regions, as well as

Nordic rural-based Centre parties.⁴ The former often identify themselves as forefront democrats rather than classical liberals. LI has 57 parties as full members and 20 as observers, the great majority being small parties: 44 from Europe, 10 from Latin America and Canada, 17 from Africa, and six from Asia and Israel. The cooperating organisations in Africa and Asia include four and three additional parties respectively.

The President is Lord John Alderdice, Northern Ireland peace negotiator and former Speaker of the Assembly from the Alliance Party. The secretariat is located in the historic building of the National Liberal Club in London. The leadership further consists of VVD, FDP, LibDems, PLA (Andorra), LI (Catalonia), Yabloko (Russia), MP (Morocco) and DPP (Taiwan).

Though not numerous, parties from new democracies have added a new dimension. Various Asian democrats and African RDR (Cote d'Ivoire), UDF (Malawi), PDS (Senegal), SNP (Seychelles), DA (South Africa), and CUF (Tanzania/Zanzibar) are prominent among these forces.

The Socialist International (SI), dating back to 1864, reflects the internationalist ideas of the socialist labour movement since its beginnings. With a history of splits with the Far Left and shutdown during the World Wars, today's SI was established in 1951. A concerted effort to reach beyond Western Europe came during the presidency of former German Federal Chancellor Willy Brandt from 1976 to 1992. It gained further momentum during the waves of democratisation in Latin America and then after the end of the Cold War in 1989.

SI today has 102 full member parties and 44 consultative or observer members. More than half are either in government ("close to 60") or leading the opposition; 59 parties come from Europe, 36 from the Americas, 31 from Africa, and 20 from Asia-Pacific. SI consists of classical social democratic, socialist, and labour parties and has lately welcomed national liberation and democracy movements, as well as some reformed successors to communist or post-colonial parties running one-party states.

SI therefore spans all shades of the Centre-Left that aspire to govern. The diverse range – from the UK's New Labour to the Sandinista Front, from SWAPO of Namibia to the German SPD, from Israel's Labour Party and Iraq's ruling PUK to the Philippines' Akbayan and other struggling democracy activists – reflects the fact that many have been attracted and invited in times of progressive aspirations and hope, both domestically and abroad. Hardly any have subsequently left, even if some are diverging from the social democratic mainstream. All Internationals are clubs that are "hard to enter, even harder to leave". This is most evident in SI as the most numerous and global, and the broadest family.

The SI President is George Papandreou, former

Prime Minister of Greece and leader of PASOK. There are 15 Vice Presidents from Europe, five each from Latin America and Africa, and one each from Israel and Asia-Pacific (shared by Japan and New Zealand). The secretariat is in London. The wide membership is therefore held together by a common denominator established by their strong and mostly old sister parties in Europe.

The new kids on the block are the Global Greens (GG). Usually seen as a distinct alternative on the Centre-Left and claiming to bring a new dimension to politics, this family of parties is probably the most like-minded in terms of identity and political priorities. But in line with a strong antihierarchical culture, the Green parties were able to come together only in 2001. They have a 12-member steering committee – three from each continent and supposedly operating by consensus, even for website postings – coupled with a Global Green Network representing Federations or Networks in each region. There are 75 member parties, with an additional six parties in Europe as observers: 41 from Europe, 11 from the Americas, 15 from Africa, and 14 from Asia-Pacific. All Green parties are relatively small, though this does not exclude influence: five have government ministers, in the Czech Republic, Finland, Ireland, Italy and Latvia.

The fact that right-wing nationalists and others advocating cultural exclusivity do not cooperate easily or openly might be inherent in their nature. It is more surprising that communists and others on the radical Left cannot do so either, despite often claiming to be internationalists. The Communist International (Comintern) was finally dissolved by Stalin in 1943, allegedly for security reasons in time of war.

Parties and movements to the left of mainstream socialists have formed a variety of alliances, but none long-lasting enough to give them a global platform. The Radical Left is permanently handicapped by an inability to distance itself from certain dictatorships and armed violence, both in the past and in the present. Cuba is a notorious example: the regime basks in the romantic light of its "brave resistance" to US dominance and enjoys wide sympathy, particularly in Latin America. Still, parties of the Left who suggest that Cuban policies might be applied in their own country usually find themselves marginalised in public opinion. In many countries the Far Left have resorted to their own versions of nationalism.

WHERE THEY ARE AND WHERE THEY ARE NOT

Worldwide, 437 political parties are members of Party Internationals, 13 with double membership of IDU and CDI, and one – the Democratic Party of Serbia – of IDU and SI. An additional 55 parties are linked through the regional branches of IDU (48) and LI (7). In spite of this impressive total, reach differs greatly among world regions.

Europe is the home ground. All party-based world organisations originated in Western Europe, where their ideologies were first defined. After the crumbling of the communist states, the "normal" Western European political landscape has quickly been replicated in most of Central Europe. But going further east and to countries with poorer prospects of EU accession the party setup becomes less "European." Still, almost all important (and some less so) parties in Europe are among the 209 members of the Internationals.

The party federations related to groups in the European Parliament (EP) are important in this process. These pan-European parties, at least by name, bring together national parties in "their" EP Group, which largely follow the membership of a related Party International. Some parties join a group for institutional reasons, but then make other political alliances. European Parties are relatively well-endowed, getting part of their money from the EU. Party Internationals have no access to direct public funding and rely on their European members for money.

European Parties are therefore partly partners and partly competitors for attention and resources from member parties and their leaders. Relations vary, from close in the case of CDI and EPP, to merely formal between SI and the Party of European Socialists (PES). European Parties are a new, daring experiment in the shaping of transnational democratic structures. Their impact on the politics of the EU and its popular standing is yet to be seen. The testing ground will be the five-yearly EP elections, next time in 2009.

The party pattern of Western Europe also extends to most of Latin America, the Caribbean, and Canada. There are 95 members of Party Internationals, and older parties are particularly likely to share these ideological identities: 12 are in IDU and 30 in CDI, with two having joined both. LI and GG have 10 members each and SI brings in 35 parties. Quite a few established parties on the Right and Centre-Right have not found a home in a Party International. The same is true for most of the new radical Left, including all political groups based on indigenous movements. (New groups across the political spectrum often reject the name "party" as the notion has come into disrepute.) Most conspicuously absent among major parties are Brazil's ruling PT and the old, large PMDB.

In 1990, PT, itself new, initiated the Sao Paulo Forum (FSP), gathering a broad church of the Left (mostly to the left of SI), with both moderate and radical socialists, as well as communist parties and revolutionary groups. Recently, the Forum has found inspiration in the wave of election victories for the Left in the region, though admittedly these governments have different characters and policies. FSP's leading forces are PT and Venezuela's ruling MVR, together with opposition leaders FMLN (El Salvador) and PRD (Mexico), an SI member. In

line with its open approach, PT hosted the most recent SI congress in 2003, without joining it. Enjoying a surge in democracy and electoral support, the Latin American Left has tended to put national politics before alignment, as was the tendency among European socialist governments when dominating the EU in the late 1990s.

Another important innovation originating from the Brazilian Left is the World Social Forum, first held in Porto Alegre in 2001. This "movement of movements" has been a source of inspiration around the globe, but keeps its distance from parties and thus electoral politics. Now it is struggling to establish its sustainability while remaining fresh, free and newsworthy.

The political parties in the United States have always been both a reference for others and exceptions. Their character of galaxies of candidates rather than cohesive parties is not much copied, but their policy debates and campaign innovations are followed the world over. The Republican National Committee is a member of IDU, though it has not occupied a leading office. Contact is facilitated by the International Republican Institute.

The Democratic Party is an even broader church and even less committed. It maintains observer relations with CDI, LI, and SI through its National Democratic Institute, while also having other forums for exchange with like-minded politicians. SI and the Global Greens have small member groups in the US.

In Africa, affiliation with Internationals is even sparser. IDU has four associated members, with Ghana's ruling NPP and Renamo (Mozambique) – also in CDI – in the lead, while CDI and LI have adopted a more inclusive strategy, with 13 and 17 members respectively. GG gathers 15 parties. Even with SI including 31 parties, several of them leading in their country and on the continent, the combined total of 79 affiliates leaves the great majority of African political parties outside any international family. Nor are there substituting African party networks, apart from traditional links between some liberation movements. For ruling parties, government relations have taken precedence at the expense of party links.

African multiparty democracy is still young. As party systems consolidate it would be natural to forge more active party relations on the continent and beyond. But African parties are poor, unless benefiting from state resources – legitimately or not – and communications are more expensive and time-consuming than elsewhere. Africa's leaders and the wider international community have endorsed, promoted, and even prescribed multiparty democracy without securing resources for its functioning. Foreign assistance gives priority to holding elections and largely neglects political parties' capacity to perform their duties.

African political parties are queuing up for recognition, exchange, and resources from Party In-

ternationals, that can offer open doors, an identity, and occasional meetings, which can be crucial at a formative stage. But engagement of the kind seen in Central Europe has not come about. This probably explains why political dialogue between Africa and the West shows signs of strain, not least over human rights and governance. Expectations of deeper commitment on both sides have been disappointed.

In Africa and elsewhere many question the relevance of ideologies and political identities originally shaped in Europe. Open networks for political dialogue and issue-based alliances between parties and other political forces might be more relevant for the foreseeable future. If political parties are growing much freer in sub-Saharan Africa, this is not the case in North Africa and the Middle East. Even where opposition parties exist, they are often repressed or so much under state control that they are unable to challenge the status quo. Party Internationals have responded in different ways. IDU stays away altogether. LI has admitted five opposition groups, three of them in Morocco where there also is a Green party. CDI has three members, including Istiqlal, heading Morocco's government under the King.⁵

In contrast, SI has 13 members, including Morocco, Israel, Palestine, Iraq, and Yemen. This engagement strategy has been instrumental in promoting a stumbling peace process between Israel and its neighbours, as well as Kurdish rights, such as autonomy in northern Iraq. A price has been paid, however, in terms of granting recognition to parties not upholding democratic principles. The ruling parties in Egypt and Tunisia are cases in point, admitted in June 1989 after showing signs of reform. Even if they have felt unwanted at times, the usual standards have not been applied. Attempts at outreach of this kind have been characterised by sharp dilemmas, seeking to avoid jeopardising support for peace processes and also failing in terms of equal application to the Israeli member party responsible for 40 years of occupation. Nor is the Palestinian member party Fatah an example of democratic conduct. In this region, engagement has often meant setting human rights and democracy aside for the sake of peace, all too often with little result.

Non-engagement is not a solution. But instead of choosing sides in genuine conflicts, foreigners need to put international law and universal human rights first. Persistent, frank political dialogue with and beyond ruling circles deter people from trying to hide real dilemmas under the carpet. By respecting all genuine interests in a fair manner, one can both invest in building trust in real peace talks and keep high the political price of violence, disrespecting the rule of law, or hindering the growth of inclusive democracy.

Asia-Pacific is perhaps the most decisive battle-

ground for democracy, being home to half of humankind and an engine of world economic growth. Party Internationals have a weak presence, however, with only five. Numbers of affiliates in North Africa are also included in totals for Africa and others in the Middle East are included in totals for Asia-Pacific.

Fifty-one affiliates: six with IDU, five CDI, six LI, 20 SI, and 14 Greens. Only a few are strong nationally, with a certain edge for IDU (see above). In Asia, SI parties are big only in Mongolia, Nepal, and Pakistan, all troubled countries in one way or another. SI parties now also govern in both Australia and New Zealand. A nominally liberal party rules in (exceptional) Taiwan.

A first reason for this relative weakness is that multiparty democracy has not yet won out in Asia. Unlike in other continents, dictators and authoritarian regimes are not under much pressure from neighbours, regional bodies, or even the world community to conform to democratic norms and allow political freedom. Impressive economic progress and trading power have done much to fend off such demands. The rise of China and other Asian Tigers devoid of political freedom is challenging the idea of democracy and its utility for rapid development. India, surging forward at last, not least in global knowledge-based industries, can give democrats new inspiration, however. Freedom of thought should yet again prove best at securing economic success in the long run.

A second reason for low affiliation is that few Asian parties identify with the Western Right-Left spectrum. Some affiliations are better explained by tactical and personal coincidences than ideological commitment. Just as African national liberation movements have joined the socialist family because of early support for their cause, Asian democrats now tend to bond with the liberal family thanks to principled stands and the work of its dynamic Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats (CALD).

Party Internationals that want to stay relevant at global level therefore face a double challenge: (i) they will acquire recognition if they advocate and apply distinctive, universal values and principles; but (ii) they must be flexible enough to be relevant for national political parties with very different identities, perceptions, and structures.

Still, history should be on the side of those Internationals – existing or yet to be formed – that take on these challenges. Political parties everywhere are under increasing pressure to provide answers to globalisation, seizing its opportunities and softening its sharp edges.

Ideological convergence is not certain. Internationally, ideologies are often more sharply distinguished than is usual nationally and within the framework of electoral realities. The classic Right-Left divide in relation to political and economic power, social protection, and economic incentives

for capital and labour remains in a world in which inequality in terms of income and wealth persists, even if economic growth is bringing more people than ever out of absolute poverty.

The diverging views on global warming exemplify a more recent ecological dimension. IDU leaders have rejected and undermined the Kyoto agreement on controlling CO₂ emissions, while leading SI members secured its adoption and implementation. This battle of political will and vision will probably continue.

WHAT THEY COULD AND SHOULD DO

Party Internationals find themselves in a new world in which there are many political opportunities, while resources for international party collaboration remain very limited. By proving their value Internationals could start to expand their activities, first on the basis of member parties pulling their weight. Public and private actors could then see that Internationals can offer effective and cost-efficient channels for bringing new qualities to democratisation and international politics.

Party Internationals should set themselves the goal of becoming the prime guardians of worldwide democratisation. Being multilateral, they have more legitimacy than national actors whose interests are always questionable.

So far, attempts to build international coalitions or communities of democrats have been based on governments or non-party NGOs. Partisan and electoral as they are, only political parties can give life to political choices and connect the concerns of voters, interest groups, and issue based non-governmental organisations to a credible programme for governing.

Despite a number of setbacks, democrats still have the upper hand in world politics. Non-democrats may find excuses for "maintaining stability", but have no inspiring alternative. Not even the Chinese model is exportable; the contradictions of communist-run capitalism are too great. That China – and increasingly Russia – protect some dictators for business and geopolitical reasons is not the main argument because some western powers do that too.

The five Party Internationals would all emerge stronger if they acted together to consolidate and expand multiparty democracy. Their different views about the ambitions, role, and practices of democratic politics would add value and novelty, reinforcing the fact that democracy is best promoted by offering more than one model.

The Internationals should launch a common platform to strengthen and clarify today's universal instruments for political and other human rights, and other relevant declarations and democracy charters issued by the United Nations and regional organisations. Particular attention to the role and responsibilities of political parties as in-

dispensable democratic institutions would be natural and urgent. Broadly agreed standards could serve to restore the reputation of parties, democratic politics, and public service. This certainly does not mean that all parties have to be shaped in the same mould.

Campaign conduct, electoral administration and dispute resolution, political funding, internal democracy and accountability, inclusiveness in relation to youth, women, and minorities, and the rights and responsibilities of party members and political allies are topics to consider, as well as issues that are not directly party-related but important for the functioning of democracy. Internationals could agree to disagree on certain matters. General norms at world level can be translated into specific standards at national level. This can be more effective than party regulations, often superficially imposed.

Each International has to maintain responsibility for its internal codes of democratic conduct. Clearly written rules, membership criteria, control mechanisms, and corrective procedures facilitate direct messages when in dialogue with existing and potential members. Ideally, party members should be encouraged to take preventive action before a party leadership goes astray. The relative cohesion of IDU is a result of high entry hurdles, as well as the instructive example of terminating relations with a party in Guatemala that supported a military coup. In 2005, LI bravely excluded its ruling member party in Nicaragua due to blatant corruption and political deals to obstruct justice. SI has installed an ethics committee to deal with questions about members and applicants.

The value of sister parties being able to trust each other is likely to grow in the future. News about misconduct travels fast and an injury to one is an injury to all. Not keeping order in the family will be politically dangerous.

Particularly with modern communication methods, the holding of meetings will not be enough. When getting together parties must make real policies and politics: talking shops replicating the most boring aspects of diplomacy are a waste of time and money. It is necessary to break with the idea that party representatives know it all, and need only a grand setting for statesmanlike "foreign affairs" statements.

The reality is that few listen to traditional international conference speeches, either in the hall itself or elsewhere. Today, exchanges between parties should be based on the insight that there is no such thing as "foreign affairs", nor are any policies purely domestic. In all fields, policies need to relate to and manage interdependence between societies. With this modern reality, learning early lessons from others is more important than praise for past achievements, soon to be obsolete.

New meeting formats and policy dialogue will

benefit from linking up with think tanks, academia, interest groups, artists, civil society organisations, and the media, all of which will take new shapes. Political action groups will tend to be more targeted and specialised, based on individual initiatives in cyberspace, cutting across traditional structures, group thinking, and national borders.

Politics will sometimes still be a matter of negotiations between elected representatives, but such exclusive arenas will tend to be the exception. Successful political parties will instead use the freedom of new technologies and meeting places to create many unexpected, newsworthy meetings of minds. The policy process will be integrated with the task of communicating with ever better informed citizens, winning their confidence and votes. Parties pioneering this progress might stand to gain.

With patience for conventional meetings vanishing, participants will require a defined purpose: are we here to recognise and analyse a problem, identify and choose policy options, decide tactics for negotiation and implementation, or to review results critically? Information technology helps in the making of preparations and follow-up, but can never substitute for bringing people together.

LI has made considerable progress in creating new working methods at its general congresses, held every 18 months. Plenary sessions are largely kept for decision-making and summaries by the LI President. National leaders and delegates have to contribute in working groups and panels on predefined topics, at which wide-ranging presentations make little sense.

A congress is a "trade fair" connecting ideas rather than a series of disconnected speeches. Given the appropriate format, party delegates are in a position to offer something to sister parties rather than just asking what the International can do for them.

One way of focusing a Party International's agenda effectively is to provide party caucuses in inter-governmental and inter-parliamentary forums at global and regional level. SI has attempted this at UN meetings, at least to some extent. Progressive Governance is a gathering of like minded social democratic and liberal governments. European parties, too, are meeting in advance of EU summits and some ministerial meetings. Elected representatives are often caught up in all too predictable diplomacy. Successful politicians make change possible and alternative input and alliances provide opportunities. Also, opposition parties can find a role.⁶

The next task is to understand and shape the trans-nationalisation of society. There are people's movements for old and new causes and ideals, represented by a growing galaxy of social movements, pressure groups, and philanthropic organi-

sations, often taking up a single issue. Some reject organising along traditional political lines. Parties and Party Internationals must engage with this chaotic reality to stay relevant and respected.

If party representatives broadened their range of contacts it would help to counter the trend against party politics. Reactions to the failures of party politics are understandable, yet represent a withdrawal from democracy. And whatever distance NGOs might take from political parties, they are unlikely to refuse an offer enabling them to exert influence. A broader range of invitations to talk about critical issues could lead to new, refreshing political alliances of a more strategic kind.

Party Internationals are generally not mentioned in reports by the World Economic Forum or the World Social Forum. But surely they should be at the forefront. Party Internationals should be first in line to provide for global democratic dialogue. Socialists have made some attempt at this with their Global Progressive Forum. Furthermore, prominent insiders could do more to invite and give a voice to outsiders. That would achieve more than many closed commissions.

Party Internationals have untapped potential in terms of developing the technical capacity of member parties. The crucial role of political parties is increasingly being recognised in international efforts to assist democratic development. More donor agencies and democracy-promoting institutes are taking note and increasing their party-aid budgets.⁷

Traditional party-related assistance is offered bilaterally. Early assistance for democracy was pioneered by German political foundations.

Now they are being joined by institutes from most – but not all – important development donor countries. Together they greatly facilitate the development of democratic politics, but Party Internationals have not yet been invited to play a direct role.

A notable exception is the close cooperation of LI and CALD with the Friedrich Naumann Foundation (FNS). There is also some coordination of efforts in developing regions. The Africa Liberal Network is supported by the Westminster Foundation for Democracy through the British Liberal Democrats, and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS) is doing some groundwork with CDI. Spanish and Swedish conservatives are active in Latin America. On the Left, efforts in Central and Eastern Europe have been coordinated by the European Forum for Democracy and Solidarity. In contrast, trade union internationals are directing support to and advising members. Party aid donors and providers are spending too much time on a rather superficial debate about the relative merits of sister-party or cross-party approaches. This complex and under-resourced field would be better

served by a variety of approaches: bilateral and multilateral, system-wide and responding to the needs of individual parties.

Party Internationals and regional party networks could assume responsibility for identifying needs and targets for aid. That would build recipient ownership of aid programmes, transfer knowledge within and between developing regions, and make the peer review of results possible. Bilateral and multilateral donors should invite Party Internationals, perhaps within a framework of donor coordination. Democracy initiatives on the part of Internationals should be eligible for funding by the UN Democracy Fund.

AN URGENT TASK

The abovementioned tasks are more or less permanent. Democracy has to be reinvented constantly, particularly as its traditional focus on nation states is proving inadequate. At present, ameliorating the climate of suspicion and confrontation in world politics is another pressing task.

The claims of the current US administration that it is promoting universal values of liberty, democracy, and the open society through unilateral action are greeted by many with scepticism. Authoritarian regimes are always able to find excuses and some popular backing in making similar claims, particularly in terms of national sovereignty. A more benign international climate prevailed during the 1990s, and even during the first year after 11 September 2001, important agreements were reached in the UN and the world trade and finance institutions.

The goodwill ended when President George Bush decided not only to contain Iraq's dictator, but to invade without global support. This has had serious repercussions, not least for the promotion of democracy. Even so, international agreement about the basic rules of cohabitation in the "global village" can be regained. There is broad agreement that only extremists stand to win if we do not address the challenges of humankind together.

Party Internationals – except the Global Greens – all have some association with the leading participants in the Iraq war and their own internal tensions. Instead of being handicapped by this, the shared experience can provide a platform for constructive dialogue. Giving more active support to the Iraqi people in terms of democratisation, reconciliation, and reconstruction might be a first task. Such goodwill initiatives should take place in each political family in relation to counterparts in Iraq, among the Kurds, and in the region as a whole.

The wider aim should be to restore international legality and legitimacy for all processes towards peace and democratisation in the so-called Greater Middle East.

To counter a revival of ideologies of segregation and confrontation, it is important to have not one uniform but a variety of democratic alternatives. Left, Right, and others offering a real choice of models for development will bring hope and renew aspirations everywhere. The extent to which the different recipes come from Africa, the Americas, Asia, or Europe will be relatively unimportant. Crossover cooking might prove to be the tastiest.

This article first appeared in the *Journal for International Relations and Global Trends*, Issue One – 2008. It is reprinted here with the kind permission of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES).

NOTES

1. Also included in numbers for Africa and Asia.
2. Country name as used by Kuomintang (IDU) and DPP (LI) respectively.
3. A historic name meaning "Left" in Danish.
4. From Finland and Sweden, both partners in centre-right governments, but not Norway's Centre Party, part of a ruling centre-left coalition.
5. Numbers of affiliates in North Africa are also included in totals for Africa and others in the Middle East are included in totals for Asia-Pacific.
6. Christoph Zöpel suggests a detailed action plan along these lines in his paper "Die Sozialistische Internationale und globale Demokratie," FES Internationale Politikanalyse, 2005.
7. The best account is by Thomas Carothers in: *Confronting the Weakest Link – Aiding Political Parties in New Democracies*, Carnegie Endowment, 2006.

Links and Sources

International Democrat Union: www.idu.org
 Centrist Democrat International: www.cdi-idc.org/index.php
 Liberal International: www.liberal-international.org
 Socialist International: www.socialist-international.org
 Global Greens: www.globalgreens.info

To know how to die

A tribute to Isithwalandwe Chris Hani

Among the many qualities for which Chris Hani has been honoured with Isithwalandwe was his faith in the masses. For without the people, the real makers of history, there can be no history, writes **Tokyo Sexwale**.

To know how to die. He knew how to die. A good death, like the death of a seed as observed in natural science. This happens when in its wake follows the birth of something new, something positive.

Comrade Chris Hani's death a decade and a half ago was a severe blow to our entire revolutionary movement and to our liberation alliance. It was, and still is, an unforgettably painful experience particularly to his young daughters and to his life partner, Limpho Hani.

Comrade Commissar, as a parent, was spared the agony of knowing that his second daughter Nomakhwezi, who suffered the nightmare of witnessing her father's brutal and bloody assassination, was herself later in life gang-raped, attempted suicide and finally succumbed to her own childhood disease of asthma. Any parent ought to be spared such terrible tidings.

Although Comrade Chief-of-Staff's passing shielded him from all this, it regrettably also denied him from experiencing the magnificent consequences of his demise: that is, the crescendo, the final revolutionary push to victory – all unleashed by the manner of his death on that fateful April morning. It was a date of fate.

For, by the evening of that painful day, the entire political landscape of our country had been completely transformed. South Africa would never again be the same.

Different detachments of our armed units – formal and informal – were literally ready to kill or die for and with him on that day. Various formations of our people's organisations were massing and mobilising, swelling to take over the streets and any other space to put a final halt to all activities and machinations of the apartheid state and its various organs.

Progressive South Africans from all walks of life bolstered the call by the ANC-led liberation alliance for an elections date to be set – the first ever

democratic elections date in South Africa. Progressive mankind the world over stood by this demand. Yes indeed, Chris knew how to die.

At that time, at the Codesa settlement negotiations table, the enemy blinked and caved in. The ANC became de facto leader of the country with Nelson Mandela – who calmed the waters and demonstrated statesmanship and decisiveness – assuming the role of de facto leader of the republic.

The rest is history – the world in our country, and our country in the world, changed for good.

Indeed, Comrade Chris the nationalist, Comrade Chris the communist, Comrade Chris the democrat, the freedom fighter, the scholar, the theoretician and the practitioner, knew how to die – a worthwhile death, which breathed newness into the lives of many others.

His life experience is littered with examples to be emulated. In each step that he took, there are lessons to be learnt from the legacy of this humble giant.

It is true that different leaders bequeath different legacies. Some leave hope for their people, others hopelessness and divisions. Chris, most definitely, left us with a legacy of hope and unity.

It should also not be forgotten that he was a true nationalist in as much as he was an internationalist. For no-one can participate in international struggles unless you come from a particular nation. The roots of his internationalism are located within the spirit of his progressive nationalism.

It should also be remembered that Chris was a democrat in as much as he was a communist. This was not contradictory, as some may want us to believe.

He was a community leader in as much as he was a working class hero, for no-one can understand their class unless they understand the society from whence they come. As one of the leaders of the national liberation movement, he understood which class of people are at the bottom-most rung

of the socio-economic ladder.

All this made Chris romantic, dynamic and yet so real.

As an unapologetic communist, and as General Secretary of the SACP, he had the unique ability in applying the science of dialectics, to understand and differentiate the positions occupied in society by non-communists and anti-communists. He was disdainful of those who could not differentiate these.

He always stressed that a good communist was one who not only understood the difference, but also spent time to win over and not to antagonise non-communists, in as much as he spent time to educate or neutralise anti-communists.

Again, it should be stressed that this is what made him a good and well-rounded progressive nationalist – a good and solid leader of the ANC-led liberation alliance.

In a recent tribute, Pallo Jordan summed it up well when he said that of all the qualities attributed to Chris Hani, he had one in great abundance, and that is the element of courage. If we can only learn this from him, we shall never fail.

We have learnt from him and many other leaders of his calibre that the challenge of our times is to have the courage of our convictions. He taught that wrong must not be allowed to prevail in the presence of good people.

Indeed it was about time, and unavoidable, that the ANC leadership took the bold decision to bestow upon him the highest honour, Isithwalandwe.

The *Isithwalandwe* award bestowed on Chris is also a tribute to the courage of the thousands of men and women, young and old, black and white, who fought before him, alongside him and after him so that we can all be free.

The *Isithwalandwe* is, above all, a tribute to the masses – the very people who really make history. Moses Kotane, when asked on his sickbed about the essence of a social revolution, quietly answered and put it simply: "Batho. Revolution ke batho."

For without the people, the real makers of history, there can be no history.

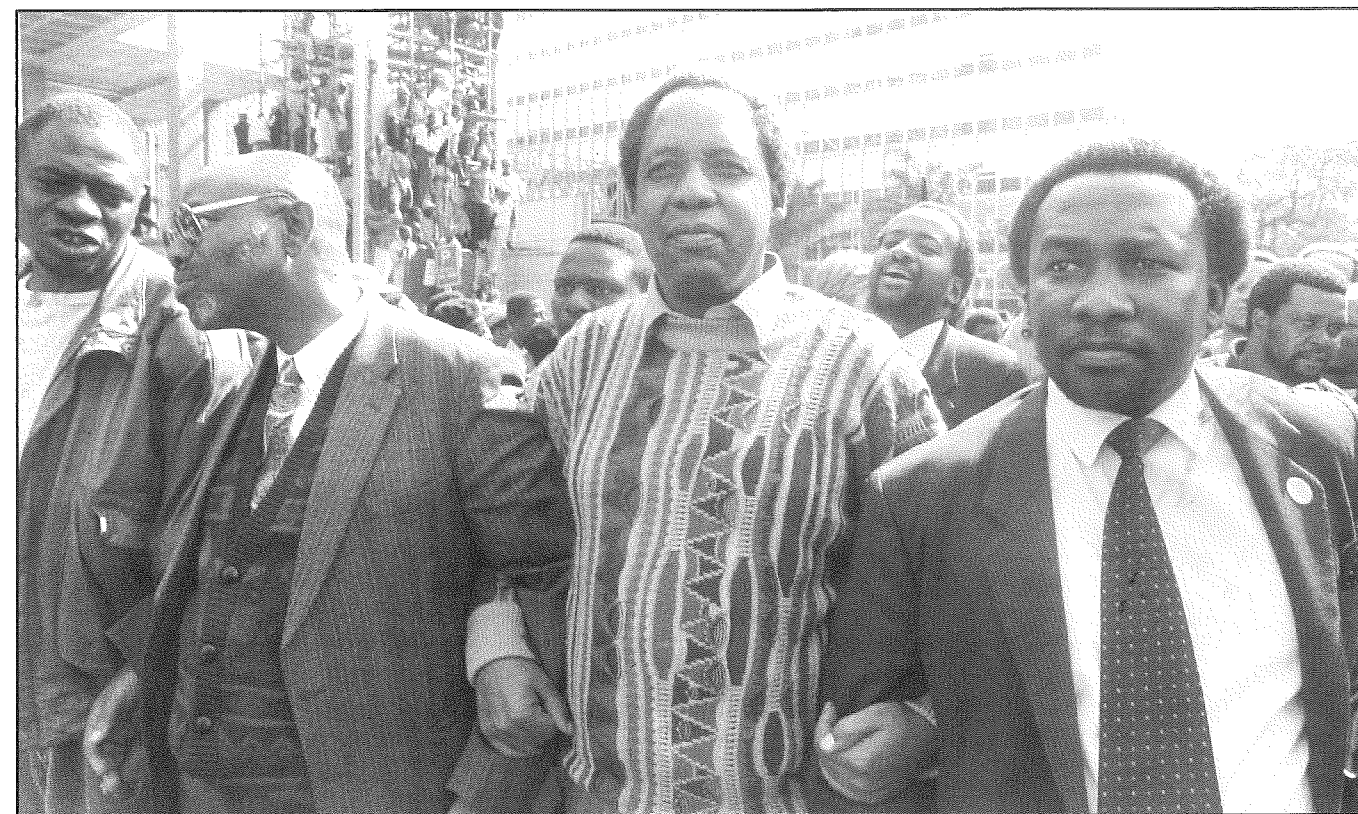
Quite often, there is a tendency to attempt to rewrite history, an attempt to leave the masses as mere footnotes, as passive onlookers to their own struggles. This is erroneous. Such tendencies have seen the downfall of so many revolutions. Our watch word in this respect must be vigilance – particularly when it comes to telling the story of what was happening in South Africa at the time of Chris Hani's assassination.

We must disabuse ourselves of the tendency to elevate the Codesa negotiations process as though it was the very heart of our struggle. It was not. In the crucible of our struggle stood men and women who formed and joined the ANC, who manned the barricades, who engaged in peasant revolts, who mobilised the working people, conscientious objectors who refused to fight in the apartheid army, who organised rolling mass action countrywide, who formed the United Democratic Front – in a word, those who fought in the many theatres of struggle.

In the fires of our struggle, we saw the Young Lions swelling the ranks of Umkhonto we Sizwe and paying the ultimate price with their lives for us to be free. We can never forget the Umkhonto we Sizwe of Chris Hani. Umkhonto we Sizwe cannot and must not be forgotten or downgraded.

A homage to Chris is also a homage to those who bore arms in the fighting army he once fought in.

At the same time, it is important that Codesa is



The late SACP General Secretary and ANC stalwart, Chris Hani and Alliance leaders during a march to the Union Buildings in Tshwane.

seen in context: it was the venue where the enemy was compelled to make the necessary preparations for the handing over of power. It was the scene where our negotiating team, bolstered by the struggle of our people through rolling mass action, defence units and preparedness to fight on, could make the enemy reach a final settlement.

It was not the scene of our surrender, for our struggle was never negotiable. It was a struggle for a united, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and free South Africa. Clearly, at Codesa, the enemy was to-ing and fro-ing – threatening to reduce the process to a charade of delaying tactics.

Triggered by the brutal assassination of Chris Hani, our people, and the world, demanded a stop to these delaying tactics and won the immediate announcement of an election date.

As a result, the demand for the date for an election was also a non-negotiable issue. It was a demand that had to be met, immediately – and indeed, the people were victorious. Consequently, a year later – again, in April – victory was attained when all South Africans came out to register their votes in record numbers.

April was not just about the death of Chris, it was about the birth of a new nation. April, in another part of the world, much earlier in history,

belonged to the thesis of the Bolsheviks, in a glorious revolution that lost its way after 70 years.

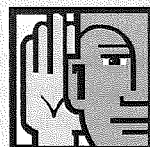
After all, history teaches us that the struggle of any people is not merely about words, words, words, theories and theses. It is about improving the quality of life of the common person. Indeed, it is about enabling people to enjoy a better life. That is the challenge of our democratic developmental state.

It is important not to ignore this lesson of history – for it is the most vital of all. Let us learn from history, and live by the example of people of the calibre of Chris Hani, so that ours does not end up being a mere short-lived thesis but rather the concrete reality of a better life for all.

Every April 27, every Freedom Day, we owe to our heroes and heroines. The April of Solomon Mahlangu, the April of Oliver Tambo, the April of Chris Hani holds a special place in the hearts of all who fought for freedom, and for all who live in a united, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and free South Africa.

TOKYO SEXWALE is a member of the ANC National Executive Committee. In March 2008 the NEC took an unanimous decision to award Chris Hani Isithwalandwe Seaparankoe, the highest honour of the movement.

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 1,500-3,000 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.

■ The editor may edit any contributions for length or to ensure clarity.

■ The Editorial Collective reserves the right to decide whether or not to publish a contribution.

Articles may be sent to the following address:

Umrabulo
PO Box 61884
Marshalltown
2107

By e-mail: umrabulo@anc.org.za

By fax: 086 633 1437

HISTORY



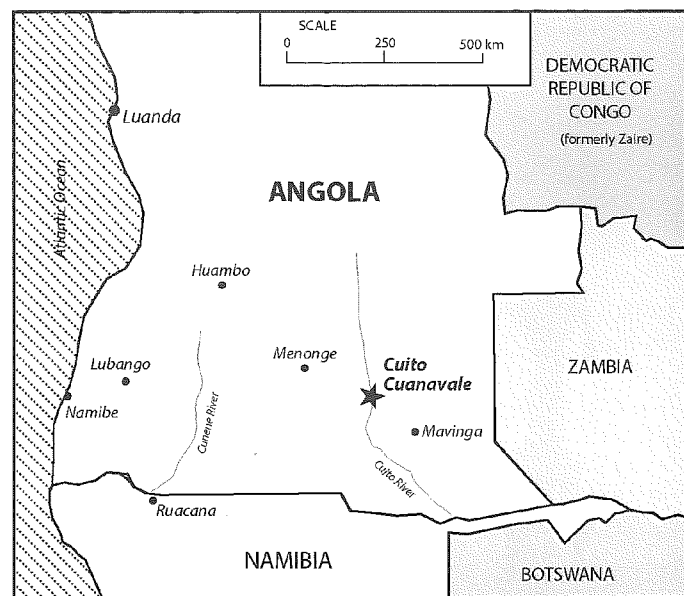
Turning point at Cuito Cuanavale

*By understanding what transpired at the small town of Cuito Cuanavale in 1988, and the impact it had on the political and military balance of forces in Southern Africa, it is possible to see why the battle stands out as a turning point in our history, writes **Ronnie Kasrils**.*

When Jorge Risquet, one of Fidel Castro's shrewdest and most trusted colleagues, addressed the Seventh Congress of the South African Communist Party (SACP), hosted in Cuba in April 1989, he was greeted with the resounding salutation "Viva Cuito Cuanavale!" For the South African delegates, many from military duty in Angola itself, there was no doubt whatsoever that an epic victory had been won over the apartheid military machine in that embattled country the previous year, constituting a historic turning point in the struggle for liberation. When Risquet quoted Castro's assertion that "the history of Africa will be written as before and after Cuito Cuanavale," he brought the house down.

While the generals and pundits of the former South African Defence Force (SADF) are at pains to claim victory¹ the acid test is to consider the outcome. The SADF, which had carried out continuous invasions and incursions into Angola since that country's hard-won independence in 1975 (which was the reason for the Cuban military presence in the first place), had been forced to totally withdraw; the independence of Namibia was soon to be agreed; the prospect for South African freedom had never been more promising.

Before the commencement of the battle for Cuito Cuanavale in October 1987 the apartheid regime was implacably opposed to any of those options. While the post-Cuito negotiations also



Location of Cuito Cuanavale

agreed on Cuban troop withdrawal from Angola, and relocation of ANC military camps (which went to Uganda), this was no setback compared to the enormity of the strategic gains. In commemorating the 20th anniversary of the battle this year and the historic outcome that changed the face of southern Africa – according to Nelson Mandela “a turning point for the liberation of our continent and my people”² – it is necessary to clarify what exactly transpired.

It is a paradox that a place where Southern Africa's history dramatically turned should be so well off the beaten track. Cuito Cuanavale is a minor town near the confluence of two rivers that constitute its name, set in the remote, bushy and featureless expanse of southeast Angola, a region the Portuguese referred to as the Land at the End of the Earth.

The prelude to the battle started in July 1987 when Angolan government forces (Fapla) attempted to advance on Jonas Savimbi's Unita strongholds at Mavinga, the strategic key to his base at Jamba near the Caprivi Strip. With Pretoria's assistance in the south and Mobutu's help from Zaire, Unita had grown stronger over the years and its actions had spread to the north, central and eastern parts of Angola. It was believed that a direct attack against Savimbi's southeastern headquarters would most disrupt him, but this was contrary to Cuban advice.

At first the offensive progressed well, with a battle-hardened and superbly equipped Fapla gaining the upper hand, inflicting heavy casualties on Unita, driving them south towards Mavinga, some 150 kilometres distant. Then in October, Fapla's advancing 47th Brigade, at the Lomba River, 40 kilometres south-east of Cuito, was all but destroyed in a surprise attack by SADF forces hastening to Unita's rescue. Catastrophe followed as several other Fapla brigades, sustaining heavy casualties wilted under overwhelming ground and air bombardment but managed to retreat to Cuito. The situation could not have been graver. Cuito could have been overrun then and there by the SADF, changing the strategic situation overnight. The interior of the country would have been

opened up to domination by Unita with Angola being split in half. This was something Pretoria and Savimbi had been aiming at for years. But the SADF failed to seize the initiative. This allowed an initial contingent of 120 Cuban troops to rush to the town from Menongue, 150 kilometres to the north-west and help Fapla organise the defences. As the ferocious siege developed, Pretoria's generals and western diplomats confidently predicted Cuito's imminent fall.

THE SADF'S OBJECTIVE

I have had the opportunity to hear the views from both Fidel Castro on the one hand, and General Kat Liebenberg, South African army chief, on the other. The briefing from Castro took place in Havana's Defence Ministry at the end of 1988. He pointed out on a huge tabletop sand model of southern Angola the drama that had unfolded. Our delegation headed by Joe Slovo hung on his every word. The SADF was far too cautious and missed a remarkable opportunity, Castro observed. After their success on the Lomba they could have quickly taken the town.³

According to General Liebenberg, with whom I later established a convivial relationship, the SADF's main aim apart from stopping Fapla's advance, was to keep the town under constant bombardment to prevent its airstrip from being used. He politely stuck to the conventional SADF face-saving explanation for he well knew that if Cuito had been taken Unita would have been placed in a most advantageous position. But admitting that meant they had failed in their objective.

The actions of the SADF are clear evidence of their determination to break through to the town. For six months they threw everything they had at the beleaguered outpost, in their desire to seize the prize. They relentlessly pounded Cuito with sixteen massive 155mm G-5 and G-6 (self-propelled) guns and staged attack after attack led by the crack 61st mechanised battalion, 32 Buffalo battalion (actually two battalions with its own armour and artillery units), and later 4th SA Infantry group. These units operated as a powerful ad-hoc brigade. The

Fapla defenders doggedly held out, reinforced by 1,500 elite troops that arrived from Cuba in December. By 23 March 1988, the last major attack on Cuito was “brought to a grinding and definite halt”, in the words of 32 Battalion commander, Colonel Jan Breytenbach.⁴ He writes: “the Unita soldiers did a lot of dying that day” and “the full weight of Fapla's defensive fire was brought down on the heads of [SADF] Regiment President Steyn and the already bleeding Unita.” The SADF prided themselves on a minimal loss of life. That was because they used black infantry troops such as their Unita proxy and SWATF (in Namibia) as cannon fodder while the white troops brought-up the rear from the safety of armoured vehicles and tanks. The SADF deployed upwards of 5,000 men at Cuito alone, according to their commander-in-chief, General Jan Geldenhuys,⁵ but this could possibly have been as much as 6,000 men.⁶ In addition there were several thousand Unita troops involved. They were repulsed by the Cubans and 6,000 determined Fapla defenders.

The numerous pro-SADF accounts focus on the engagements leading up to Cuito, and the siege itself, meticulously recorded battlefield manoeuvres and achievements. Indeed they describe tactical efficiency and resourcefulness, but cannot conceal the fact that they failed to conquer the town, and they play down the later decisive military developments on the Namibian border that commenced in April 1988 and peaked in June. Colonel Breytenbach is the exception here. He observed: “With a lack of foresight the South Africans had allowed the bulk of their available combat power to be tied down on the Cuito Cuanavale front.” In his view this should have been regarded as a secondary front. This was in sharp contrast to General Geldenhuys fixating on the pretence of a SADF victory at Cuito and lamely claiming that the new front opened up by the Cubans in the west was akin to Castro “kicking the ball into touch” as though that part of southern Angola was outside the field of play in the Atlantic Ocean. His actual words were: “Our opponents boast that they had beat us... because they won some line outs.”⁷ The saga at Cuito Cuanavale can be correctly characterised as a Cuban-Angolan defensive victory. Undoubtedly wars are not won by defensive engagements.

The significance of Cuito is that the defenders not only saved the day, but also bought the time to enable the Cuban-Angolan side to turn the tables and by April launch a breathtaking offensive in the southwest that changed the course of our history. General Geldenhuys knew very well, like a rugby captain suddenly forced onto the defensive, that the ball was very much in play and his opponents were robustly driving forward having gained the

initiative. In fact stopping the SADF in its tracks at Cuito and then decisively seizing the initiative and going on the offensive was similar to the great turning point in the Second World War, when the Nazi forces were halted at Stalingrad at the end of 1942 and subsequently driven back to Berlin.

Lest there be any lingering doubt about the outcome at Cuito Cuanavale, listen to what the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff, closely monitoring events in Angola, noted in an intelligence report dated 15 April 1988 that Cuito Cuanavale was no longer an isolated outpost. Cuban troops had secured the road from Menongue to Cuito. “Any SADF/Unita attempt to cut off the main supply route would be met with very heavy resistance.” Cuban planes and anti-aircraft weapons had reversed the situation for the South African forces arrayed against Cuito: the absence of the SA airforce in the area had become “notable”. The joint chiefs further observed: “Lacking air superiority, the SADF was unable to conduct an air resupply effort resulting in less responsive resupply effort over land.”⁸

At his tabletop model Castro pointed out the amazing feat of a 10,000 strong Cuban, Fapla and South West Africa People's Organisation (Swapo) troop deployment, along a front stretching from Angola's southern port of Namibe in the west along the railway line, through Lubango on to Menongue and Cuito in the east. The SADF forces at Cuito were sidelined, like a major piece on a chess board that has prematurely advanced, as powerful armed forces with the latest Soviet weaponry, moved forwards in the south west, under superior air cover, towards the Namibian border. Angola's Cunene and Mocimedes provinces were liberated after years of SADF control.

A master stroke was the rapid construction of airstrips at Cahama and Xangongo near the border, which brought the strategic Ruacana and Calueque hydro-electric dam systems on the Cunene River within striking distance. Soviet Mig-23s had demonstrated their superiority over South Africa's aged Mirage fighters and now that they commanded the skies the network of SADF bases in northern Namibia was at their mercy.

A POWERFUL RIGHT BLOW

Castro showed quiet pride in this achievement, cutting a thoughtful figure. Behind the singular achievement was outstanding military acumen and not a foolhardy gambler depicted by his detractors, including Greg Mills in a recent Sunday Independent article.⁹ It was at this point that he used his now famous boxing analogy to explain the carefully formulated strategy: Cuito Cuanavale in the east represented the boxer's defensive left fist that blocks the blow, while in the west the powerful

right fist had struck – placing the SADF in a perilous position.¹⁰ To return to that other sporting metaphor misused by Geldenhuys, play swung robustly from the east-end of the rugby field to the west-end with the Cubans, Fapla and Swapo on the attack and the SADF uncomfortably pinned back on the borderline.

The end for the SADF was signalled on 27 June 1988. A squadron of Migs bombed the Ruacana and Calueque installations, cutting the water supply to Ovamboland and its military bases and killing 11 young South African conscripts. A Mig-23 executed a neat victory roll over Ruacana on the Namibian side of the border. The war was effectively over.

The SADF was clearly out-foxed in Angola. Magnus Malan, South Africa's Minister of Defence, had admitted that "as far as the Defence Force was concerned [Fidel Castro] was an unknown presence in military terms, and therefore it was difficult to predict his intentions."¹¹ This amounted to an astonishing intelligence failure coming a dozen years after the SADF first encountered the Cubans in Angola. Malan was not alone in this ignorance, however, for the Americans had been in confrontation with Havana since the 1960s and appeared to know no better. Along with Pretoria they expected a Soviet Union eager for rapprochement with the West to curtail Cuba's actions. They were surprised to discover that the Soviet Union's so-called proxy had not even consulted Moscow over Havana's massive intervention. They were even more taken aback when sophisticated Soviet military equipment was rushed from the USSR to Angola to supply the Cuban-Angolan offensive.

The Cubans could have marched into Namibia but exercised restraint, with all parties, including the USA and Soviet Union, looking for compromise and a way forward in negotiations that had previously been going nowhere. Castro was not looking for a bloody encounter, which would have cost many lives on both sides. Neither were apartheid's generals and political leaders. They could afford casualties even less than the Cubans, considering the popular mass struggle and growing armed actions within Namibia and South Africa and the serious problem with white conscription.

Chester Crocker, America's chief negotiator, had to be given a special exemption to meet with the Cuban delegation owing to the United States embargo of that country. Crocker, whose country had long supported Unita and earlier Holden Roberto's FLNA against the MPLA, was to confide: "Reading the Cubans is yet another art form. They are prepared for both war and peace. We witness considerable tactical finesse and genuinely creative moves at the table."¹²

CONFUSED STRATEGY

His opinion of the South Africans was that "they confused military power with national strategy." In his book "High Noon in Southern Africa", about the conflict and the negotiations, Crocker writes: "...a former academic colleague confirmed my impressions. After spending ten days with Pretoria's military, diplomatic, and intelligence establishment, he reported to me that he had seldom seen a government so utterly confused and at cross-purposes over basic questions of policy. Given the absence of strategic guidance from top political levels, it was remarkable that SADF chief of staff Jannie Geldenhuys and his military colleagues avoided disaster in Angola during the first half of 1988."

The central negotiation issue was UN Security Council Resolution 435 of 1978, concerning South Africa's withdrawal from Namibia, and that country's independence. Linked to this was the departure of Cuban troops from Angola. The last SADF soldier left Angola at the end of August 1988, and Namibia became independent in March 1990, even before the Cuban exodus from Angola. Apartheid Foreign Minister, Pik Botha, had tried to modify Resolution 435, asserting that the SADF would withdraw from Angola only "if Russia and its proxies did the same". They made no mention of even considering a withdrawal from Namibia. *Business Day* reported on 16 March 1988 that Pretoria was "offering to withdraw into Namibia – not from Namibia – in return for the withdrawal of Cuban forces from Angola. The implication is that South Africa has no real intention of giving up the territory any time soon."

These attempts, however, proved futile in the face of the changed balance of forces and were demolished by Jorge Risquet who gave Pik Botha a roasting: "The time for your military adventures, for the acts of aggression that you have pursued with impunity, for your massacres of refugees...is over," he chided. He said Pretoria was behaving as though it was "a victorious army, rather than what it really is: a defeated aggressor that is withdrawing... South Africa must face the fact that it will not obtain at the negotiating table what it could not achieve on the battlefield."¹³

What materialised at Cuito Cuanavale set in chain a process that finally broke the ascendancy of the military hawks and politicians in Pretoria. Together with the struggle within South Africa, and apartheid's international isolation, the country's freedom was soon achieved. It is fitting that at Freedom Park, outside Pretoria, the 2,070 names of Cuban soldiers who fell in Angola between 1975 and 1988, are inscribed along with the names of South Africans who died during the liberation struggle. Those patriots and internationalists were

motivated by a single goal – an end to racial rule and genuine African independence. After thirteen years defending Angolan sovereignty the Cubans took nothing home except the bones of their fallen and our gratitude.

It is also noteworthy that for most of those years Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) combatants engaged the adversary in many parts of Angola, cooperated with Fapla and Swapo units, as well as with Cuban and Soviet advisers, aided in the interception and translation of Afrikaans radio traffic, and provided invaluable intelligence on the SADF. One hundred-and-thirty MK combatants and a number of SADF members lost their lives in action during that time.

Tens of thousands of Africans were killed by South Africa's murderous security forces in Angola and Mozambique where they waged almost continuous dirty wars against those newly liberated countries, and in bloody massacres of civilians, refugees and freedom fighters in such places as Cassinga, Gaborone, Maseru, Manzini, Matola and elsewhere, in the desperate attempt to save white supremacy and prevent the future being born.

The die-hard officers of the former SADF and apartheid politicians of the time try to claim they were fighting to save Southern Africa from communism, but that was a myth to curry favour with the West during the Cold War. The era of racist, colonial rule they strove to perpetuate has thankfully passed into history. All the states of our region are enjoying peace and stability and getting on with the developmental tasks of creating a better life for their people now that apartheid is no more. Castro's prediction that Africa's history would radically change after the battle for Cuito Cuanavale has been borne out. It is imperative that our people, and particularly the younger generation, be made aware of Cuba's remarkable sacrifice and contribution to Africa's freedom and independence, and the heroic role of the independent states of our region.

RONNIE KASRILS is a former member of the ANC National Executive Committee, Minister for Intelligence Services, and was former chief of intelligence in Umkhonto we Sizwe.

NOTES

- 1 Magnus Malan "My Life with the SA Defence Force"; Jan Breytenbach "Buffalo Soldiers"; Helmoed Heitman "War in Angola"; Peter Stiff "Silent War"; Fred Bridgland "The War for Africa".
- 2 Piero Gleijeses "Cuito Cuanavale Revisited" (*Mail & Guardian*) 11 July 2007
- 3 Ronnie Kasrils "Armed and Dangerous"
- 4 Jan Breytenbach, "Buffalo Soldiers"
- 5 Le Figaro (Paris), 1 April 1988
- 6 Piero Gleijeses' interview with Lt Col Hutchinson who was at the Directorate of Operations at Army Headquarters, Pretoria
- 7 Jannie Geldenhuys "Die Wat Wen"
- 8 I am indebted to Piero Gleijeses for this and other material he has uncovered in his outstanding research and writings on the subject.
- 9 Greg Mills, *The Sunday Independent*, 24 February 2008
- 10 Piero Gleijeses, "Moscow's Proxy? Cuba and Africa 1975 - 1988", *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Harvard 2006.
- 11 Magnus Malan, *ibid*
- 12 Chester Crocker "High Noon in Southern Africa"
- 13 Piero Gleijeses, *Mail & Guardian*, 11 July 2007

The enduring voice of revolutionary youth

Sixty years after it was written, the ANC Youth League's Basic Policy document still offers valuable guidance for contemporary struggles, writes **Malusi Gigaba**.

The formation of the ANC Youth League (ANCYL) in 1944 was part of the unbroken resistance to foreign domination. The ANCYL belonged to the era of the evolution of national and political organisations that reflected the special aims and aspirations of the oppressed. It fulfilled the yearning of the youth for more direct forms of struggle imbued with a clear national consciousness.

Four years after its formation on 10 September 1944 the ANCYL adopted the Basic Policy. This policy was adopted in 1948, the same year the National Party came to power, making racism the official policy of successive white governments.

The 1940s was a decade of rapid economic and political change in South Africa. The previous years had benefited from a boom in the manufacturing sector, among others buoyed by the new opportunities created by the war years. This resulted in a huge demand for labour and there was growing African trade union militancy. African workers accounted for most of the increase in the labour force and the African urban population almost doubled between 1939 and 1952. At the same time, as the economy was doing so well, the socioeconomic and political conditions of black people were deteriorating.

According to Walter Sisulu, quoted in the biography, *Walter and Albertina Sisulu: In our Lifetime*: "While the cost of living rose steadily in the early 1940s, miners' wages remained the same. An average mineworkers' wage in 1946 was the same as it had been in 1913, which in real terms represented a 15% drop in earnings. Mine owners stuck to their old argument – that black mineworkers were migrants, so their families were supported by the land, and their wages were merely extra income, and thus not crucial to their families' survival. Effectively, the mines relied on the unpaid labour of the women in the rural areas to subsidise

their cheap labour system." He said: "For the black opposition... 1946 was the year that dispelled any illusions about the liberalism of the Smuts government." This led to the 1946 Mineworkers' Strike, which, according to Sisulu, "was one of the outcomes of the impact of the Second World War on the economy of SA".

INITIAL VIEWS ON AFRICAN NATIONALISM

In 1943 the annual conference of the ANC adopted the Africans' Claims document, as a response to the Atlantic Charter. The Africans' Claims was an unequivocal declaration of equality by Africans and was an attempt to demonstrate that the principles they were fighting for in Europe were the same ones advocated by black people in South Africa. General Smuts, who had been among the pioneers of the Atlantic Charter and was regarded as a world statesman, rejected the Africans' Claims as a "propagandist document" which "made no effort to recognise his government's efforts to improve African welfare". He thus refused to accept the Charter's assertion that human rights were applicable to the situation of black South Africans.

Much of the content of the Basic Policy document is credited to the tireless efforts and gigantic intellectual prowess of Ashby P Mda, who became ANCYL President after the sudden and tragic death of Anton Lembede, the first ANCYL President.

In 1948 he worked tirelessly on both this ANCYL policy document (in which for the first time since its formation, the ANCYL outlined its policy positions on political, economic, educational, cultural and social issues) and on the famous Programme of Action which the ANCYL Executive first tabled for discussion and adoption at the ANC's Transvaal Conference, and later to the ANC's Annual Conference. The 1948 ANC Conference failed to adopt the Programme of Action

and deferred it to the 1949 Conference in Bloemfontein. Mda had worked hard on both documents, at the same time extensively travelling the country to establish ANCYL branches and consequently jeopardising his health.

Anton Lembede, whom Mda succeeded, had been ANCYL President from 1944 until 29 June 1947 when he died at Coronation Hospital in Johannesburg from "cardiac failure" with "intestinal obstruction" as a contributory factor. Lembede was born on 21 January 1914 at Eston in Mbumbulu, in what is now KwaZulu Natal. He was largely self-educated. When he died in 1947, Mda became the Acting President and was subsequently elected President in 1948, a position he held until he was forced to resign due to poor health in 1950. He was succeeded by Godfrey Pitje, who was a lecturer at Fort Hare University. Mda and Lembede were "often paired as the Romulus and Remus of African Nationalism" (Edgar, R. and Ka Msumza, L. (1996): *Freedom in our Lifetime: The Collected Writings of Anton Muziwakhe Lembede*).

Yet, Mda's views on African Nationalism were broader than Lembede's. Notwithstanding, Lembede, Mda's lifelong friend, was credited as father and architect of African nationalism. Mda used his position as ANCYL President to expound African Nationalism, stating in a letter to Pitje that he advocated for what was "the pure Nationalism of an oppressed people, seeking freedom from foreign oppression". He went further to say that: "We as African Nationalists do not hate the European – we have no racial hatred: – we only hate white oppression and white domination, and not the white people themselves! We do not hate other human beings as such – whether they are Indians, Europeans or Coloureds." (in Edgar and ka Msumza).

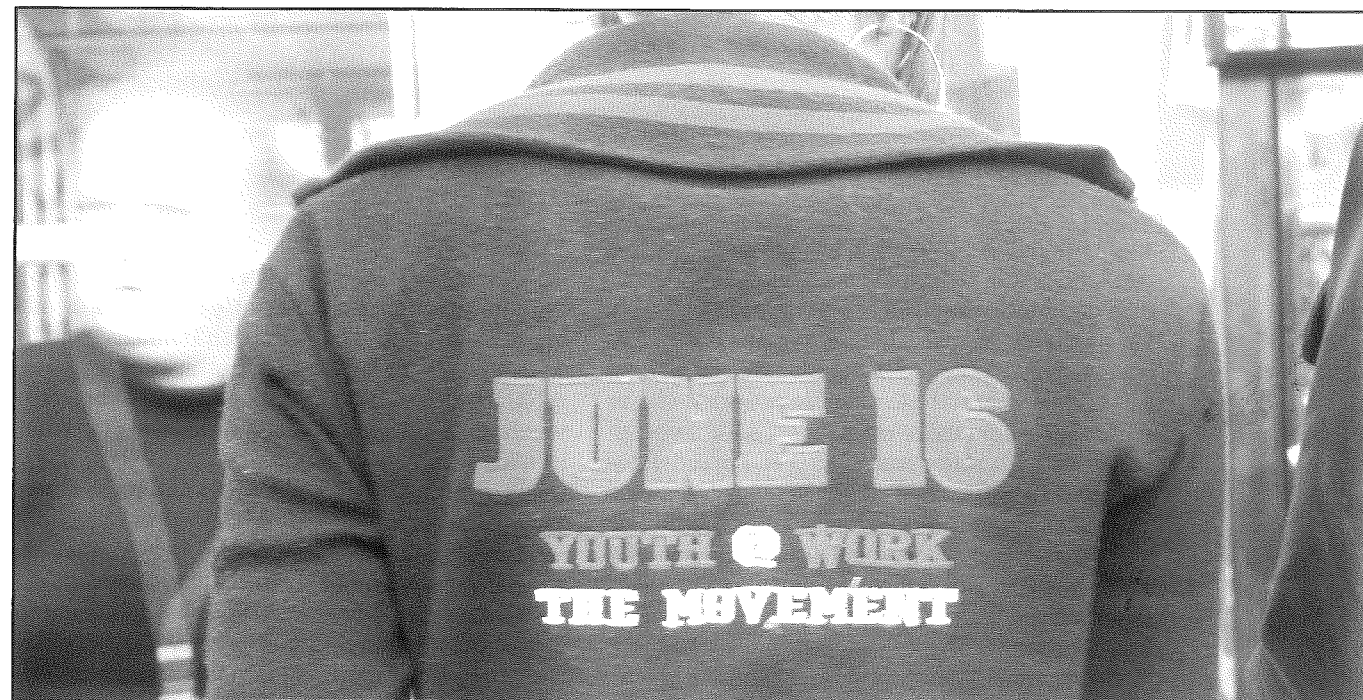
THE BASIC POLICY ON AFRICAN NATIONALISM

The Basic Policy concludes its treatise on African Nationalism by stating that: "The historic task of

African Nationalism (it has become apparent) is the building of a self-confident and strong African Nation in South Africa. Therefore African Nationalism transcends the narrow limits imposed by any particular sectional organisation. It is all-embracing in the sense that its field is the whole body of African people in this country. The germ of its growth was first sown within the bosom of the African National Congress, and it found its clear crystallisation in the Congress Youth League. It should now find concrete expression in the creation of a single African National Front. The strength, solidarity and permanence of such a front, will, of course, depend not on accident or chance, but on the correctness of our stand, and on the political orientation of our front. Granting that this would be anchored on African Nationalism, we should build the most powerful front in our history."

This was a development of Lembede's earlier views, some of which had been regarded as extreme. Of course, there had long been debate within the Communist Party of South Africa since the 1930s on what was called the Native Republic, but none of the debates had as yet referred to African Nationalism and expounded it. The ANC itself was an African National Congress, and yet had not rigorously engaged in a debate on what it understood as African Nationalism. But this development represented a decisive advance from all hitherto conceptions of the nature and character of the national question in South Africa. It also began to define the content of the struggle and locate the struggle in South Africa within its international and African context.

This basic policy sought to articulate the ANCYL's political, economic, educational, cultural and social programme. At its outset, the document remarks: "The African people in South Africa are oppressed as a group with a particular colour. They suffer national oppression in common with thousands and millions of oppressed Colonial peoples in other parts of the world". It argues



further that: "The African has a primary, inherent and inalienable right to Africa which is his continent and Motherland, and the Africans as a whole have a divine destiny which is to make Africa free among the peoples and nations of the earth."

It goes further to state that: "In order to achieve Africa's freedom the Africans must build a powerful national liberation movement, and in order that the national movement should have inner strength and solidarity, it should adopt the national liberatory creed – African Nationalism, and it should be led by the Africans themselves."

It then states the fundamental aims of African Nationalism as:

- the creation of a united nation out of the heterogeneous tribes;
- the freeing of Africa from foreign domination and foreign leadership;
- the creation of conditions that can enable Africa to make her own contribution to human progress and happiness.

The document states that the goal of political organisation and action is the achievement of true democracy in South Africa and in the rest of the African continent. In this way, as in the 1944 Manifesto, the ANCYL displayed its truly progressive Africanist outlook, which regarded the struggle against apartheid to be broader than South Africa itself. "In such a true democracy all the nationalities and minorities would have their fundamental human rights guaranteed in a democratic Constitution," it said.

The ANCYL stated its understanding that two main factors contributed to the historic defeat of the resistance against colonial invasion; that is, the superior weapons of the white man, and the fact that the Africans fought as isolated tribes, instead of pooling their resources and attacking as a united force. They characterised the birth of the ANC as providing "a solid basis for tribal solidarity, and for a nationally organised struggle against white domination". While noting the commendable changes that had taken place in the ANC under AB Xuma, they noted that there was still "room for more drastic and revolutionary changes in the organisational form of Congress, if this organisation is to live up to the people's expectations". They make the point that: "From the very outset, the Congress Youth League set itself, inter alia, the historic task of imparting dynamic substance and matter to the organisational form of the ANC."

Since its inception the ANCYL has located itself and the political and socio-economic aspirations of the youth within the context of the struggle against national oppression led by the ANC. It has always taken a keen interest in defending the ANC against its detractors, and played an active part in its building, believing, as stated in the 1944

Manifesto, that: "Defects in the organisation of the people against oppression cannot be cured by mouthing criticisms and not putting our heads together to build what has been damaged and to find a way out of the present suffering." The ANCYL has always felt responsibility both towards itself as a youth organisation and to the ANC as a movement.

The document reiterates the point made in the 1944 Manifesto that a dominant group does not voluntarily give up its privileged position, which is what African Nationalism sought to answer as a "militant outlook of an oppressed people seeking a solid basis for waging a long, bitter, and unrelenting struggle for its national freedom". The ANCYL's African Nationalism was linked directly with the right of the Africans to fight for freedom.

The document firmly rejected as extreme and ultra-revolutionary the stream of African Nationalism centred on Marcus Garvey's slogan, 'Africa for the Africans', and based on the 'Quit Africa' slogan and on the cry 'Hurl the White man into the sea'. It advocated a more 'moderate' but progressive stream that took account of the concrete situation in South Africa, realising that the different racial groups had come to stay. "But we insist that a condition for inter-racial peace and progress is the abandonment of white domination, and such a change in the basic structure of South African society that those relations which breed exploitation and human misery will disappear. Therefore our goal is the winning of national freedom for African people, and the inauguration of a people's free society where racial oppression and persecution will be outlawed".

FORCES IN THE STRUGGLE FOR AFRICAN FREEDOM

For the first time, this document identified and sought to analyse the forces in the struggle for African freedom, what became known in the later *Strategy and Tactics* documents as the "social motive forces". While this was a first attempt and was thus not thorough, it was important in that it first lay bare for the national movement to know those forces for and against the national liberation struggle. It recognised Africans as the greatest single group and the key to the movement for democracy in Africa, "not only because Africa is their only motherland, but also because by bringing the full force of their organised numbers to bear on the national struggle, they can alter the basic position of the fight for a democratic South Africa". This affirmed the primacy of Africans as a motive force for freedom and gave content to the strategic objective of our struggle as the national liberation of Africans and black people in general; and further affirmed the leadership of African people of the

national liberation struggle.

Accordingly, the ANC's 1969 *Strategy and Tactics* said: "The main content of the present stage of the South African revolution is the national liberation of the largest and most oppressed group – the African people. This strategic aim must govern every aspect of the conduct of our struggle whether it be the formulation of policy or the creation of structures. Amongst other things, it demands in the first place the maximum mobilisation of the African people as a dispossessed and racially oppressed nation. This is the mainspring and it must not be weakened. It involves a stimulation and deepening of national confidence, national pride and national assertiveness. Properly channelled and properly led, these qualities do not stand in conflict with the principles of internationalism. Indeed, they become the basis for more and more meaningful cooperation; a cooperation which is self imposed, equal and one which is neither based on dependence nor gives the appearance of being so. The national character of the struggle must therefore dominate our approach."

The Basic Policy recognised Indians and Coloureds as oppressed groups, even though their oppression could have been, by some degrees, different from that of Africans and hence made the point that: "The National Organisations of the Africans, Indians and Coloureds may cooperate on common issues". And, concerning white people, the document noted that the majority of Europeans share the spoils of white domination in this country and thus have a vested interest in the exploitative caste society of South Africa.

However, the document made the fundamental statement that all of the above notwithstanding, it "is to be clearly understood that we are not against the Europeans as such – we are not against the European as a human being – but we are totally and irrevocably opposed to white domination and to oppression". We were fighting the system, and not the people.

To refer again to the 1969 *Strategy and Tactics*, it says: "The national character of the struggle must therefore dominate our approach. But it is a national struggle which is taking place in a different era and in a different context from those which characterised the early struggles against colonialism. It is happening in a new kind of world... – a world in which the horizons liberated from foreign oppression extend beyond mere formal political control and encompass the element which makes such control meaningful – economic emancipation. It is also happening in a new kind of South Africa; a South Africa in which there is a large and well-developed working class whose class consciousness and in which the independent expressions of the working people – their political organs and

trade unions – are very much part of the liberation front. Thus, our nationalism must not be confused with chauvinism or narrow nationalism of a previous epoch. It must not be confused with the classical drive by an elitist group among the oppressed people to gain ascendancy so that they can replace the oppressor in the exploitation of the mass.

"But none of this detracts from the basically national context of our liberation drive. In the last resort it is only the success of the national democratic revolution which – destroying the existing social and economic relationship – will bring with it a correction of the historical injustices perpetrated against the indigenous majority and thus lay the basis for a new – and deeper internationalist – approach. Until then, the national sense of grievance is the most potent revolutionary force which must be harnessed. To blunt it in the interests of abstract concepts of internationalism is, in the long run, doing neither a service to revolution nor to internationalism."

The ANC recognised that while the Africans were subjected to the most intense racial oppression and exploitation, they were not the only oppressed national group in South Africa. Coloureds and Indians also suffered varying forms of national humiliation, discrimination and oppression and were part of the non-white base upon which rested white privilege. As such they too constituted an integral part of the social forces ranged against white supremacy and shared a common fate with the Africans and their own liberation was inextricably bound up with that of the African people.

Accordingly, unity in action between all the oppressed groups was regarded as fundamental to the advance of our liberation struggle, in order to isolate the enemy and bring freedom nearer.

On the question of white people, the ANCYL's Basic Policy in 1948 noted that they "have a vested interest in the exploitative caste society of South Africa". However, it had also noted that a few of them love justice and condemn racial oppression, but their voice was negligible, and it argued that these justice-loving white people in the last analysis count for nothing. It then had concluded this observation by saying: "In their struggle for freedom the Africans will be wasting their time and deflecting their forces if they look up to the Europeans either for inspiration or for help in their political struggle."

However, in its later pronouncements on this question, building on the ANCYL's earlier conceptions and now better informed by experience and a new theoretical understanding, the ANC recognised that, other than those belonging to the other oppressed groups, those few white revolutionaries who show themselves ready to make common

cause with our aspirations, must be fully integrated on the basis of individual equality which did not mean a mechanical parity between the various national groups which would lend flavour to the slander that ANC enemies and critics have been ever ready to spread of a multiracial alliance dominated by minority groups. Such cooperation and alliance, it was argued later, had to give expression to the main emphasis of the present stage of our struggle. However, the ANC said: "Committed revolutionaries are our brothers to whatever group they belong. There can be no second class participants in our Movement. It is for the enemy we reserve our assertiveness and our justified sense of grievance". (Strategy and Tactics, 1969)

THE CLASS, NATIONAL AND GENDER QUESTIONS

But, later, again building on the ANCYL's articulation of the "forces in the struggle for African freedom", the ANC Strategy and Tactics documents, basing themselves on the Freedom Charter (adopted in 1955 in Kliptown), have:

■ articulated the intricate relationship in our country – more than in any other part of the oppressed world – between the national, class and gender oppression, saying in the 1969 *Strategy and Tactics* that it was 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. Our drive towards national emancipation is therefore in a very real way bound up with economic emancipation. We have suffered more than just national humiliation. Our people are deprived of their due in the country's wealth; their skills have been suppressed and poverty and starvation has been their life experience. The correction of these centuries-old economic injustices lies at the very core of our national aspirations";

■ related to the above, consequently, it noted that: "This perspective of a speedy progression from formal liberation to genuine and lasting emancipation is made more real by the existence in our country of a large and growing working class whose class consciousness complements national consciousness. Its political organisations and the trade unions have played a fundamental role in shaping and advancing our revolutionary cause. 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. Its militancy and political consciousness as a revolutionary class will play

no small part in our victory and in the construction of a real people's South Africa."

In its most recent *Strategy and Tactics*, adopted in 2007, the ANC says: "The main content of the NDR is the liberation of Africans in particular and Blacks in general from political and socio-economic bondage. It means uplifting the quality of life of all South Africans, especially the poor, the majority of whom are African and female. At the same time it has the effect of liberating the white community from the false ideology of racial superiority and the insecurity attached to oppressing others... Precisely because patriarchal oppression was embedded in the economic, social, religious, cultural, family and other relations in all communities, its eradication cannot be an assumed consequence of democracy. All manifestations and consequences of patriarchy – from the feminisation of poverty, physical and psychological abuse, undermining of self-confidence, to open and hidden forms of exclusion from positions of authority and power – need to be eliminated. Critical in this regard is the creation of the material and cultural conditions that would allow the abilities of women to flourish and enrich the life of the nation."

These perspectives developed the ANCYL's formulations to make them distinctly revolutionary. Whereas ours was a national struggle, its class content could not be ignored and, accordingly, there were not only national forces to be mobilised, there were also class forces led by an independent working class. In 1988, Joe Slovo was to say that in South Africa, the question facing revolutionaries was not of the distinction between the national and class question in our revolution, but the relationship between the two. He argued that to ignore the national content of the class struggle as well as the class content of the national struggle was chauvinistic and self-defeating.

What informed these views and made our nationalism more revolutionary was the unique situation in our country of the existence of an industrial base, including the development early on of mining and farming capitalism. This had led to the development of a strong independent working class and working class movement. Nationalism in South Africa did not develop independently of the capitalist mode of production. The two were related to one another and hence influenced and shaped one another. This lent revolutionary class content to nationalism, and vice versa.

AN INCLUSIVE ECONOMY

Even before these obviously advanced theoretical formulations, in its Basic Policy, the ANCYL held that political democracy would remain an empty form without substance unless it was properly "grounded on a base of economic, and especially, industrial democracy". In this way, the ANCYL

first articulated the relationship between national liberation and economic emancipation. The Basic Policy dealt with land, industrial policy, trade and broader economic issues. The industrial policy advocated for the full industrialisation of South Africa to raise the level of civilisation and the standard of living of the workers; the abolition of industrial colour bars and other discriminatory provisions; and the establishment in the Constitution of the full and unhampered right of workers to organise themselves.

The ANCYL espoused an inclusive economy that embraced all peoples and groups within the state, eliminated discrimination and ensured a just and equitable distribution of wealth among the people of all nationalities, gave all men and women an equal opportunity to improve their lot, and eliminated domination and exploitation of one group by another.

Its educational policy aimed for a 100% literacy among the people, free and compulsory education for all children, mass adult education and access by all children to academic, aesthetic, vocational and technical training. It regarded the aim of such education to be to mould the characters of the young, give them a high sense of moral and ethical values, and to prepare them for a full and responsible citizenship in a democratic society.

Its cultural policy espoused the assimilation of the best elements in European and other civilisations and cultures, on the firm basis of what is good and durable in the African's own culture and civilisation so that Africa is in a position to make her own special contribution to human progress and happiness. It supported the cultural struggle of the African people and encouraged works by African artists of all categories and stood for a coordinated development of African cultural activity. It stated that: "African works of art can and should reflect

not only the present phase of the national liberatory struggle but also the world of beauty that lies beyond the conflict and turmoil of struggle."

THE BASIC POLICY TODAY

A substantive part of these policies have found articulation in the 52nd National Conference resolutions, as well the January 8th Statement 2008, regarding free and compulsory education until undergraduate level, increasing the number of no-fee schools, the *Kha ri Gude* mass literacy campaign, the need for the massification of Further Education and Training (FET) colleges, the need for the re-establishment of colleges of education to train more teachers, the need for a campaign on values in education to impart youth with the new values of the new society we are building, and others. Even economic resolutions addressed the issues raised in the Basic Policy in a substantive manner, to ensure that the economy was inclusive in that it embraced all peoples and groups within the state, eliminated discrimination and ensure a just and equitable distribution of wealth among the people of all nationalities, gave all men and women an equal opportunity to improve their lot and eliminated domination and exploitation of one group by another.

There can be no doubt that the ANCYL's Basic Policy remains relevant even today in view of the struggles that are still being waged for total emancipation. It is important that this document continues to inform current and future generations of youth and ANCYL members, to instil in them a sense of revolutionary nationalism.

MALUSI GIGABA is a member of the ANC National Executive Committee and a former President of the ANC Youth League.

Pioneers of a new intellectual age

An examination of the lives and works of five key intellectuals in colonial South Africa is an important contribution to rewriting the history of South African thought, writes Mandla Nkomfe.

In this book of less than 70 pages, Mcebisi Ndletyana, Vuyani Booï, Songezo Joel Ngqongqo and Mncedisi Qangule, have compressed a very important period in the intellectual history of the African people. The idea of this book was conceived by the Amatole District Municipality in the Eastern Cape and supported by the National Heritage Council. To realise this objective, the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) and Fort Hare University were brought in.

The focus of the book is on the Cape province when it was a colony of the British Empire. For a long time, the literature that recorded this era looked at the so-called frontier wars, missionary activity and the final defeat of the Xhosa by the English. The book takes a different angle with its focus on the intellectual activity of the colonised people. It is concise and easy to read.

The five essays contained in the book give us a refreshing perspective on the role and place of early African intellectuals the 19th century. The writers have chosen five diverse and yet powerful public intellectuals of the time. These are Ntsikana (prophet, missionary agent, musician and composer), Tiyo Soga (missionary and literary figure), John Tengo Jabavu (journalist and educational activist) and Mpilo Walter Benson Rubusana (educationist, author, journalist and politician) and Samuel Edward Krune Mqhayi (author, praise poet and educationist).

The writers rely on Antonio Gramsci's definition of an intellectual. Thus, "Intellectuals are individuals who, by virtue of their position in society and intellectual training, are preoccupied with abstract ideas, not only for self-gratification, but also to fulfil a public role. Intellectuals explain new experiences and ideas in the most accessible and understandable ways to the rest of society." Each essay discusses the different ways in which each of these historical figures fulfilled this public intellectual role.

By 1854, the Cape Colonial Administration had adopted a 'civilising' policy towards the indigenous people. Sir George Grey, the colonial administrator, was the originator of this policy. The British had to decide whether to place the locals under British rule, or let them be. The policy of civilisation answered this dilemma by arguing that the natives must be brought to the level of civilised people like the white settlers. They had to be transformed into the image of white establishment that was said to be synonymous with civilisation. To pursue this objective, British law and education was to be imposed and the natives introduced into wage labour. In this context, the book argues that the goals of the colonial state and the missionary project were the same. The overall aim being the creation of an indigenous middle class that shares a similar value system and economic interests with the white settler community.

The book goes on to say that, "This middle class would, in turn, be protective of the colonial society, serve as a pacifier of the Xhosa community, and help to spread 'civilisation'. The key question is whether these early public intellectuals played the role accorded to them by the British in so far as they could become agents of colonial rule, modernisers and a buffer between the regime and the masses of the Xhosas."

The essays in the book suggest that they played an often delicate role of linking the worldview of the African people with the project of modernity. They did this in different ways and sometimes in conflict with each other. The approaches of Jabavu and Rubusana, for instance, were instructive in this regard. In Jabavu, we see an African whose views seem to be buttressed by Cape Liberal politicians. His political approaches were conservative given the politics of the times. Jabavu supported limited political franchise to African people, was on the side of the Afrikaners in the Anglo-Boer War and supported key aspects of the Land Act of 1913,

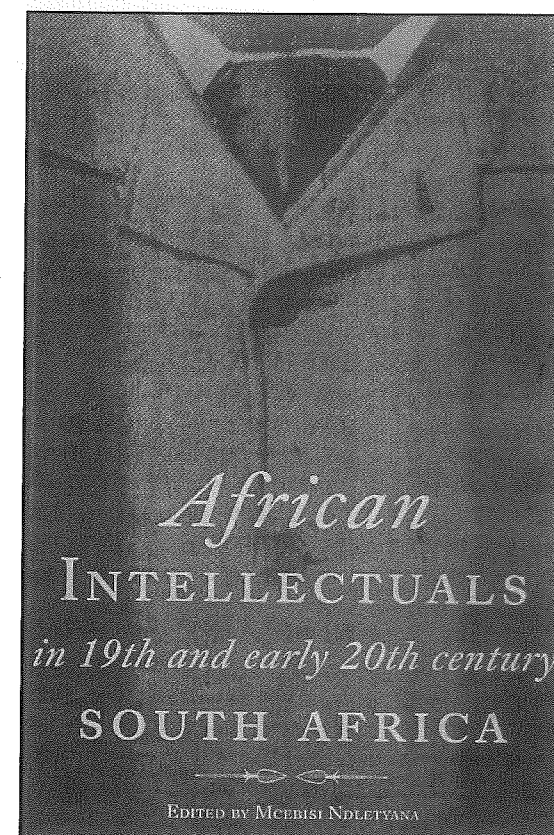
which sought to restrict Africans to some 7% of the land in South Africa. He refused to be part of the formation of the South African Native National Congress (SANNC, later the ANC) in 1912 on the basis of it being racially exclusive. The issue of the Land Act of 1913 resulted in Jabavu having running battles with Sol Plaatje, who was the founding Secretary of the ANC.

Rubusana, on the other hand, represented a more radical perspective regarding the Native Question and other related matters. Whereas Jabavu's newspaper *Imvo Zabantsundu* tended to reflect the views of white liberal politicians, who were its funders, Rubusana founded *Izwi La Bantu* which was aimed at giving clear voice to the political aspirations of Africans in the Eastern Cape. Rubusana was rooted in the political formations of black people such as the Native Vigilance Association and was elected President of the Cape-based Native Congress, which eventually merged with other provincial congresses to form the South African Native National Congress.

Yet these two also had similar concerns regarding the education of African people. Jabavu's greatest intellectual contribution was to initiate the process of the formation of the first African university in 1916, the University of Fort Hare. Rubusana was very much involved in teaching and went on to establish schools in and around East London. He advocated for compulsory education and mother-tongue education.

Ntsikana kaGhaba and Tiyo Soga played an important role in proselytising the Christian faith among the Xhosa in the early 1800s. Ntsikana maintained a link between the indigenous belief system and modernity. He started off as a prophet who understood the worldview of his people and in that capacity became an advisor to King Ngqika. Ntsikana embraced Christianity, preached the Gospel of Christ and composed hymns. Some of his hymns have become classic and remain part of the repertoire of Xhosa hymns. These include 'Umdali Wobom' (Life Creator), 'Ingoma Engquvuva' (The Round Hymn) and 'Ulo Thixo Omkhulu' (He is the Great God). According to Vuyani Booï, "Ntsikana conceptualised and constructed his religion in a way that would attract and accommodate the various cultural dimensions of his own people. Because of that fusion, Ntsikana was able to advance Christian beliefs with the African community." To compose hymns and explain the Christian faith to his people, Ntsikana had to dig deep into the indigenous belief system of his people to create a popular imagination of his new faith.

According to Mcebisi Ndletyana, "Tiyo Soga is said to be the first internationally educated black South African and priest, a pioneer of African lit-



AFRICAN INTELLECTUALS IN 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY SOUTH AFRICA

Edited by Mcebisi Ndletyana
HSRC Press

erature, and a seminal intellectual, Tiyo Soga embodied the paradox of the civilising mission." After spending time in Lovedale Seminary in 1844, Soga proceeded to study abroad in Glasgow, Scotland. On finishing his tertiary studies, he came back to be the first African missionary. He was first posted as a missionary at Mgwali in 1857 to revive the mission station there. Subsequently, Soga built churches in Tutuka and Qualoka.

Soga's main intellectual contribution was in linking traditional systems and the modernising project; the development of African literature (this involved translation of English literature into IsiXhosa and writing opinion pieces in the newspapers of the day; and the development of nationalist thought. Soga challenged the Eurocentric assumptions of missionary work. He believed that missionaries had to work from within the experiences of Africans and not demean the viewpoints and experiences of Xhosas as barbaric and thus outside history and the modern world.

Soga's ideas were fuelled by his experiences as a student in Glasgow where he was an object of

fascination among the Scots. Ndletyana claims, rightly, that, "In many ways, Soga was the first nationalist-intellectual and a progenitor of black consciousness – an ideology that would be popularised a century later by Steve Biko."

Ndletyana goes on: "Proud black man that he was, Soga advised his children that, though born to a white mother, they should identify themselves as black men in order to gain respect in life: if you wish to gain credit for yourselves – if you do not wish to feel the taunt of men, which you sometimes may be made to feel – take your place in the world as coloured, not as white men; as *Kafirs* not as English men. You will be more thought of for this by all good and wise people, than for the other. It will show them that you care not for the slight put by the prejudices of men upon one class of men, who happen to differ from them in complexion." This quotation locates Soga as one of the pioneers of nationalist thought and founder of black theology.

Samuel Edward Krune Mqhayi was the most influential public intellectual in the Eastern Cape. He was a poet and author. First and foremost, Mqhayi was a Xhosa praise poet (*Imbongi*). He wrote poetry and prose. Having listened to the stories of the past and present as told by the elders, Mqhayi developed a skill for praise poetry. Mqhayi's intellectual contributions were in the areas of nationalist thought; literature, as in chronicling the belief and legal system of the Xhosa (this is evinced in the most influential book *Ityala lama-Wele*, which sought to reveal and interrogate the Xhosa legal system); and the development of the techniques of poetry that takes into account the demands of western and Xhosa traditions.

According to Mncedisi Qangule, "Mqhayi was, however, no ordinary imbongi. He redefined the scope and the subject matter of an imbongi. Previously, iimbongi were focused inwardly on their societies. In this role they would praise or criticise the power structures to highlight abuses of power. They would also be generally concerned with the morality and welfare of the populace. Mqhayi, however, went a step further: he modified and enlarged this poetic tradition by including whites as poetic subjects. This change of subject came about as a result of Mqhayi's perception of the political changes he saw happening in the Eastern Cape. He saw the subjugation of Africans, as power began to concentrate in the white hands in the Eastern Cape. In adapting and expanding the traditional role played by an imbongi in response

to these powerful historical forces, Mqhayi created praise poetry of exceptional quality."

AFRICAN INTELLECTUALS IN THE 1800s

The intellectuals of the 19th Century faced a set of challenges different to the present. These included, among others, demands to align themselves with the imperatives of modernity in order to progress. For Africans to connect with an evolving South Africa and continue to fight for their liberation, the issue of education as a means of attaining their objective was important. Earlier forms of struggle had exhausted themselves. Therefore their role was to explain new experiences and ideas. The nature of Cape colonialism imposed a particular outlook on many an intellectual. This included a profound belief in the authenticity of the civilising mission where, once educated, they felt equal to the white establishment. They believed in the reasonableness of the system. This approach went a long way in informing their attitude to politics, hence the belief in petitions and deputations. In other words, they were conflicted subjects of the Queen. Their conflicted posture resided in the fact that, while embracing the project of modernity, they challenged the assumptions of the superiority of English culture, institutions and language. In this regard, we should consider Tiyo Soga's pleas to respect chieftaincy and record African history and values, instead of simply deriding it as the English were advocating. Then there's Rubusana, who extolled the values of vernacular, instead of English, which was exclusively promoted as the indicator of sophistication, and Ntsikana's refusal to denounce ancestral worship, while also adhering to Christian ideas.

My only concern with the book is that a wider sample of intellectuals would have been more representative. This includes covering other provinces. I would be interested in other intellectual traditions whose ideological outlook was different from the ones covered in the essays, such as those of the Communist Party, Congress and the Non-European Unity Movement in the Eastern Cape.

Overall, this book is a necessary intervention in the rewriting of our history and, hopefully, it will be made available to as many readers as possible, particularly students in colleges and universities.

MANDLA NKOMFE is ANC Deputy Provincial Secretary in Gauteng.