

TAKING POWER SERIOUSLY

Amandla!

South Africa's new progressive magazine standing for social justice.

ISSUE NO. 52 MAY 2017



ZUMA'S REGIME MUST GO

RSA
R25⁰⁰



Whither ANC? | Land and radical economic transformation | Nuclear power



A critical analysis of the ANC in power

**SOUTH AFRICA'S
CORPORATISED
LIBERATION**

DALE T. MCKINLEY

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Cover Illustration:
Donovan Ward



Does it mean then we don't care about the fight between the predatory Guptas on the one hand and established global capital on the other?

Zuma's regime must go

IMAGINE. THE POLITICAL CRISIS is over. Zuma has resigned and been allowed to leave the country for the Philippines, where President Duterte has said he can stay as long as he likes. The ANC has elevated Cyril Ramaphosa to the presidency. A flood of new investment has poured into the SA bond market and the Rand is now trading at R11.55 to the dollar. S&P has just reviewed SA credit rating and upgraded the country to BBB – back to investment grade. SA First has cancelled marches that were scheduled to take place on June 16. Angus Buchan, who led more than a million in prayer during the crisis, proclaimed that his people's prayers had been granted. God is bountiful.

Imagine that you are one of the more than 9 million unemployed people of South Africa. Your sister is one of the 17 million South Africans who receive social grants.

What difference does all this hullabaloo about "credit ratings" make to your lives? What difference does this change make - from Zuma the Gupta lackey to Ramaphosa, the BEE millionaire?

Ramaphosa instead of Zuma? Does it make a difference?

Clearly, the crisis in South Africa runs much deeper than Zuma. It is a crisis of the economy as well as a crisis of politics. Whatever the resolution of the political crisis, there will still be a crisis of de-industrialisation, of jobs, of houses and provision of decent services. Most of all, there will be the crisis of the extreme gap between the rich and poor.

How do we respond to this crisis?

SO DOES IT MEAN THEN WE DON'T CARE about the fight between the predatory Guptas on the one hand and established global capital on the other?

Interestingly, on this issue, Cosatu and Numsa, noted rivals, seem to agree. A plague on both their houses, they say. They are all thieves.

At odds with Cosatu and Numsa is the new General Secretary of Saftu, Zwelinzima Vavi. He has been clear for many months that the predatory elite is a key enemy and the toppling of its chief representative in the state, Jacob Zuma, a key task.

A distinct variant has come recently from Chris Malikane – the new advisor to the new Minister of Finance. Interestingly, he has in the past been an advisor to both Cosatu and Numsa. But he doesn't agree with either of them on this issue either. In his view, we must certainly take sides. We must support the predatory elite in their battle with "white monopoly capital". They are completing the tasks of the National Democratic Revolution. Therefore we must join with them in "a broad anti-white monopoly capitalist united front". There is a critique of this approach on Page 10 .

Do we take sides? Which side are we on?

IT IS QUITE TRUE THAT THE factions of the ANC represent the interests of different sections of capital.

Zuma represents the looter capitalist section, a kind of lumpen bourgeoisie, the tenderpreneurs, the State-Owned Enterprise parasites. Cyril is closer to big, global capital – which is after all

where he made and continues to make his money.

So if it is a war between fractions of capital, why interfere? Let them destroy each other. We will get on with our own business with our one-day stayaway focused on our own demands.

There are three main reasons why we disagree with this analysis:

1. The key argument is that the looter capitalists threaten democracy. Yes, we know it's a limited form of democracy that protects private ownership. But it still provides better conditions for struggle than repressive dictatorship. The looter capitalists need to control the justice and law and order arms of the state in order to be able to continue looting. Zuma's focus on placing compliant people in these positions is no accident. The global capitalists, on the other hand, have no such need. They make profit in the "normal" way – exploitation of labour.
2. The second reason is that the activities of the looter capitalists affect the material conditions of life of the working class and the poor. Rising interest and bond rates will have the most severe effect on the working class

and the poor who are most dependent on the state for resources.

3. Thirdly, control of the Treasury gives the predators the means to prioritise unnecessary investment. They do this because it provides new opportunities for looting. Hence the war over the nuclear deal, in which the predators lost a battle, courtesy of the Cape High Court, just before Amandla went to press. Hence the trains that are too big, the inefficient but lucrative coal supplies to Eskom. Hence. Hence. Hence. The list is endless.

So, we believe that the defeat of the kleptocracy is in the interests of the working class and the poor. But we don't believe that "your enemy's enemy must be your friend". Waging war on the kleptocracy does not for a minute represent support for what Malikane and others call "white minority capital". On the contrary, fighting against the kleptocracy will strengthen the working class in its life and death struggle with neoliberalism and capitalism as a whole.

But you are standing in the way of radical economic transformation!

SO GOES THE SELF-SERVING, opportunistic argument of the dominant faction of the ANC leadership. Yes. They are really trying to sell this story, incredible as it may seem. To believe it, you would have to believe that coincidentally, after 23 years in power, they have suddenly decided now to change the course of macro-economic strategy completely. Of course, you would also have to reconcile this story, which is for the South African masses, with the other ANC story that nothing will change. That is the story they are telling the ratings agencies and overseas investors.

But this story is not innocent. It would be a joke if it wasn't so serious. Imagine "radical economic transformation" in the hands of the ANC. Imagine nationalisation of the banks, for example, under the control of the ANC. Or the mines. Or other parts of the "commanding heights". What we see now at Eskom and Prasa would pale into insignificance in comparison. The sufferers again would be the working class and the poor.



When the opposition parties marched together, it wasn't the DA which dominated. It was the red berets and t-shirts of the EFF.

Do we join the current protests?

IF WE DO, ARE WE JUST FOLLOWING THE whites? Or the middle class? They don't jump up and down about poverty or exploitation. They only get really upset when you try to take away their control of the Treasury. Let them get on with it. We have other issues to pursue.

We believe that we cannot afford to isolate ourselves, as the working class and the poor, from activism, just because it contains significant middle class forces. On the contrary, our task is to lead those forces. We know that we don't have the same fundamental class interests. But right now the middle class is also hurt by the same economic forces that attack the working class and the poor. They will be poorer. Not poor, but certainly poorer. They will pay more for their credit – their houses and cars. More for their utilities.

As long as we are able to express our class interests within a mass movement, that is where we should be, promoting the self-activity of the oppressed layers in society.

Imagine if all the marches all over the country on Friday 7 April had been supported by workers and workers' organisations. Whose banners would have been the most prominent? Who would have been there in the greatest numbers? When the opposition parties marched together, it wasn't the DA which

dominated. It was the red berets and t-shirts of the EFF.

And our banners and placards could say "ANC must fall", "Capitalism must fall" etc. By being there, we would contest for leadership of this "national" struggle. By staying away, we abandon the terrain.

That is why we have always fought for the principle of the "united front". That is what the united front is – a variety of class forces combining around limited demands, all free, at the same time, to pursue our own demands.

Conclusion

POLITICS IS ABOUT ENGAGEMENT. Studying, reading, issuing statements – these are all necessary components of political activity, but in the end respect is won through engagement. It is only through engagement with non-radical forces over common interests that we can hope to convince others that really, there is no alternative. As long as we are permitted to speak our minds in popular movements, that is where activists should be. ■

Disclaimer

The views expressed in these articles do not necessarily reflect those of the Alternative Information & Development Centre, or the *Amandla!* Editorial Collective.

news briefs

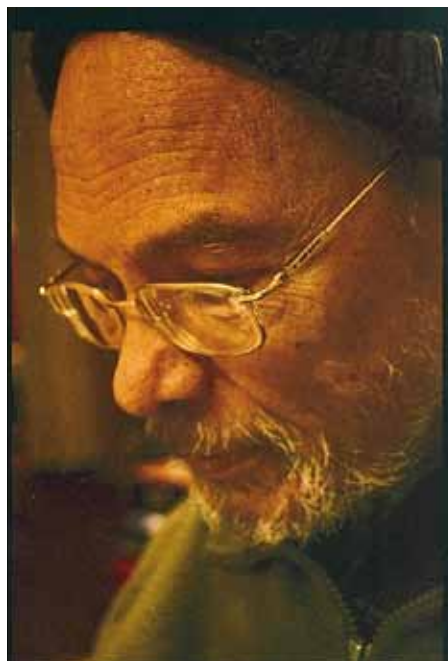
south africa

TNC merger will dominate seed market

MONSANTO AND BAYER WANT TO MERGE. These two seed and agrochemical companies dominate the global market. Together they would control 30% of the global seed market. In South Africa, they would have an absolute monopoly on commercially available cotton seed. This merger can still be stopped and the Southern Africa Campaign to Dismantle Corporate Power is campaigning to achieve that.

Making money from social grants

THE INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISTS, Amabunghane, call Lunga Ncwana a



Tribute to Kenneth Abrahams

Amandla! was saddened to hear of the death of Kenneth Abrahams. Kenny was an activist in the Non-European Unity Movement in the 1950s. As a member of the Ovamboland People's Organisation, the precursor to Swapo, he was in a branch with many who became Swapo's leaders. He was committed to non-collaboration and internationalism. His struggle was to infuse the Namibian national liberation movement with democratic and socialist ideas.

Thus, today we say: Hamba Kahle Comrade Kenneth Abrahams. Rest in power. The struggle for a socialist Namibia continues.

A full tribute is available on the *Amandla!* website.

"shadowy middleman". He lives in a R65m mansion, thanks to two directors of a JSE-listed IT company, EOH. EOH so far has R300m in social development IT contracts and, Amabunghane says, "is positioning itself to become a central player in a future social grants distribution system". It just shows how capital has learned to make money from poverty.

Nuclear price tag

SINCE THE COURT RULING ON THE ZUPA nuclear power project, its protagonists have made it clear that they see the ruling as just a "bump in the road". So, the campaign continues. We were interested to hear of a way of putting the R1 trillion price tag into perspective. The entire asset value of commercial agriculture in South Africa is R393 billion. That includes land and fixed improvements, machinery and livestock. That's not much more than one-third of the price of the nuclear power that we don't need.

international

Violence against unionists in Honduras

THE HONDURAN AGRICULTURE TRADE union, STAS, is currently fighting multinational fruit company Fyffes for better working conditions. On 13 April, leader of the union Moises Sanchez and his brother Misael were cycling to their home in the village of La Permuta, when they were ambushed by a gang of six armed men. Misael was seriously wounded in the face by one of the criminals who attacked him with a machete. Moises was kidnapped, beaten and threatened with death if he continued the union work.

Fyffes has been at the centre of a scandal involving labour rights abuses in the south of Honduras. Workers, the majority of whom are women, are not paid the mandatory minimum wage, work long shifts, are subjected to poor hygiene and safety conditions and are threatened with dismissals when they try to organise.

Nice to see the high moral standards of TNCs as they make their profits around the world.

More precarious stories

A UK COMPANY CHARGED A WORKER £800 (more than R13,000) for being off sick. It seems it is common for courier drivers to have to pay their company to hire a replacement if they are off sick. A car drove into Emil Ibrahimov as he was delivering parcels. He ended up hobbling around on crutches, unable to work. UK Mail, the company he works for, says he is self-employed, not an employee. So his sick note is irrelevant. And it cost them £800 to hire a replacement while he was off sick. So he must pay them £800. Meanwhile, UK Mail made a profit of £16m (R270m) last year. Their business model for this profit is clear.

The R1 billion UK Election

THERESA MAY CAME TO OFFICE AS THE UK Prime Minister promising there would be no early general election. She repeated that promise many times. Now she has called an early general election. Why? Because she decided it's necessary. That's it. Changing her mind on a commitment is neither here nor there. And then the irony. The central plank of her election campaign is to provide "strong and stable" government. Some stability.

Zanufication or renewal: whither ANC?

This was the title of an Amandla Forum in Cape Town in April. There were four speakers:



Jeremy Cronin: Deputy General Secretary of the SACP and Deputy Minister of Public Works



Tony Ehrenreich: Provincial Secretary of Cosatu Western Cape



Mbuyiseni Ndlozi: National Spokesperson of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF)



Noor Nieftagodien: AIDC Board member and member of the Amandla Collective.

THE INPUTS REPRESENT THE diversity of left views on the current crisis. Amandla was particularly interested in understanding the stance of the SACP, in the light of the huge responsibility it



carries for bringing and sustaining Zuma in power and dividing Cosatu over the alliance with the ANC.

It is disappointing that Jeremy Cronin was only able to account for the failure of the National Democratic Revolution to date by saying “unfortunately a different dominant line prevailed within the ANC”. Support for Zuma at Polokwane was “a marriage of convenience” that went wrong. Despite all this, he sticks with the same strategy: “What we require is a genuine second radical phase of the National Democratic Revolution.” This leads him to propose a popular front, in which the SACP seeks to build an alliance of class collaboration between working class organisations and sections of the elite, under its leadership and programme.

Tony Ehrenreich accepts that “Cosatu today is a fraction of what it was”. He advocates “unity of workers on a non partisan basis”. Polokwane was “a fundamental mistake... because we have personalised the issue.” He criticises Cosatu for making again “the same mistake we have”, this time with Cyril. He doesn’t mention the National Democratic

Revolution, but he explains Cosatu’s refusal to become involved in “Zuma must fall” as a refusal to participate in “a squabble between thieves”. It is supported by forces who have never supported working class issues.

The EFF is clearly the biggest force on the left, able to mobilise thousands on the streets. However, what is less clear is their strategy for getting rid of Zuma and addressing the mammoth social crisis faced by the mass of poor and working people.

It is concerning that they go into the “Zuma must fall” campaign as a single issue campaign, without trying to connect that with a set of demands that address the economic and social crisis. This is an opportunity to radicalise the struggle, to extend the demands beyond “Zuma must fall”. It is a chance to contest the dominance of liberal ideology and put working class issues at the forefront. As Amandla!, we were also interested in EFF’s tactical alliances with the liberal opposition, particularly the DA, and its perspective of uniting with other left forces.



The EFF is clearly the biggest force on the left, able to mobilise thousands on the streets. However, what is less clear is their strategy for getting rid of Zuma and addressing the mammoth social crisis faced by the mass of poor and working people.

Mbuyiseni Ndlozi from the EFF says that “the only tool that is in the hands of the people...is the State”. The problem is the corruption of the “democratic state”. The solution is to “build street by street an alternative, village by village, township by township, and replace the draconian kleptocratic ANC.” In other words, the solution lies in building an alternative political party to challenge for control of the state, rather than a united front movement.

Noor Nieftagodien from AIDC says categorically, “The fundamental crisis we have is a crisis of the National Democratic Revolution. The NDR has run its course.” He criticises the two-stage belief “that once you capture the state certain things will follow, that a kind of radical transformation will follow”. He agrees that Polokwane was a marriage of convenience, but asks, “Where was the class analysis?” In place of a broad patriotic front, he proposes a “socialist left bloc”. “We must build movements door-to-door, street-by-street, not to become EFF members, not to become Communist Party members...but to build movements”.

In the next pages, we have selected four key areas on which the speakers focused, and grouped some of their responses together.

The crisis in the ANC



Jeremy Cronin: THE ANC, I THINK we would all agree, is suffering from a very deep and systemic, not just personal individualised, crisis. Is it capable of renewal? Well my optimism of the will

would like to believe that it is capable of renewal. I would certainly work as an ANC member not to push the ANC over the cliff. But with the pessimism of my intellect, I am obviously deeply uncertain about the prospects of the ANC having the capacity, from within its structures, as it presently finds itself and on its current trajectory, to actually manage any kind of renewal. And frankly, on its current trajectory, it's heading for steep decline, fragmentation and possible implosion.



Mbuyiseni Ndlozi: THE ANC, LIKE all liberation movements, has run its course. It is not going to deliver on an agenda that will lead to genuine liberation. In 2007, when capitalism went into crisis, most working class formations couldn't take advantage of that crisis. They couldn't score real gains. Why? Because the working class formations are not united. Where are they? They are inside the ANC fighting a lost hope of factionalism.

Every ten years, every seven years or five years you are at this point trying to convince yourselves that a faction will save you. You have to disabuse yourself that this tool called the ANC is ever going to come to the rescue of the working class. It is not. Its time is done. It will only take us to securing the democratic state. Beyond the democratic state it has no capacity to take us beyond.



Noor Nieftagodien: WHEN YOU look at many of the branches of the ANC, they have become not only centres of

factional disputes but they have also become centres of procurement. To change that, to place the energies of the left to try and change that, is a dead end.

What happened is that the Communist Party and Cosatu criminalised workers in struggle. The Marikana massacre was a high point of state violence. And in all of that, Cosatu and the Communist Party sided with the ruling party. It was a key moment and I would like to see Cosatu and the Communist Party look itself squarely in the mirror. If you are going to redeem yourself, I think you need to confront that question.

A similar process occurred with Fees Must Fall. Blade Nzimande has consistently criminalised the Fees Must Fall movement.

The state, redistribution and the National Democratic Revolution



Jeremy Cronin: FROM 1994 TO 1996 was a period in which there was a radical break: the first phase of a national radical phase of a national democratic revolution. The institutions of white minority rule were abolished. We introduced one person one vote, representative democracy.

And what the SACP argued at the time, and continues to argue, is that, immediately following that breakthrough of 1994 through to 1996, we should have opened up a new front of struggle: what we might now call a second radical phase of the National Democratic Revolution. Unless we opened the new front of struggle which addressed the structural and systemic problems we inherited from internal colonialism of South Africa, the gains and advantages of the democratic break-through would not be advanced or even defended. And indeed we have also said at the time that the ANC itself would gradually erode in terms of its popular support, would lose its direction, unless it led a process of a second radical phase.

Now unfortunately a different dominant line prevailed within the ANC. What later came to be called the “Third Way” – a centre-left politics, which basically said that there are no alternatives to neo-liberalism. Let's embrace globalisation and financialisation. They

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are the royal route to all things good and wonderful. But having embraced those things, we will also do some kind of redistribution. And there was redistribution through that period.

The first kind of re-distribution was of course BEE - the redistribution of shares to a small privileged elite within the ANC and a kind of elite pact between dominant monopoly capital in South Africa and the new elite. And this was justified on the grounds that what we are trying to do, what the National Democratic Revolution was really about, is normalising and deracialising South African capitalism. It is not about the radical restructuring of the deep-seated colonial distortions of our political economy.

And from leading sections of the ANC still today the same thing is being said. Radical economic transformation consists in ensuring that blacks manage, own and control the commanding heights of the economy. No talk about socialising the economy, no talk about worker empowerment, popular empowerment. So it's about de-racialising monopoly capital.

Editorial Comment: A SIMILAR stance was taken by Cosatu's Tony Ehrenreich:



Tony Ehrenreich: THE FREEDOM Charter essentially said that what we have got to do is to ensure that we grow the economy but still carry out redistribution. There's enough wealth in this country for all of the people. We have to make sure we find the mechanism to spread it more evenly. It will grow the economy and it will give everybody opportunities.

Two years into the marriage, we had the ANC coming up with Gear. Gear said that there will only be redistribution after growth. Some of the results of growth will trickle down to the poor people. So classical trickle-down economics was



The Daily Maverick photoshopped key leaders of the Polokwane alliance as the three tenors. Jeremy Cronin calls Polokwane a "marriage of convenience".

meant to address the problems in South Africa, which it clearly could never do.

Black Economic Empowerment was essentially about the purchase of the ANC's soul. The ANC National Working Committee and many of the ANC MECs were taken on as partners in Black Economic Empowerment deals. Nearly a 25% stake in these companies set aside to enrich the political elite, to make sure that we can't touch the wealth amassed under apartheid.

But remember that these things came about with very carefully constructed plans. While we were negotiating the transition and the mechanisms of democracy at Kempton Park, Thabo Mbeki was meeting at the Development Bank up in Sandton with white monopoly capital and essentially talking about how they were going to carve up the economy and what was going to happen and that we couldn't touch a lot of the commanding heights of the economy, to make sure we address many of the challenges that exist.

They wanted to defend the legacy and the ownership practices of apartheid and they have been able to achieve that to a greater extent. And those policies spoke about trade liberalisation and deregulation of the labour market. So we have labour broking, outsourcing sub-contractors, workers essentially earning half the pay they earned a year before without any of the benefits.

And so they impoverished the working class and created the gap between the wealthy and the poor that was greater than what existed under the days of apartheid. And if anything, that must

have told us that the policy trajectory we were on was clearly wrong. But this was the black elite within the ANC taking up the opportunities.



Mbuyiseni Ndlozi: WHAT HAS really happened here in our view is that kleptocracy has come on fully. What happened in 1994 is that the democratic movement got this one tool which is the state. It is the only tool that is in the hands of people. It is the reason why we are able to get RDPS, because of the democratic state. When you corrupt the democratic state, when it begins to be run by a family that was not even there in the struggle, you are taking the only thing out of the hands of black people, out of the hands of the democratic forces. And that is why the state of capture is the most dangerous thing that has happened in the last five years in South Africa. And that is why we have got to unite and oppose it.



Noor Nieftegadien: I THINK THAT what we need to understand is that the fundamental crisis we have is a crisis of the National Democratic Revolution. The NDR has run its course. And this is why in all the factional fights that we

have had, we have not had anyone or any component of the alliance being able to provide a vision, not only to address the current crisis but also to provide a vision of where we have to go to.

The problem is fundamentally what we debated in the 1970s and 1980s. It is the problem with this idea of the two stages - the belief that once you capture the state certain things will follow, that a kind of radical transformation will follow. Of course, that hasn't happened. And the reality is that the ANC and its alliance partners are not capable of doing that. It's like we are being sucked into what we can

disappointed tenderpreneurs. These tenderpreneurs were not part of the inner charmed circle. They hadn't benefited from the arms deal and all of those things and felt excluded by Mbeki. They wanted to get their hands on power broking.



Tony Ehrenreich: AND SO MY comrade spoke about the convenient marriage in 2009, when President Jacob

The problem here is much more than Zuma, clearly. The ANC's National Working Committee defended Zuma. Both Cyril and Gwede had to apologise for some of the statements that they made, which clearly shows us that it's not just an individual. There are many in the NEC that's also been bought already and they are preparing themselves for the December conference.



Noor Nieftagodien: KARL MARX wrote famously, in the 18th Brumaire, that history repeats itself, first as tragedy and second as farce. It's not simply about individualising the problem. It is, as Jeremy has said, not understanding what the fundamental crisis is. And therefore it is a problem that Cosatu has endorsed Ramaphosa. It is fundamentally wrong to repeat this error of placing our political eggs into the Ramaphosa basket. Because it doesn't address the fundamental questions of why we have this problem.

I hear that it was a marriage of convenience. But where was the class analysis? Many of us criticised Zuma. We knew what Zuma was about. Of course, we couldn't pre-empt the extent of the kleptocracy that would take over. But there was analysis there. And yet the Communist Party, Cosatu and of course the ANC Youth League at that point were the most vocal advocates of Zuma. So I think that we need to hear more of the contrition and the recognition that what happened then was a fundamental mistake.

Broad Patriotic Front/unity of workers



Jeremy Cronin: THERE NEEDS, IN the first instance, to be a broad patriotic front, and we saw that marching in the streets in the last week. But that remains the politics of the middle strata. We need also now to embed it into the issues that are struggled with, and mobilise action of working class and popular forces... What we require is a genuine second radical phase of the National Democratic Revolution.



What happened is that the Communist Party and Cosatu criminalised workers in struggle. The Marikana massacre was a high point of state violence. And in all of that, Cosatu and the Communist Party sided with the ruling party.

call a kind of politics of purgatory - this second stage, that keeps on wanting to happen. It keeps on being given different names as they are always about to launch into the next radical stage.

Polokwane



Jeremy Cronin: BASICALLY, IT WAS A marriage of convenience between two different sets of forces. On the one hand, Cosatu, the SACP but others also in the ANC who opposed the neoliberal political macro-economic policies that had prevailed, and which continue to prevail, within government. And then on the other hand the right wing led by ANC Youth League elements who were

Zuma came to power. And Cosatu for its sins was part of that alliance, an alliance that was disaffected, that wanted Thabo Mbeki out because we felt that he was the problem. But surely we made a fundamental mistake, because we have personalised the issue. The issues at that stage were clearly much more than individuals. It was about orientation, it was about vested interest and it was about the powers who are ruling the society in their own interest.

Cosatu is opposed to the continuation of President Zuma. We want President Zuma out because of the problems that he has caused. But we are making the same mistake we have made when we asked President Zuma to take over from Mbeki. We are again personalising the issue. So we want Cyril Ramaphosa to take over without dealing with the systemic issues that led to a corrupt cabal coming to power in the ANC that caused the problems that we are in today.

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Tony Ehrenreich: COSATU TODAY IS a fraction of what it was. The first thing we have to think about doing is to build a unity of workers on a non-partisan basis. Set the politics aside for a moment to make sure that unions are uniting, so that the working class has a much greater say in the kind of society we build and the choices of government policy in parliament... Today, we are largely unable to affect the political trajectory of the ANC and they are able to operate on their own with all of the troubles that we see.

Cosatu said that they are not going to join these protests. And the reason why we are not joining the protests is because we think this is a squabble between the thieves. The thieves who had stolen under apartheid want to hold onto what they have stolen. The thieves who are stealing today with Zuma want the space to be able to steal more. None of them ever have concerns about what happens to the poor and the working class. None of them in the main have marched for democracy, against labour brokers, or for land reform. They are not concerned about the issues that build a more egalitarian society where our people can come together in a meaningful way.

Those who are funding the banners for a lot of the marches were guilty of the collusion around the bread prices and chicken prices and steel prices. Yet we are not talking about their corruption. Let's make sure we are consistent.



Mbuyiseni Ndlozi: NONE OF OUR banners in the march that we had on the national day of action were sponsored by people who are described by comrade Tony. In fact I think that the EFF represents a very proper record of consistency: we have marched against the banks, we have marched against the Chamber of Mines. We don't march for the land – we occupy the land and people run to courts to make sure that we stop that business of occupying the land.

All solidarities are questionable, including the solidarity long held by Cosatu. In fact, your solidarity is much more problematic. It's not a street



When you corrupt the democratic state, when it begins to be run by a family that was not even there in the struggle, you are taking the only thing out of the hands of black people, out of the hands of the democratic forces. And that is why the state of capture is the most dangerous thing that has happened in the last five years in South Africa.

solidarity for one day. You have been holding that problematic solidarity for the last twenty years.

The biggest, most important question facing us as the left is our unity for the agenda of a true transformation, readying the working class people on socialist principles. And not just locally. At an international level, there is a bigger crisis of uniting left forces.

So what do we do? We have got to build an alternative - that is the decision of the Economic Freedom Fighters. We put a challenge to the entire left formations. We have got to build street by street an alternative, village by village, township by township, and replace the draconian, kleptocratic ANC that has no interest but to constantly asphyxiate genuine transformation.



Noor Niefertagodien: LET ME JUST SAY again, for the sake of brevity and perhaps provocatively, that those people who believe that we shouldn't march against Zuma are being sectarian. They don't understand, as Mbuyiseni said, the moment that we are in. We can have discussions about the kinds of alliances that we need to establish. But this is one of the key challenges we face today. It's not the only one but it's a very important part of the transition.

it is very important that even if we come to the conclusion that there is no future with the ANC, we do not dismiss the fact that there are many people who still have hopes in the ANC. That is not to say that we need to go back into the ANC. I think that is a cul-de-sac. But it means that the kind of politics that we produce must not be a sectarian politics. In the constitution of something new, there will be many people in the ANC, in the Communist Party, in Cosatu who we can't dismiss.

We need to produce a kind of politics that will allow us to bring people who are critical – not only of Zuma, but of the fundamental systemic crisis - out into a new a kind of movement. So we do need a socialist left bloc. That in my mind is indisputable.

It is true that we are on the streets at the moment, and we need to march strategically to get rid of Zuma. But where we need to place our energies is in the creation of a left bloc. What we can't have is to channel this kind of energy, this new energy, this kind of hope, the possibility of a new left politics into party politics only. That will be a fundamental mistake. We need to build movements. We must build movements door-to-door, street-by-street, not to become EFF members, not to become Communist Party members – if they choose to be, so be it – but to build movements.

BEE out of the closet: Malikane's alliance for "black" capitalism

By Dick Forslund



Mbizana, an area which is a target for mining, resisted by the local community. How would Malikane's "broad anti-white monopoly capitalist united front" work out in Mbizana?

We do not confuse exploitation or exploiters with the colour of men's skins; we do not want any exploitation in our countries, not even by black people.

– Amílcar Cabral

PROFESSOR CHRIS MALIKANE at Wits is one of the advisors to the new and nervous Finance Minister, Mr Gigaba. For this reason, Malikane's recently published version of "Radical Economic Transformation" caused an outcry from DA, business

and representatives of finance capital. His first, longer paper "Concerning the Current Situation" was followed by "Call for anti-imperialist workers to unite" in *Sunday Independent*.

In the latter article, the ANC government is asked to come up with "a new National Economic Plan". The plan should outline how demands for "expropriation of white monopoly capitalist establishments" (mines, banks, insurance companies, monopoly industries ...) can "immediately be realised". In the same vein, Malikane calls for "expropriation of all land without compensation".

Intensified BEE that destroys ANC

MUCH MORE IMPORTANT THAN WHAT Malikane thinks should "immediately be realised" by the ANC in a distant future,

is the political project he thinks should be immediately realised now. And that is support for the rise of the "tender-based black capitalist class", which "has no coherent historical international backing".

When we put his "broad anti-white monopoly capitalist united front" under the magnifying glass, its essence is support for intensified Black Economic Empowerment policy (BEE). It is a deepening of the project that has destroyed the ANC, bringing the organisation into disrepute, into internal chaos and murderous lawlessness. Combining patronage with neoliberalism, as it did, the really existing "National Democratic Revolution" has been divisive, increasingly undemocratic and counter revolutionary. It has pushed working class communities and trade unions backwards with labour broking and mass unemployment. Right now it is also

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threatening basic democratic gains from 1994.

Still, Malikane writes: “in so far as the tender-based capitalist class has begun a war against the dominant white monopoly capitalist class, it has to be encouraged”. Well, this is what the Zuma faction is doing. Consequently, Malikane distances himself from the calls for President Zuma to step down, by simply not mentioning it. He sticks to “the main contradiction”, like Chairman Mao, as it were.

We should step into a kind of stage where “white monopoly capital” for a long period is the only true enemy. It is a faction of the ruling class that is in coalition with “the credit-based black capitalist class”. Its “ownership and control of the state and the ruling party is being threatened by the rise of the tender-based black capitalist class”. That is why these tenderpreneurs should get our sympathies and support.

In the current situation, Malikane therefore proposes no measures against rampant corruption. He sees no threats to democratic rights and to the rule of law. Meanwhile, even the security cluster is becoming factionalised.

Indeed, in his first press conference, Finance Minister Gigaba stated that the policy of tenders and outsourcing will be “unapologetically” continued. Malikane’s support for this was indicated by his answers to City Press in an interview on 23 April. He defended Gigaba’s pledge to corporations and finance capital that nothing would change. He was surprisingly quoted saying: “Investors have to be assured that South Africa is a destination for investment. The Cabinet reshuffle shouldn’t lead to doubts. The ANC’s financial policy is still the same. We are on course.”

Malikane’s project for a “broad anti-white monopoly capitalist united front” or “broad anti-imperialist front” will serve as the Zuma faction’s left flank. It will fit well with Zuma’s latest speeches about “foreign influence”.

Concrete analysis

CONCRETE ANALYSIS OF CONCRETE circumstances is the living soul of Marxism, as Lenin once said. So, let us take a concrete example and apply Malikane’s strategic scheme.

Mbizana is a municipality in Eastern Cape. The largest private employer is the Wild Coast Sun. Mbizana is also the municipality of the coastal Amadiba community who are struggling against mining, in defence of their communal land.

How would Malikane’s “broad anti-white monopoly capitalist united front” work out in Mbizana, where Oliver Tambo was born and where the Pondo



MRC, the company which wants to mine in Mbizana, already runs a controversial open cast mine north of Cape Town.

rebellion started in 1959-60? What are the class forces and where are the possibilities of progressive alliances?

The tourist attraction, the Wild Coast Sun hotel and casino, was established in the 1980s by evicting over 100 families from their land. Their land claim was recently successful, but it is right now under threat of being diverted by the mining lobby, the Amadiba chief, and corrupt elements in the Land Department. Outsiders want a piece of the deal.

The Wild Coast Sun is owned by the transnational company, Sun International. The vast majority of close to 1,500 workers are casually employed, even those who have worked there for twenty years. They have just organised themselves in Amcu, after being let down by Satawu. The employer is unwilling to engage in negotiations. Many workers took part in an unprotected strike over Christmas. We will see what will happen with this struggle for workers’ rights, permanent employment and decent wages.

The BEE partner of Wild Coast Sun owns a 30% share in the casino (paid out as a multi-million rand “management fee” in order to avoid tax). This share is controlled by the local mining lobby – a group of about 15 local people, led by a Mr X. Mr X has organised a faction in support of his projects in the regional structures of ANC. Some of these projects are public works programme tenders for the Mbizana Local Municipality (where they always pay about R500 below the legal EPWP monthly wage of R1,800 per month, for some reason).

The same group is also flocking around SANRAL’s N2 Toll Road project. The road is planned to run between 3 and 5km from the coast, along the projected open cast mining area. It will divide

the coastal villages with a fenced 100m wide highway.

The same Mr X is a director in one of the subsidiaries of the Australian mining company MRC. MRC is the company which runs a controversial open cast mine north of Cape Town.

For 15 years MRC has fought for the right set up an open-cast titanium mine of titanium minerals on the coast at Mbizana, against the will of the coastal Amadiba community. As a director of MRC, Mr X signs all the affidavits for the company which is applying for the mining licence, TEM. The Amadiba chief is also a director of TEM.

The income to the BEE partner of the casino is supposed to be used by the Mbizana Trust for community projects, but the trust has lately come under community pressure, with suspicion of embezzlement and mismanagement. Just like almost all trusts in SA, its financials however are secret. The mining lobby controls who sits in the board.

MRC (which has not left the Mbizana mining project, despite what was announced last year) and the rogue business cabal is supported:

- by the Provincial Government
- by Zuma’s Presidency (through its project of putting the N2 and mining supporter Zanozuko as the king of AmaMpondo)
- by SANRAL, with tenders and political cooperation
- by the local SAPS (which time and again is granting the mining lobby impunity for its attacks in the coastal community)
- by Sun International through millions of rand going to its local BEE partner (an estimated R10m last year)
- by the Department of Mineral Resources (DMR)

Black and Non-White

The concept non white appears in Steve Biko's writings in *The Definition of Black Consciousness* (1971). The famous passage reads in full:

The fact that we are all not white does not necessarily mean that we are all black. Non-whites do exist and will continue to exist for quite a long time. If one's aspiration is whiteness but his pigmentation makes attainment of this impossible, then that person is a non-white. Any man who calls a white man "baas", any man who serves in the police force or security branch is ipso facto a non-white.

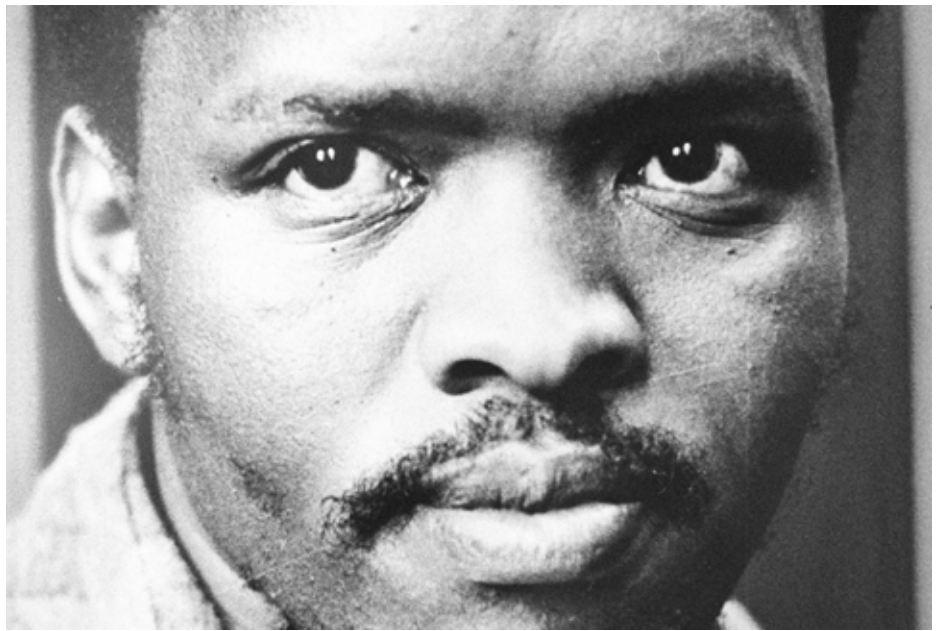
- by important ANC figures in the region and MPs in the Cape Town parliament
- by the Mbizana municipality leaders, who recently made an illegal change of the plans for the coast to include open cast mining. The change is being challenged in court.

These forces meet regularly and coordinate all moves (court cases, police raids in the coastal community, allocation of tenders, nomination fraud in the ANC before the local elections, plans in Mbizana planning documents, violent efforts to abolish the oppositionist coastal traditional authority, and so on).

There is no clear-cut tender- or credit-based "black" capitalist class in this story. There is the rot in the ANC. There is the anti-community police force. There are the intransigent officials of SANRAL and the DMR. There is MRC.

Here, as elsewhere, there is also a fourth component coming to the capitalist party: "business kings, chiefs and headmen", a process the Zuma government is trying to underpin with new legislation called the "Traditional Khoi-San and Leadership Bill".

We cannot know, of course, what squabbles there are between the forces in that "alliance" about their share in the profits and projects: the local mining lobby and traditional business leaders, the new "black" capitalists, on the one hand, and MRC and Sun International (or SANRAL), on the other. But there is no "anti-imperialist", "black" capitalist fight against any "white monopoly capital" to support. To propose such a campaign or front would be a dark joke. Should we campaign for the "black" capitalists to have a larger share in the Wild Coast Sun casino? More tenders from SANRAL? These are the same people held responsible by the anti-mining community for the assassination of Bazooka Radebe in March last year, allegedly backed by MRC.



"The fact that we are all not white does not necessarily mean that we are all black. Non-whites do exist and will continue to exist for quite a long time." Steve Biko.

What is needed in Mbizana is not a phony "broad anti-white monopoly capitalist united front", promoting more "black" shareholding in historically white companies. Indeed, the government (and even the MRC) is already trying to play the "black" card in the community: Now the "blacks" are taking over the mining from the Australians, halala! This BEE move has been rejected with contempt by the community. The people laugh in anger at the constant efforts to confuse issues. Malikeane complains that the black working class is led into confusion if the White Monopoly Capital issue is not raised. It is exactly the opposite.

A different alliance

WHAT IS NEEDED IN MBIZANA, AS IN other places, is an alliance between the workers and the rural community, overwhelming the enemy with mass democratic action and education. For decent work and wages, for the kind of development and modernisation that people want.

For people's power against the enemies of the people: the broad capitalist rainbow alliance, that hates progressive laws and democracy itself, always tries to stop economic emancipation of the majority and always rule by deception, confusion and violence.

Our new capitalists as "Black" or Non-White?

WHATEVER HISTORICAL OR PRESENT value the term has as an analytical tool, "White Monopoly Capital" (WMC) is increasingly used as a slogan. It is supposed to fool workers and communities so that they don't oppose

capitalism as such. It is there to whip up support for corruption when fierce opposition is what is needed. The WMC slogan gets its persuasive power by being opposed to Black.

For that reason I have written "black" in quotation marks before the word "capitalist", questioning whether there is an attempted deception here. In reality, there is no reason why "black capitalists" should be supported by the black working class and rural poor. This is not the road. Perhaps we should draw on Steve Biko. Forty years ago he spoke of black police officers in service of apartheid as "non white". We can stop speaking of Malikeane's "tender-based" and "credit-based" capitalist class as "black".

We can speak of them as *non white*. We can point to the fact that when they aspire to be rich they stand in opposition to the cheap labour of black workers that they exploit. They are a part of the South African racist capitalist system. This might serve to defuse some of the spin doctoring in ANC's factional battle and shed more light on the BEE policy (or rather the Non White Economic Empowerment policy) that has destroyed the ANC. This policy is blocking the whole black working class and rural masses from advancing. The burning issue is the crisis of racial capitalism and capitalist oppression.

It is perhaps a paradox that it is Steve Biko who can help us, putting colour-coding in the service of understanding class division, fighting confusion and capitalist propaganda. But this is South Africa. ■

Dick Forslund is an economist at AIDC.

What should we make of the SACP's latest critical posture of the ANC rot: an audacity or a quagmire?

By Gunnett Kaaf



After the cabinet reshuffle, the SACP openly called for the President to step down. They even participated in civil society marches demanding Zuma's resignation, which attracted tens of thousands of demonstrators, on 7th April.

OVER THE LAST TWO YEARS, the South African Communist Party (SACP) has been growing extremely critical of the ANC rot. After the State of Capture Report by the Public Protector last year, they came out guns blazing on President Jacob Zuma and his corrupt relationship with the Guptas. They openly said he should cut all ties with the Guptas. They were so scathing in their criticism of JZ, that they only stopped short of calling for his resignation at the time. The dropping of three prominent SACP Central Committee members from the cabinet after the 2014 elections seems to have soured relations between the ANC and SACP. The increasing dominance of the Premier League within the Zuma group, after the 2014 elections, is another factor that led to the alienation of the SACP from the JZ inner circle.

This year, the SACP grew more critical of the ANC and JZ's leadership, particularly in the run up to the recent midnight

cabinet reshuffle in which the Finance Minister and his Deputy were fired on account of a dodgy intelligence report. They initially threatened to resign en masse from the cabinet if Pravin Gordhan was fired. After the cabinet reshuffle, they openly called for the President to step down. They even participated in civil society marches demanding Zuma's resignation, which attracted tens of thousands of demonstrators, on 7th April.

So what should we make of the SACP's latest posture? Are they becoming courageous, such that they will soon break out of the alliance impasse? Will they independently forge ahead with an audacious programme guided by the social demands of workers and the poor? Or are they getting trapped in a quagmire of noises that will not bear any meaningful result?

SACP goes along as usual

THEY HAVE SINCE CAPITULATED ON their threat to resign en masse from the cabinet after the reshuffle. A mass

resignation would have had a political impact by shaming and condemning JZ. It would make it clear that the SACP was now drawing the line that they can no longer tolerate any of the corruption antics by JZ. It is clear that the reshuffle was more about capturing the National Treasury as part of the Guptaisation of our state institutions by JZ. A mass resignation would earn them some of the respect they lost when they were active participants in the Zuma inner circle, since Polokwane, until recently when they fell out of favour.

The SACP has done some of the most despicable things as part of the Zuma group. They defended the unpardonable Marikana massacre, and called the striking workers "vigilantes". They defended Nkandla saying that it is a "rural development" project and that the criticism is mainly "a propaganda by white people". They led the charge for the expulsion of NUMSA from COSATU. Ironically this was for being critical of the JZ rot, pretty much the same as they themselves are doing now.

Not enough

THE CURRENT NOISES BY THE SACP, though correct, are not sufficient. The SACP is squandering an opportunity to break away into a new independent political mode and chart a way forward that would help the country not to slide into a tragic impasse as a result of the ANC crisis. Of all the ANC groupings (101 Veterans, MK Council, COSATU etc) that are openly critical of the ANC rot, the SACP is the most objectively placed to make a meaningful and impactful contribution. What makes the SACP uniquely privileged is that they are an independent political party. They are not an ANC structure (or a trade union like COSATU). They are therefore not constrained by the ANC internal discipline that has been polluted by the increasing power of dominant factions within the organisation, ahead of the December elective conference. That's why courage is indispensable for the SACP. Sadly, lack of courage is their biggest weakness.

They keep on criticising, without ever embarking on an action to really shake things up within the alliance or break out of the alliance, in an audacious way, and chart an independent socialist path. Only calling for Zuma's resignation and bemoaning the ANC rot will not shake up things for the better within the ANC. This is a make or break moment for the SACP because the ANC can no longer be renewed from within. The rot is way too deep. Ordinary ANC members have been effectively sidelined. They don't have a say in the affairs of the organisation. The

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The main reason the SACP lacks courage is because it has no political independence from the ANC. It has no independent socialist programme worth the name.

dominant factions have appropriated all the power to themselves.

In fact, these dominant ANC factions have constituted themselves into a bourgeoisie that is based on accumulating wealth, using the state in corrupt ways. That's why the moral condemnations of the ANC corruption, which is what the SACP's criticism amounts to, can no longer have any impact. The ANC corruption is effectively linked with the class power relations within the state as well as the post-94 social power relations. The black bourgeoisie is a subaltern ally of the established white bourgeoisie that owns and controls monopolies across all the sectors of the economy.

The ANC is imploding in a chaotic way, like an "Empire of Chaos", to borrow a phrase from Samir Amin. This implosion is going to continue until the ANC loses power. It manifests through endless corruption scandals, policy incoherence, loss of a sense of strategic management, and the ANC decline in prestige and electoral support.

That's why only audacity will save the SACP's relevance in our politics. For instance, since the SACP has already called for JZ to resign, they should easily mandate all of their members who are MPs to vote for the motion of no confidence in the president when it comes up in parliament. But they will not do so, because they lack the courage of their own convictions.

No independent political programme

THE QUESTION IS WHY DOES THE SACP lack courage? The answer to this question

should go beyond the trappings of patronage networks, wherein they rely on ANC deployment to prop-up their political careers.

The main reason the SACP lacks courage is because it has no political independence from the ANC. It has no independent socialist programme worth the name. For most of post-1994, they continued the sterile mode, inherited from the exile years, of operating within the ANC, without a real independent socialist programme. They continued to pursue their struggle for socialism within the ANC political framework of the National Democratic Revolution.

The alliance has failed because it is based on the ANC political strategy, the NDR, which is not radical, despite the radical sounding rhetoric. The ANC is not radical, in that it is not anti-capitalist, and does not support socialism or any other form of egalitarian society. The ANC is trapped within the capitalist framework. Historically, particularly during the struggle against apartheid, the ANC was revolutionary in that it fully opposed apartheid. The ANC understood that apartheid could not be merely reformed, it had to be destroyed. So there was a potential to be radical if the ANC had elaborated a post-apartheid South African society from an anti-capitalist stance, with a meaningful social transformation perspective beyond political conquest. The ANC did not do so, and thus after 94 it made a full bourgeois capitulation and embraced neoliberalism.

The other potential for the ANC to be radical stemmed from its popular social base of black workers, township

and rural communities. The alliance (COSATU and SACP), the Youth League, ANC branches, students, civics and other mass formations could have insisted on a radical social transformation programme that has a strong economic redistribution element for workers and other poor strata from the black community. Sadly, that did not happen.

Now the ANC has become fully bourgeois and, on top of the embrace of neoliberal policy, increasingly corrupt. It is rotten to the core, and that's no longer reversible.

If the SACP had an independent political programme for advancing socialism, it would have used it to meaningfully to bargain within the alliance. It would have insisted on radical policy measures for the whole alliance. Instead, the SACP mainly sought accommodation within the alliance. Even their criticism of GEAR policy and neoliberalism did not come from a firm standpoint of a sound socialist programme. That's why they were easily co-opted after Polokwane into the conservative Zuma inner circle. And they then defended the neoliberalism and the rot.

The SACP are trapped in a quagmire. Only courage and audacious measures will save them. Otherwise they are going to perish from the political scene, as the ANC continue to implode like an Empire of Chaos! ■

Gunnnett Kaaf is political and community activist based in Bloemfontein. He has previously held leadership positions in the SACP Free State and in the YCL nationally.

Is the Cape High Court judgement a fatal blow to South Africa's nuclear pretentions?

By David Fig



The Guptas control Shiva uranium mine on the West Rand. It can't produce at current low prices. They may be banking on a future expansion of nuclear energy to make their investment more viable.

ON 26 APRIL 2017, coincidentally the 31st anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster, the Cape High Court presented its judgement on the case brought by Earthlife Africa Johannesburg and the Southern Africa Faith-Communities' Environmental Institute. The two NGOs were challenging how the state determined that we should be purchasing 9,600 megawatts of extra nuclear power. The judge used terms like "unconstitutional" and "illegal" to refer to the state's behavior, and declared invalid:

- The state's decision that the nuclear build go ahead
- The state's handing over of the procurement process to Eskom
- The automatic endorsement of the state's plans by Nersa, the regulator, and
- The secretive agreement with Russia, and two other agreements with the US and South Korea on nuclear co-operation.
- Eskom's request for information from nuclear vendors.

Government will have to start all these procedures again if it is serious about going ahead. It will have to open up the

process to detailed public scrutiny. The regulator will have to have a series of public hearings before the country can endorse its historically highest ever spend on infrastructure, estimated at well over R1 trillion. The international agreements will have to be brought before the scrutiny of parliament.

All this will take time. Time that President Zuma does not have. He threw out two Ministers of Finance who clearly opposed the deal, as well as his relatively loyal Minister of Energy. But the procurement cannot happen in June, as planned by Eskom. In fact it is unlikely to happen before Zuma leaves office in two years' time. Meanwhile the facts about the deal will become open and public, and will demonstrate that we cannot afford and do not need more nuclear energy.

Nuclear expensive and not needed

SINCE 2011, STATS SA HAS REVEALED that we are consuming far less energy than before the power crisis of 2008. This is a result of the economic downturn, the higher price of electricity causing more to save energy, the rapid roll out of renewables (now producing more than

Koeberg can), and the opening up of giant coal burning plants at Medupi and Kusile.

We produce more than we currently consume, allowing us to export electricity to our neighbours. Eskom also has plans to close six coal burning power stations. Recent studies from the University of Cape Town's Energy Research Centre have shown that we do not need to consider nuclear for another twenty years.

The CSIR has developed models showing that new nuclear is likely to be much more expensive than coal or renewables in our energy mix. Now that we have been rated as junk investment status, it is unlikely that our economy can afford the debt burden.

Zuma's enthusiasm for the deal has led to suspicions of his motives. One source of pressure might be the Russians. Another is more than likely the Gupta family. The Guptas control Shiva uranium mine on the West Rand. It can't produce at current low prices. They may be banking on a future expansion of nuclear energy to make their investment more viable. In her report on state capture in November, the Public Protector pointed to overlapping directorships between Gupta-owned companies and Eskom. Eskom CEO Brian Molefe was compelled to resign after his close relationship with the Guptas was revealed. Zuma's son and other relatives are directly employed by the Guptas.

Zuma is relatively isolated in his quest for nuclear procurement. The ANC is clearly divided on it. The private sector is against the idea. Most scientists, except for those with a stake in nuclear, have advised against it. The list of civil society organisations opposed to nuclear expansion goes well beyond the environmental lobby, and includes foundations, trade unions, faith communities, human rights campaigners, defenders of the constitution and many other citizen groups.

Will Zuma and Eskom accede to the verdict, or will they challenge it, while continuing to overturn the rule of law? Not only would this subvert our constitution and our democratic form of government, but it would illegally deny popular participation in energy democracy. The stakes are high, but the president's own future is part of those stakes. Will he continue to treat the country's future with impunity? Or will this judgement symbolise the roll-back of the democratic dispensation envisaged by the authors of our constitution? The issue of nuclear procurement has become one of the key markers of our nation's political health. ■

David Fig is a fellow of the Transnational Institute in Amsterdam and works out of Johannesburg as a researcher and trainer with progressive social movements. He is author of *Uranium Road: Questioning South Africa's Nuclear Direction*.



Medupi power station. Global coal use has doubled during the past thirty years and claims that coal is in terminal decline are dangerously premature.

Why stopping Eskom's closures can be good for both unions and the environment

By Sean Sweeney

SO THE STORY GOES LIKE THIS: Eskom announces the early closure of five coal-fired electricity plants, beginning in 2020. It points the finger at renewable energy companies (Independent Power Producers, or IPPs) for producing unreliable, expensive power that is compromising Eskom's market dominance and generating excess capacity. Unions (Num and Numsa and the two union federations, Cosatu and Saftu) oppose the closures. They criticise Eskom for its inefficiency, mismanagement and corruption. They commit themselves to saving the jobs of as many as 30,000 workers working in the power stations at Hendrina, Kriel, Komati, Grootvlei and Camden.

These unions are also united in calling for a "just transition" for workers. This is a concept that was written into the preamble of the Paris Climate Agreement, after tenacious union pressure.

Environmental groups mostly stayed quiet about the closures and the threatened job losses. They criticised Eskom for using the proposed closures to wage war on government commitments to integrate renewable sources of power

into the national grid. Defending this approach, Greenpeace states, "Renewable energy is the only technology currently delivering new electricity capacity on time and on budget to South Africa's constrained grid...Eskom is clearly running an anti-renewable energy campaign, which must be stopped in its tracks."

Jobs or the environment?

THE REACTIONS TO THE ESKOM closures therefore appear to reflect the conflicting "jobs versus environment" priorities of progressive forces. Given the established health- and climate-related impacts of burning coal, are the unions in this case not putting jobs before serious environmental concerns? And are not the environmentalists (again) advocating for "renewables by any means necessary" in order to save the planet, regardless of the immediate costs to working people?

Unlike a decade or so ago, energy is today at the centre of huge social and political conflicts in many parts of the world, and the number of struggles is growing. Unfortunately, there are still too many instances where organised workers have lined up with large energy employers

against environmentalists, farmers, ranchers and indigenous people.

Such was the case of the brave struggle of the Standing Rock Sioux in North Dakota in the US, where construction union leaders represented workers building the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL). But the US is not alone. Unions in Argentina and the UK are divided on fracking. In Canada there is tension between unions over whether (and how) to exploit the bitumen in the Alberta tar sands, one of the world's largest deposits of so-called "unconventional fuels." In Germany, unions have sided with lignite coal producers and done their part in obstructing the steady advances made by the wind and solar companies. And Norway's unions are not entirely united in their opposition to arctic drilling.

Opportunity for broad-based campaign

THE ESKOM CLOSURES STRUGGLE IS hardly unique. But it is one that has the potential to give impetus to a different kind of broad-based campaign. This could lead to breakthrough victory for the kind of class based environmental politics that could resonate beyond South Africa.

How can this be done? The first thing is for environmentalists to acknowledge that the Eskom closures are not a definitive test of where unions and social movements stand on the environment and climate protection. Defending workers in coal is not the same as defending coal use. Similarly, defending the expansion of renewables should not involve supporting renewable energy companies and their privatisation, anti-public, and profit-driven agenda.

Just as unions in the energy sector are sometimes enlisted to do the bidding of the employers, many large environmental NGOs have been comfortable with, and often materially assisted by, large wind and solar companies. They like to depict the old utilities as social dinosaurs.

Both unions and environmental groups must therefore take an independent approach. This is the basis for a real and powerful unity.

Dispelling myths

ENERGY SYSTEMS ARE RAPIDLY changing, but it is important to be clear about what is changing and what is not. There is considerable confusion.

For example, the growth of renewable energy is often believed to be at the expense of fossil-based power like coal, oil, and gas – something that generates wild applause from environmentalists. But this is far from true. With global energy demand growing every year, all forms of energy generation and consumption are increasing. The lion's share of new demand is being met by fossil fuels. True, coal use has slipped several percentage points since 2013, mainly due to the economic slowdown in China (which consumes 50% of the world's coal). But global coal use has doubled during the



Members of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and their supporters opposed to the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) confront bulldozers working on the new oil pipeline. There are still too many instances where organised workers have lined up with large energy employers against environmentalists, farmers, ranchers and indigenous people.

past thirty years and claims that coal is in terminal decline are dangerously premature.

Yes, “modern renewables” (mostly wind and solar) have grown fivefold in terms of installed capacity in just a single decade. However, they still only generate about six percent of global electricity supply. At this rate, they may barely reach ten percent of electricity supply by 2030. Gas use has grown far more dramatically than wind and solar over the past ten years or so. Furthermore, global greenhouse gas emissions are rising, not falling.

Meanwhile, the Paris Climate Agreement, negotiated in late 2015, acknowledges the need for global warming to stay “well below 2 degrees Celsius”. In 2013, Price Waterhouse Coopers’ (PwC) annual **Low Carbon Economy Index** reported that the 2 degree Celsius target was “**highly unrealistic**.” If it was highly unrealistic then, it has clearly not gotten more realistic since.

SA approach fatally flawed

WHEN VIEWED AGAINST THIS SOBERING backdrop, South Africa’s flawed and essentially neoliberal approach to driving renewable energy is failing, and will continue to do so. Its commitment to energy transition is – in common with many developed and major developing countries – a commitment to privatisation. Globally, the growth of renewables is having a disruptive and negative impact on the “incumbents” like Eskom. But this on its own is no cause for celebration – especially if the levels of renewables are inadequate. The costs of power rise, and progressive forces

become more divided and in conflict with each other.

Work needs to be done on the union side too. Cosatu, Num and Numsa have all condemned the announced closures, and the partial privatisation of Eskom by way of the IPPs. But there are differences that will need to be addressed. For example, Num’s position on renewables is problematic, “As much as we support green energy,” says Num, “we cannot ignore scientific facts that green energy is not as cheap as it is portrayed by the capitalist who are dealing with it. We know that capitalism is about profit maximisation.” Num also expressed concerns about the problem of intermittent supply.

Cosatu echoed some of Num’s concerns, including the enormous costs of renewables under the IPP system. But, unlike Num, it did not criticise renewable energy as a source of power, and declared itself “not hostile to the introduction of (IPP’s) by Eskom “as long as the IPPs behaved responsibly by creating jobs and skills for South African workers”.

Social ownership the key

WHILE SUPPORTING MILITANT ACTION to halt the closures, Numsa’s call for replacing the IPP system with social ownership of renewables is the critical ingredient around which a compelling approach to energy transition can be developed. This approach was echoed in the founding statement of the recently launched new trade union federation, SAFTU:

“We shall mobilise workers to oppose Eskom’s planned closure of five coal-powered power stations, which could produce 30,000 – 40,000 job

losses, fight the partial privatisation of Eskom by involving independent power producers, step up the campaign against nuclear energy and develop a position on transition to socially owned renewable energy.”

The problems of cost and intermittent supply are not, as Num suggests, intrinsic to renewables. High costs reflect profits and borrowing expenses. Social ownership, combined with a massive scale-up of renewables will create economies of scale and supply chains that will bring costs down. Aware of the negatives, Cosatu should reconsider its support for IPPs. Currently, Cosatu’s support for IPPs, however critical it might be, will undermine the argument for an alternative approach that can give both the climate and workers a fighting chance. The present course – both in South Africa and globally – will lead to more splits and conflict within progressive forces.

Both environmentalists and unions should therefore obstruct Eskom’s closure plans. Strike actions and mobilisations should be given full support. Chipping away at the market share of fossil fuels will not deliver the energy transition needed by South Africa and the whole world. The struggle around the Eskom closures can win if it is grounded in a positive, forward-looking vision that could anchor a united and powerful campaign. Today, building social power is the only way of protecting both workers and the environment. ■

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Liberal white intellectuals and lazy black thinkers warn that radical land reform will bring calamity of Zimbabwean proportions to this country.

Land reform requires change to property clause

By Lubabalo Ntsholo

ADDRESSING THE OPENING of the House of Traditional Leaders in Parliament in February, President Zuma spoke passionately about the land question in South Africa. He said that political parties representing mainly black people should never argue about the need for radical economic transformation. And at the centre of that transformation is the return of land back to black people. He argued this, of course, after the African National Congress in Parliament had shot down a motion by the Economic Freedom Fighters for a constitutional amendment to Section 25 of the Constitution to allow for land expropriation without compensation.

Mr Zuma is well aware that 23 years of ANC rule have managed to transfer only about 8% of the land back to black people, at astronomical costs to the National Treasury. But what do Zuma and his group in the ANC mean by radical land reform?

The mainstream debate on the land question is drowned in a large number of liberal narratives, using various scarecrows to defocus us from what in South Africa is the central issue.

- The first of these narratives is the warning by liberal white intellectuals and lazy black thinkers that radical land reform will bring calamity of Zimbabwean proportions to this country, leading to more impoverishment than social and economic emancipation of the very people land reform ought to emancipate.
- Secondly, they argue, as Jackson Mthembu and his ANC caucus did, that the Constitution is an enabler for land reform, not an impediment, and that tampering with the Constitution will lead to anarchy.
- Thirdly, and more absurdly, is the argument advanced by Terror Lekota and the white right wing, questioning even the validity of land dispossession as a factor in the debate on land reform.

Three fundamental questions

TO AVOID FURTHER CONFUSION OVER how we approach the land question, we need to ask why we need land reform and how we carry it out.

Why we need land reform: I think a large section of the South African population, apart from a few people like Lekota and Steve Hofmeyer, recognize that land dispossession was a great injustice done to black people in this country. It set in motion most of the social ills we now have: problems of inequality, differential access to good quality education and to jobs, as well as the gendered dynamics in our socio-economy. So, the land question is in this sense about restorative justice, not merely redistributive justice. Land was taken, and it must now be returned. The manner of reform therefore, must consider this fact of historical injustice.

How to carry out land reform: Taking this imperative for land reform into account, most people have

acknowledged that land reform since 1994 has not worked in South Africa. This is because of the overbearingly legalistic manner in which land reform has been conceptualised since 1994. Of utmost importance here is the constitutional protection of private property rights, guaranteed by Section 25 of the Constitution, the so-called property clause. The property clause is the most schizophrenic section of the Constitution, and is indicative of the general state of confusion bedeviling the ANC on matters of redress, and recently, on matters relating to their so-called radical economic transformation.

- Section 25 (1) guarantees the inviolability of private property rights, most of which are a direct product of colonial and apartheid dispossession.
- Section 25 (2) does provide for the State to expropriate land for land reform purposes, but unambiguously obliges the State to pay compensation.
- Section 25 (3) requires the compensation to be "just and fair". It must be calculated taking a number of factors into account; they include the current use of the property, history of acquisition, the market value of the property, extent of direct state investment and subsidy previously received.

I argue, as many others do, that this section of the constitution provides for two irreconcilable imperatives. On the one hand, it provides a constitutional commitment to land reform. It recognises in the preamble and to a limited extent in Section 25 (7), that current rights to property are a result of a systemic and systematic process of race-based dispossession.

Professor Lungisile Ntsebeza provided a nice rebuttal of the Property Clause in his paper "Land Redistribution in South Africa: The Property Clause Revisited". He questions whether radical land reform is possible within the current constitutional framework. He argues that, of the factors that need to be taken to account when compensation for expropriation is concerned, only the market value is quantifiable.

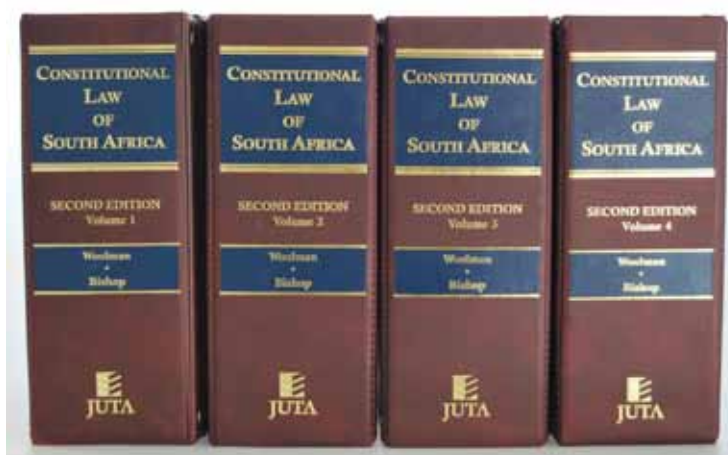
A more comprehensive rebuttal however is provided by Professor Fred Hendricks. He criticises Ntsebeza for acceding to Ruth Hall's argument. She says that perhaps land reform could be pursued more radically without changing the constitution. She believes that the Constitution provides for radical land reform. Hendricks argues that "the adoption of the willing buyer-willing seller model for land reform

was not an aberration at all; it rests very comfortably with the Constitution, especially with respect to its provisions for compensation".

Radical land reform therefore is and can only be found outside of the current constitutional framework. Private property rights, and the requirement that the State pay for land reform, are anathemas to comprehensive land reform. This is what makes a constitutional amendment to Section 25 of the constitution critical. Without that amendment, we basically have no land reform programme, but a massive land purchase programme.

Not just agricultural land

LASTLY, THERE IS A WIDE-SPREAD misconception that agricultural land is all that land reform should be concerned with. This misses the point on the multiple layers of the land question in South Africa. For the purposes of this article, I



Radical land reform therefore is and can only be found outside of the current constitutional framework.

highlight just three, and these are:

- The land question in the former reserves
- The land question in urban areas
- The land question in commercial agriculture.

The former reserves: these are inhabited by approximately 17 million people. There is a very strange land tenure arrangement. Land in those areas is legally owned by the State, but administered, with impunity, by traditional leaders, without any accountability. Land allocations are done through systems of patronage, and women are mostly denied opportunities to access land. Radical land reform would have to take away control of land from these feudal lords and give it over to democratic citizen based land committees.

The urban areas: no attempt has been made to restructure in any significant way apartheid architecture, which has condemned black people to overcrowded, rat infested and flea-ridden squatter camps called the townships. A radical

land reform programme must expropriate in secluded areas, which have been enclaves of white elites. This will make land available even in city centres for low cost housing for the majority.

Commercial agriculture: much has been made of the nature and structure of the agrarian economy in this country. It is made up of about 37,000 commercial farmers, producing about 90% of the food. These are then complemented by subsistence farmers, found mostly in the former reserves. They contribute about 10% of our food. Of the commercial farmers, only 20% are considered productive, and 5% are producing about 70% of our food. Of course, the majority of these farmers are white.

These farmers feed into corporate retail sales, which in return have stringent requirements for the control of plant diseases. These requirements close off access to this market for small scale farmers who cannot meet them. As a

result, former cooperatives such as SENWES, AFGRI and NWK control about 74% of maize handling and storage capacity in the country. This is but a tip of the iceberg. It shows how a few people have consolidated control over our agrarian economy over time.

Restructuring the economy and society

RADICAL LAND REFORM must be able to dismantle these systems of control. It is more than just the question of land, primary as that may be. It is essentially about restructuring the

nature of our economy, of our geography and of our society as a whole. More fundamentally, the land question is about the creation of a new society based on values of humanity and freedom.

Without land, there is no freedom. Because the ANC has prevaricated for over 23 years on addressing this matter, South Africa remains a neo-colonial society. And as Fanon says in *The Wretched of the Earth*, "For a colonised people the most essential value, because the most concrete, is first and foremost the land; the land which will bring them bread and above all, dignity"

The talk on radical economic transformation by the ANC is artificial. It is not genuine, because there isn't now, and there never was before, any commitment to uproot the vestiges of apartheid and colonialism embedded in our economy. Land inequality is the single most important of these vestiges. ■

Lubabalo Ntsholo is an EFF parliamentary researcher. He is writing in his personal capacity.

Land and *radical economic transformation*

By Ben Cousins



Sophiatown 1955. In South Africa, our bitter history is of dispossession of land by a state serving the interests of white settlers. It includes recent experience of forced removals.

LAND HAS MOVED TO THE centre of political discourse in recent months. At the same time, allegations of state capture by the Gupta family have created a storm of controversy and placed the presidency under immense pressure. Leading politicians from the ruling African National Congress portray land as a key focus of so-called “radical economic transformation”. One common measure proposed is expropriation of land without compensation. Others within the ANC disagree. This is a symptom of internal disarray within the party.

At the same time, the ruling party has refused to support a proposal by the Economic Freedom Fighters that the constitution be amended to remove the requirement for compensation. What on earth is going on? How should these developments be interpreted?

One way to understand the ANC's increased emphasis on the land question is in terms of political tactics and the 3 “Ds” – Distract, Deceive and Divide. Distract citizens with an issue that takes attention away from your own misconduct. Deceive society using fake information or false promises. Divide your opponents (such as opposition parties and

alliance partners) by focusing on an issue that they will never agree on.

Land is fundamental

THIS HELPS, BUT IT IS NOT THE WHOLE answer. Land in Africa is fundamental, even in countries that are relatively industrialised and urbanised. It resonates powerfully because of widespread and chronic poverty and the continuing significance of both rural and urban land in the livelihood strategies of migrant workers, small-scale farmers and petty entrepreneurs in the informal sector.

In South Africa, our bitter history is of dispossession of land by a state serving the interests of white settlers. It includes recent experience of forced removals. The “land question” strikes a chord for many people, and serves as a potent symbol of persistent poverty and structural inequality. These are legacies bequeathed to the post-apartheid era but only partially addressed since 1994.

The widely acknowledged failure of land reform means that land remains a key political resource, available as a key grievance for mobilising political constituencies. This will be the case for as long as the distribution of land continues to be racially skewed. Whichever party or alliance of parties holds power, the land question will have to be addressed, like it or not. Unfortunately for the ANC, its land reform programme is in deep trouble, and vulnerable to accusations of incompetence, elite bias and corruption.

Awkward facts

IN 23 YEARS, LAND REFORM HAS BARELY altered the agrarian structure of South Africa. It has had only minor impacts on rural livelihoods. The national budget for land reform has never been much more than 1% of the total, and is usually less. Around 9% of farmland has been transferred to black people through a combination of land restitution and redistribution, but many “settled” restitution claims (perhaps 15,000) have not been fully implemented. Post-settlement support has been absent or ineffective.



In 23 years, land reform has barely altered the agrarian structure of South Africa. It has had only minor impacts on rural livelihoods.

No systematic data on impacts are available. Case study evidence suggests that around half of rural land reform projects have brought improvements in the livelihoods of beneficiaries – but often these are quite limited.

Tenure reform has been badly neglected. Farm workers and farm dwellers remain vulnerable to eviction. Thousands of labour tenant claims have been ignored for the past 17 years, and only court action brought by an activist NGO, Association for Rural Advancement (AFRA), has forced the department to commit itself to resolving them.

Communal tenure reform policy continues to be focused on the transfer of land ownership to traditional leadership structures and chiefs, with new policies proposing to offer community members only “statutory use rights”. The lack of accountability of such structures is not addressed. Nor is the fundamental problem that apartheid-era boundaries are being imposed.

Incompetence: Some problems are due to poor management and incompetence. The current land reform programme is *ad hoc* in character, lacks coherence and is poorly co-ordinated. The relevant government departments are well known as some of the weakest amongst the weak. Agricultural and land policies have not been clearly linked, and water reform and land reform have barely touched sides. Little support for black smallholder farmers is on offer, and no land reform farms have been officially sub-divided.

Informal agricultural markets are ignored, despite the fact that they offer real potential for market-oriented smallholders taking possession of redistributed land. There has been no spatial targeting of land and people in zones of opportunity and need (e.g. farms

for sale that are located on the edges of densely settled communal areas, or land at the urban edge).

Elite bias: Research findings point to the capture of the South African land reform programme by aspirant elites. For example, the “Pro-active Land Acquisition Strategy” (PLAS) and the State Land Lease and Disposal Policy of 2013 replaced all previous forms of land redistribution. These are openly oriented towards medium and large-scale black commercial farmers. They assume that there will be only one lessee per farm, and farms will not be subdivided. The beneficiaries are often relatively well-off and hold other business interests, but strategic partners and mentors in fact gain much more than beneficiaries.

The Recapitalisation and Development Policy Programme (“Recap”) of 2014 replaced all previous forms of funding for land reform, including settlement support grants for restitution beneficiaries. Recap beneficiaries must have partners recruited from the private sector, as mentors or “co-managers”, who write their business plans. The Presidency’s mid-term evaluation of the programme reveals that large sums are spent on relatively few beneficiaries, few jobs have been created, and access to markets for produce remains limited. In the six provinces assessed, around R3.5 million was spent per project, around R520,000 per beneficiary. Job creation cost R645,000 per job.

A policy on “Strengthening the Relative Rights of People Working the Land”, also known as the “50/50” policy, is now being piloted. Each farm owner is to retain 50% ownership of the farm, ceding the other 50% to workers. While couched in “radical” language, this in fact offers workers very little. It is unlikely that dividends will ever be paid, and wages will remain at the legal minimum at best. In

contrast, farm owners will receive massive windfalls of public money to prop up their businesses.

The re-opening of the land restitution claims process in 2014 was clearly aimed at catching votes in that year’s general election. But it also opened the door for chiefs intent on expanding their control of territory and resources. In February of that year, they were openly invited to submit large land claims by President Zuma.

Corruption: Corruption in the land sector is increasing. This is clearest in relation to traditional leaders who enter into crooked business deals with mining companies in the platinum belt. Government remains intent on transferring communal land into the private ownership of unaccountable traditional councils under chiefs. Current policy documents explicitly envisage these institutions striking business deals with investors.

A number of recent newspaper stories report cases of dubious deals for redistributed farms. One has it that Minister Nkwinti introduced a Luthuli House comrade to one of his officials at a land summit. Eight months later, Bekendvlei Farm was bought for R97 million and handed over to Errol Present and a business partner. The senior official had bypassed required procedures. A day after the deal went through, Nkwinti was the speaker at Present’s lavish wedding.

Political misdirection and its come-uppance

THE ARGUMENT THAT THE KEY constraint on land reform is the property clause rings very hollow, given government’s record of weak leadership, a tiny budget, poor planning, incompetent implementation, increasing capture of the programme by emerging elites, and corruption. The current turn to radical populism is an attempt to divert attention from the ways in which the budget for land reform is being used as a resource for political patronage, rather than as means to address structural inequality, as well as to divide the opponents of state capture.

The current focus on the land question is much like the call for “radical economic transformation” by those elements of the ANC intent on lining the pockets of a class of “tenderpreneurs” (or aspirant bourgeoisie). It is meant to deceive the population into thinking that the dominant faction in the ANC remains concerned with social change. But land questions cannot be manipulated quite so easily – they are more likely to blow up in your face. The ANC may not be able to rely on its rural vote for very much longer. ■

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Crossing the divide: Saftu's challenge

By Edward Webster



Former Cosatu General Secretary, Jay Naidoo, addressing the launching congress of Saftu.

THE LONG AWAITED LAUNCH OF the South African Federation of Trade Unions (Saftu) in Boksburg on 27th April promises to be a voice for the growing numbers of unorganised and marginalised workers. But, as the Secretary of the South African Informal Traders Alliance (Saita) warned delegates at the launch, “don’t break our hearts with false promises”.

Many have become cynical over the idea of a new federation. It was conceived over two years ago in the wake of the expulsion of Numsa from Cosatu, followed by the dismissal of the Cosatu general secretary, Zwelizima Vavi, in March 2015. But the idea of a new federation is not the outcome of a surge in worker militancy. Instead, it is a response to the failure of existing unions to provide an adequate voice and service to its members. Saftu is the product of the crisis in representation facing traditional trade unions

The launch got off to a good start.

HOPE WAS IN THE AIR WITH OVER 1,800 mainly young delegates singing - rather hesitatingly - those stirring words from the Internationale, “We can bring to earth a new world from the ashes of the

old”. The carefully crafted report of the Steering Committee, set up after the Worker Summit on 30 April 2016, made clear the intention to build “a broader labour movement, not a narrow trade union for wages of the employed”. The report promised that it will “give a voice and represent the workers employed by labour brokers...knit together the struggles of those who receive regular salaries and benefits with the struggles of the workers in the informal economy”, and struggle “hand in hand with unemployed workers”.

The opening day was a heady moment. All three past General Secretaries of Cosatu were present: the founder and first general secretary of Cosatu, Jay Naidoo (1985- 1999), Sam Shilowa (1993-1999), and Zwelinzima Vavi (1999- 2015). Naidoo caught the mood of the delegates, with a combination of homage to the past with a call to grasp the new opportunities created by information technology. He argued that we need to replace fossil fuel capitalism with new forms of renewable energy. We need to harness the new technology, so that workers can, Naidoo romantically declared, become the “new creative class” with time on their hands for art, music and books to read”.

A strength of the federation will be its ability to combine the experiences of

long standing union leaders with a new generation of unionists, disillusioned with the ruling party and its Alliance partners, Cosatu and the SACP. With nearly 700,000 members, it is the second largest federation in South Africa. But the challenges facing this attempt to “cross the divide” between organised workers and the growing precariat will require more than patience and the ability to listen. It will require a strategic leadership willing to move out of the comfort zone of traditional unionism, recruit unfamiliar constituencies and experiment with new ways of organising.

Challenges

THE FIRST CHALLENGE WILL BE TO BREAK with the bureaucratic practices that have seen union leaders gradually distanced from their members. With the exception of Numsa and Fawu, all the affiliates are either break-aways from established unions or small, often recently formed, locally-based unions. If past “business union” practices are to be challenged, then union investment companies and the gap between the salaries of some union leaders and their members will need to be revisited. There has been no systematic attack on income inequality in post-apartheid South Africa in spite of Section 27 of the Employment Equity Act that employers “must” address the “apartheid wage gap”. Despite this legal opportunity, labour has neglected this section of the Act. Saftu could make its mark within the labour movement by taking life-style issues seriously and, in particular, the wage gap within its own ranks.

The second challenge is around political diversity. What was striking at the launch was the wide range of political and ideological views. An illustration was the lively debate over the relationship between Pan-Africanism and Marxist-Leninism. But there was consensus that there should be no party political affiliation. It was agreed that Saftu should be politically independent, although there was a strong appeal for a workers party from one speaker. The challenge will be for Saftu to be a genuine forum for political debate, respecting different views, and even allowing different ideological factions to be institutionalised within the federation.

The most difficult challenge arises from the shift from industrial unions to



As newly elected General Secretary, Zwelizima Vavi, pleaded: "Do not fight each other over the 28% already organised: our challenge is to organise the 72% who are unorganised."

general unions. NUMSA led the way when it extended its scope to include a variety of economic activities beyond metalworkers including, for example, university cleaners and bus drivers. Furthermore, many of the Saftu affiliates are general unions. How to deal with the danger of internal "poaching" was extensively discussed at the launch. Will the protocols proposed in the report of the Steering Committee prevent divisive conflict in the future? As newly elected General Secretary, Zwelizima Vavi, pleaded: "Do not fight each other over the 28% already organised: our challenge is to organise the 72% who are unorganised".

A major challenge facing Saftu is the need for innovative strategies on new ways of organising. It is not clear how Saftu intends to recruit the new constituencies of women, immigrants, low paid service workers, outsourced workers, and the growing numbers of workers in the informal economy. Experiments in organising precarious workers, such as the Casual Workers Advice Office (CWAo) in Germiston, need to be carefully examined as they could provide ways of crossing the divide between the old and the new.

Linked to the fragmentation of unions is what many delegates called the "big brother syndrome". Do you continue with the past practice of unions voting on the basis of their size, or do you introduce the principle of equal votes between affiliates?

This is likely to be an on-going debate as the federation tries to build unity between very different sized unions.

A difficult challenge is how to respond to the demand for "radical economic transformation". On the one hand, Saftu endorsed the call for Zuma to resign but, on the other hand, they are equally critical of "post-apartheid deal making, deindustrialisation and financialisation". It is difficult to detect any clear economic policy in the report of the Steering Committee.

Organising informal workers

THE LEADERS OF THE NEW FEDERATION are confident that a number of Cosatu affiliates will join, or if the unions do not, their members will come across to a Saftu affiliate. To organise the low paid and the precarious is an ambitious task, but there is growing evidence that innovative strategies to bridge the informal-formal "divide" are emerging in the Global South. There have been successful attempts at collective organising of informal workers. Alliances are emerging and growing across this divide in other parts of Africa. An example of a new organising strategy in Ghana is an alliance of informal port workers with national trade unions. Through the alliance with the national union, the local union of casual workers gained the necessary political status to improve their working conditions.

Labour scholar, Rina Agarwala, has challenged the conventional view that informalisation is the "final nail in the labour movement's coffin". Informal workers in India, she demonstrates, are creating new institutions and forging a new social contract between the state and labour. She shows how informal worker movements are most successful when operating within electoral contexts where parties must compete for mass votes from the poor. Agarwala calls this "competitive populism". These informal worker organisations are not attached to a particular party, nor do they espouse a specific political or economic ideology.

It is too soon to pronounce on the future of Saftu. But what is clear is that increasingly workers are rejecting traditional trade unions and forming new types of organisations that bring workers together to promote their rights and interests. Saftu needs to draw on these experiences if it is to fulfil the promise of its launch.

Edward Webster is professor emeritus in the Society, Work and Development Institute (SWoDI) at Wits University. He will be launching next month a collection of research-based essays on precarious work in India, Ghana and South Africa, *Crossing the Divide: Precarious Work and the Future of Labour*, Edward Webster, Akua O. Britwum and Sharit Bhownmik, University of KwaZulu-Natal Press.

Nothing For Us Without Us!

New forms of self-organisation by workers in the informal economy

By Pat Horn



Ghana StreetNet Alliance march for rights and social security on International Street Vendors Day. StreetNet International has over 600,000 members in 54 affiliated membership-based organisations in 49 countries in Africa, Asia, the Americas and (mainly Eastern) Europe.

WORKERS IN THE informal economy usually hear about themselves in the third person. They are referred to as unorganised, vulnerable workers and victims of globalisation and neo-liberal capitalism.

This is despite the fact that workers in different sectors of the informal economy have been self-organising since the 1970s.

- In 1972 the Self-Employed Women's Association in India started to organise women vegetable vendors and home-based workers in Ahmedabad, after the collapse of the textile industry. Today it is registered as a trade union, with over 2 million members.
- In 1979 the General Agricultural Workers' Union in Ghana started to organise informalised agricultural workers and peasant farmers. This happened after the International Labour Organisation (ILO) officially recognised rural workers whose employment relationships had been eliminated by the Structural Adjustment Programmes of the IMF and the World Bank.

Informal workers are organised

TODAY WE HAVE INTERNATIONAL organised groups of democratic, membership-based organisations of workers in the informal economy. Some are registered as trade unions. Others work like trade unions but are unwilling or unable to register due to short-sighted legislative regimes.

StreetNet International has over 600,000 members in 54 affiliated membership-based organisations in 49 countries in Africa, Asia, the Americas and (mainly Eastern) Europe. It was launched in Durban, South Africa on 14 November 2002, a day which is now celebrated as International Street Vendors' Day. StreetNet is an international federation of organised street vendors, informal market vendors and hawkers. These are mostly "own-account" workers, as defined by the ILO. It was deliberately initiated in the global South, so that the organisation would be led, and its founding policies formulated, by organised informal workers from the global South. This was done to avoid the element of northern domination in global

organisations such as the ILO and the organisations of the international trade union movement.

The International Domestic Workers' Federation (IDWF) has 59 affiliates of membership-based domestic workers organisations (including domestic workers' trade unions) and associations in 48 countries. It was similarly launched in Montevideo, Uruguay, on 28 October 2013. In 2011, ILO Domestic Workers Convention 189 was adopted through the international unity and strength of an organised sector of workers.

This means that strong and viable representative organisations of workers in these sectors of the informal economy are alive and well at national level.

There are also strong worker organisations in other sectors of the informal economy, such as waste pickers, home-based workers, informal transport workers, subsistence fisherpeople and rural workers.

Organisations of waste pickers and other sectors

IN BRAZIL, FOR EXAMPLE, MANY cooperatives and associations of catadores (waste pickers) are part of the (Movimento Nacional dos Catadores de Materiais Recicláveis (National Movement of Collectors of Recyclable Materials (MNCR)) who organise informal workers in their sector into worker-controlled cooperatives. MNCR developed strong policies to maintain worker control of the cooperatives/associations and the movement.

- All elected leadership, no matter how senior, have to be working members of cooperatives/associations and to earn their income directly from this work, on an equal basis with other members of their cooperatives.
- Negotiations with government and municipalities is done directly by elected catadores leaders and not by technocrats, who can assist only in a support role.
- At local and regional levels the MNCR has sub-committees which negotiate directly with state and local governments, with varying levels of success.

At federal level, however, an inter-ministerial committee was established

by President Lula, in response to the development of the MNCR movement. This was an advisory committee which met monthly with elected MNCR leaders, and every year in December, while the Brazilian Workers' Party (PT) was in office. The President met with the catadores to evaluate the progress of the Inter-Ministerial Committee.

MNCR has a policy of political independence. Their perception is that the trade unions all have political affiliations, and therefore they have avoided trade union affiliation as well.

In the sector of organised waste pickers and recycling workers, a regional network Red Latinoamericana de Recicladores (LACRE) was established in Bogota on 1 March 2008, a day which is now celebrated as National Day of Waste Pickers and Recycling Workers.

There are also regional networks in other sectors of the informal economy, such as HomeNet South Asia and HomeNet South-East Asia. The International Transportworkers' Federation (ITF) has informal transport workers' organisations as affiliates, and other Global Union Federations have also accepted membership-based organisations of workers in the informal economy as their affiliates.

Challenges for the trade union movement

HOWEVER, THE TRADE UNION movement in many countries is still struggling to come to terms with organising workers in the informal economy on equal terms with the traditional organised sectors. That means with the same recognition of their rights to representation by their own democratically elected leadership. It means embracing the membership-based organisations which arose from self-organisation, and were not organised by the unions themselves, into the wider trade union movement.

THESE ARE THE KEY CHALLENGES:

1. **Political will:** getting trade union leadership to prioritise the organisation of workers in the informal economy, and to make human and financial resources available to implement this.
2. **Legal changes:** if a country's laws are an obstacle to organising workers in the informal economy, unions struggling for the necessary changes to the laws.
3. **Constitutional changes:** changing trade union constitutions where they are the obstacle to organising informal workers.
4. **New organising strategies:** learning new organising strategies which are more appropriate for workers in the informal economy. This could mean identifying new negotiating partners (e.g. municipalities in the case of street



Waste pickers ("catadores") in Ecuador. In Brazil, many cooperatives and associations of catadores (waste pickers) are part of the Movimento Nacional dos Catadores de Materiais Recicláveis (National Movement of Collectors of Recyclable Materials).

vendors, rather than employers) and new collective bargaining strategies and demands.

5. **Women leadership:** overcoming the traditional male bias in formal sector trade unions in order to have significant leadership by women. It is women who are in the majority in the informal economy, especially in the lowest income-earning work.
6. **Learning from those doing it already:** by means of exchange visits or other engagements, unions learning from the experiences of those who are already organising in the informal economy, avoiding some of the mistakes and replicating the more successful strategies. There are many different models operating successfully. Sometimes a combination of different models can work where no single one fits exactly.
7. **Organising workers in the informal economy as workers and as equals:** avoiding a tendency for formal workers to want to do things on behalf of informal workers, instead of organising for them to represent themselves and set their own organisational agenda. Workers in the informal economy are more marginalised. They often have lower levels of formal education. Formal workers need to be conscious to avoid this tendency. They must remember their own struggles to represent themselves instead of being represented by others.
8. **Joint campaigns:** including demands set by the workers in the informal economy as well as the demands of the formal workers, for successful joint campaigns. It will not work for

formal workers to set all the demands and the agenda and expect the support of workers in the informal economy when there is nothing in it for them.

9. **Tackling globalisation:** workers confronting the negative consequences of globalisation in a unified way. Formal and informal workers should identify their common ground and organise around that.
10. **Civil society:** taking a lead in civil society. If trade unions are sufficiently representative of the working people (which is usually the majority of adults) in any society, they are the natural leaders of any civil society or social movement. They become much more representative of the wider working class if they genuinely represent the workers in the informal economy. They are then much better equipped to take up a leading civil society role.

SO THE PART OF THE TRADE UNION movement which recognises all workers (including "own-account" workers) as workers, can and should promote the right of all workers to represent themselves through their own democratically-elected representatives. This may mean developing new models of statutory bargaining forums suitable to the new sectors of workers being organised. It must be in line with the principle "Nothing For Us Without Us". The working-class alliance of trade unions and worker-controlled cooperatives needs to work together for the promotion of an alternative political economy to replace the current neo-liberal capitalist models existing in most countries. ■

Pat Horn is StreetNet international co-ordinator.

Reclaim the City Movement says:

*Build inclusive cities!
No to spatial inequality!*



Reclaim the City protesters on Long Street in Cape Town in 2016

Amandla! interviewed the Campaign to Reclaim the City and the movement to occupy the inner city.

What inspired the formation of the Movement to Reclaim the City?

THE MOVEMENT FORMED IN CAPE TOWN in February 2015 to right the wrongs of the Group Areas Act and other apartheid policies that led to the forced removal of black, coloured and Malay people from District 6 and other areas.

Reclaim the City recognises that many black and "coloured" people in Cape Town remain displaced even 23 years after democracy. The movement therefore aims to bring back the right to the city for these people.

Reclaim the City list of demands:

RECENTLY THE WESTERN CAPE Provincial government decided to sell the Seapoint site of Tafelberg school for private development rather than social housing. Reclaim the City's demands include reversing this decision.

OUR PRIMARY OBJECTIVES ARE TO:

1. Desegregate Cape Town
2. Address the spatial inequality and spatial violence

3. Put an end to urban evictions and reverse the gentrification that pushes people to the outskirts of the city
4. Fight for land for people not for profit; an end to private-public partnerships
5. Bring back people to the inner city through a social housing program
6. Secure a firm commitment and timelines for social housing from government.

Apartheid spatial planning does not just mean that poor people live far away from the city centre. It also leads to socio-economic exclusion. We ask ourselves how long will black and "coloured" people be displaced and excluded from the cities and from the economic centre of the city?

What is Reclaim the City doing?

CURRENTLY THE MOVEMENT IS occupying Woodstock Hospital and the Helen Bowden Nurses home, also potential sites for social housing. We are focused on urban evictions and occupation because of scope and lack of capacity. However there is a deep sense of solidarity with farm workers and those in rural areas who experience the same struggles. The struggle to Reclaim the City is not confined to the areas where we are occupying. The movement exists to desegregate the whole of Cape Town.

Occupation is a peaceful strategy which we will continue to use in this fight against spatial inequality and injustice.

What inspired the occupation?

OCCUPYING LAND HAS BEEN PART OF land struggles in South Africa for centuries - pushing the boundaries of private land ownership and demanding land to address the pressing housing needs of people. Land occupations through setting up shack settlements are part of the history of our urban and peri-urban landscape. Occupying vacant or derelict buildings happens across inner cities, to address the lack of affordable, well-located housing. There are even some buildings in the inner city of Cape Town that are being secretly occupied. This occupation is not something new. We are using the occupation as a way to leverage broader land and housing demands of Reclaim the City.

We want to remind government of its obligation. Section 26 of the constitution states that everybody must have access to adequate housing. Government must therefore provide the policy and plans, with timelines, to demonstrate its commitment to providing adequate housing for all.

There are vacant public buildings in the inner city. Therefore it is our task to remind government about its commitment to provide adequate and affordable housing.

We have written over 900 letters to provincial government to remind them of their own plans. We have demanded that the Western Cape Department of Human Settlements use the Tafelberg site for social housing. Government has even done a feasibility study that indicated that the social housing project is in fact financially viable. The reason government does not want to develop social housing in the inner city is not economically related.

What are the risks of the occupation strategy?

THE ACTIVISTS ARE OCCUPYING AT great personal risk. We are seen as trespassers, so we could be arrested. Government has tried to demobilise the movement. We are adamant that we want to continue struggling for adequate and affordable housing for all.

We know that we cannot win this fight alone so we welcome help. We don't want to burn or destroy. We want to learn and build.

We are calling for mass support and mobilisation in solidarity, so that the movement evolves into a mass movement that has the power to demand adequate and affordable housing for all South Africans.



Unity must be the watchword. It must be a unity forged in struggling for immediate demands such as accommodation, food, security (particularly for women and those who experience gender and sexual violence).

A Popular Hegemony – Students and Class Struggle

By Chris Morris

ENTERING A NEW ROUND OF struggles, bruised and smarting from a defeat, students across the country are coming to realise that this year may prove decisive in the battle for free, decolonised education. The current lull in protest presents an opportunity to take stock, understand the problems and search for prospects. What are the conditions in which we are struggling? What do we hope to achieve? Importantly, how do we get there?

More importantly, how do we counter the petty-bourgeois, bourgeois and opportunist elements of fallism? These elements have not only played straight into the hands of a government dedicated to neoliberal rule. They also provide no strategic guidance and employ disastrous tactics, such as seen at Kempton Park.

A Shaking Hegemony

FIRST THOUGH, A NOTE ON CONTEXT. IT should come as no surprise that the student uprising has been led by the first generation of “born-frees” – those born around the transition from Apartheid. We were raised under the myth of a rainbow nation. We have matured in a reality far from the dreams sold in 1994.

To be sure, the transition to democratic rule in itself presents a major victory for all South Africans. Civil war would have resulted in the decimation of the country and its people. Avoiding that, together with the ushering in of a democracy in which political freedom is guaranteed, was no small feat. The problem is that the economic and social policy pursued by the hegemonic ANC since then has not taken us beyond the terms of the compromise. Twenty years on, and this failure is quickly causing the disintegration of the ANC’s hegemony.

It is in fact the ANC’s failures over the past twenty years which are at the root of what Saleem Badat calls the “organic crisis” of universities. Determined to pursue a neoliberal governance and economic path, the ANC has straight-jacketed itself. Its policies simply do not allow it to break free of the power of international and local capital of any kind, crony or monopolistic.

The ANC ditched the social democratic Reconstruction and Development Plan (RDP) and turned to the neoliberal Growth Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) and National Development Plan (NDP). This “social extractivism” has been

persistently, if spontaneously and sporadically, resisted in the numerous “service delivery” protests, strikes and land occupations. The restructuring of labour, and downward pressure on wages, dramatically boiled over in the tragic massacre at Marikana. Universities and students have not been immune from the effects of “rationalised” government – reduced funding, cost recovery, corporatisation and the restructuring of labour at universities.

The ANC has been and continues to be at the forefront of an attack on the capacity of the state to deliver on a historical promise to transform the lives of the working and popular classes. The ANC abuses the political power the popular classes have given it. It is no longer willing or able to tackle the fundamentally unjust economic, social and political structure of South Africa. The effect is to leave contradictions of race, gender and class unresolved and aggravated. It is captured by the petty-bourgeois and opportunist elements which have been part of the decimation of organised forces of the people. These include once gigantic institutions such as COSATU, as well as grass-roots movements, which

at their height comprised the United Democratic Front of the 1980s. Today the petty-bourgeois and opportunist elements at the universities, in typical fashion, are loudly and with disastrous consequences laying claim to these struggles of the popular classes.

Fallism, Struggle and revolutionary praxis

IF WE ARE TO REMAIN FAITHFUL TO Amilcar Cabral’s famous call, then we must be careful not to claim easy victories. Fallism has become a part of our vocabulary. But that is more as a result of the sound and fury which animates the protests than the united and organised mass power of students. Without dismissing the creative potential that the movement and students possess, the lack of patient, persistent and thorough organising on the part of Fallists has resulted in the defeat of last year. Despite some valid and some not so valid criticism of the National Education Crisis Committee, celebrity Fallists and opportunists from the political parties brawled on live television. A united student movement, with mass support, including strategic allies, and a clear

strategic and tactical approach should have used the platform to drive forward the demand.

Easier said than done... Putting aside identity, political and ideological differences in order to build mass support for Free Decolonised Education will require more than a theoretical or even moral argument. Building a mass movement requires patient and persistent work. Students cannot come together at the end of the year and expect everyone to be on board because of the obvious justice of our position. We need to use the time we have now to build a movement with mass support of students, organic links with popular movements in communities, the unions and rural movements, and a politically independent stance. This must ensure that the goal of free decolonised education is not sacrificed at the altar of opportunism. Spontaneity and drama are good for bringing an issue to the fore. But building a movement capable of pushing forward an alternative requires unity of purpose and identity.

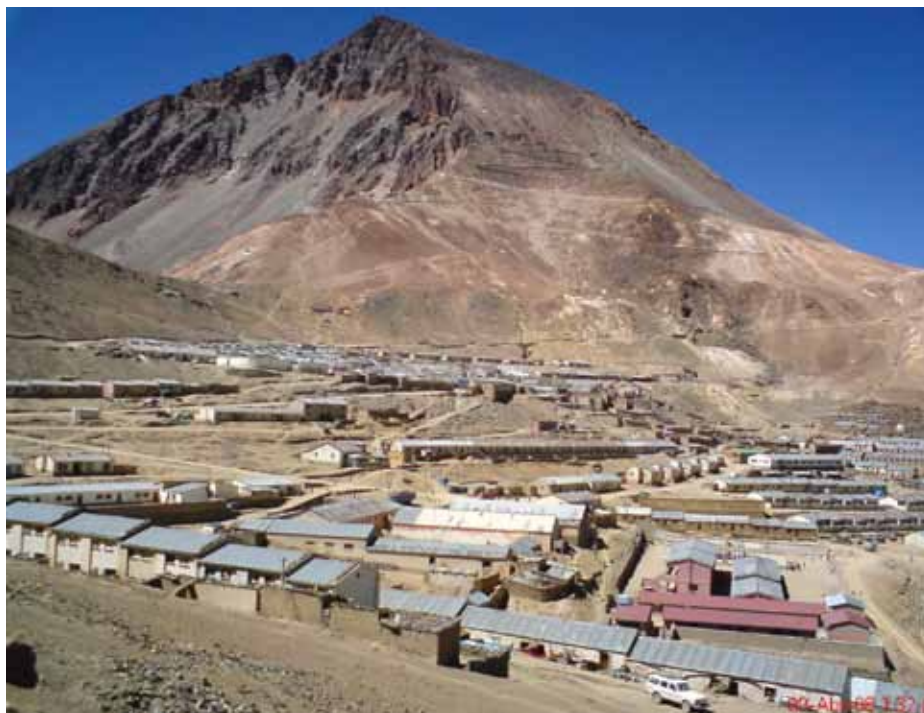
Unity was must be the watchword. But it must be a principled and programmatic unity. Our interests as students, particularly as black working class students, do not lie with opportunists and sexists. They lie in working together to carry through programmes that bring change to the material and spiritual life of students. It must be a unity forged in struggling for immediate demands such as accommodation, food, security (particularly for women and those who experience gender and sexual violence). It must be a unity which includes constant strategising for longer term goals, and building of a new political culture, symbolism and mass support.

Unity must also extend beyond the ivory towers. Beyond the political parties, students must seek out those movements and grass-roots organisations, workers, high school learners and communities engaged in the fight against neoliberalism, capitalism and the oppressive systems of patriarchy and racism. The higher education crisis is only one instance of a generalised crisis we are experiencing at the moment. It will be imperative that we make the links to forge unity across divisions rather than within them. Political opportunists, Zuptamites, petty-bourgeois elements and celebrity fallists must be out-organised by the mass of students, conscious of their interests and unwilling to be distracted by divisiveness, empty rhetoric and poor strategy and tactics.

Chris Morris is a Politics Student at the University Currently Known as Rhodes (UCKAR). He is a member of Asinamali and writes in his personal capacity.

Some thoughts, self-criticisms and proposals concerning the process of change in Bolivia

By Pablo Solón



The highland mining town of Huanuni. Toxic runoff from the mine still slides into the local river and stinking raw sewage runs through the streets.

This is Part 2 of a two part article. We published Part 1 in *Amandla!* 51.

■ The *nouveaux riches*

IN ALMOST ALL REVOLUTIONARY processes in this and the past century, there is a process of confrontation with the old displaced sectors. But after this, there arise, within the revolutionary process, groups of “*nouveaux riches*” and bureaucrats who want to enjoy their new status. To do so, they ally with sectors of

the old rich. The only way to resist those *nouveaux riches* and new middle classes of popular origin is, once again, through having strong social organisations. However, when these organisations are weakened and co-opted by the state, there is no counterweight to the new sectors of economic power that begin to influence in a decisive way the decisions that are taken.

By the beginning of the government's second mandate, in 2010, it was clear that the major danger for the process of change did not come from outside. It



The Incahuasi gas field. Have we become addicted to extractivism and the rentism of a basically export-oriented capitalist economy?

came from within the leaderships and new power groups that were forming in the municipalities, governorships, state enterprises, public administration, armed forces and government ministries. The distribution of the rent from the gas between all of these entities opened up an incredible opportunity to do business.

In the higher spheres they were aware of the danger. But efficient ways of monitoring the state apparatus were not adopted in time. The dominant logic came to be that of public works followed by more public works, in an effort to win more popularity and thereby be re-elected. That is how new sectors of economic power came to the fore - political and union leaders, and contractors who began to climb socially thanks to the state. Added to them were merchants, smugglers, cooperative miners, coca growers, "transportistas" (bus and truck owners) and others. They obtained a series of concessions and benefits. As a result, they represented major sources of electoral support.

To renew the process of change, it is necessary to reinvigorate old social organisations and create new ones. Today there is no assurance that those who were the key actors a decade ago will be the key actors of tomorrow. It is foolish to think that it is possible to resume the process of change simply with a change of personnel. The process is more complex, and requires the reconstitution of the social fabric that gave rise to it.

From "Vivir Bien" to extractivism

Vivir Bien means, literally, "living well". It is a philosophy associated with the indigenous peoples of the Andean countries of South America. It is a guiding principle of the state in the new constitutions of Ecuador and Bolivia. It includes a commitment to live in harmony with the Earth and the needs of a sustainable ecology.

TO REINVIGORATE AND RENEW THE process of change, it is fundamental to know what country we are building. We must be very sincere and self-critical.

The achievements of the last ten years are undeniable. They have their origin in the increased income of the state resulting from the renegotiation of the contracts with the petroleum transnationals. This took place at a time of high hydrocarbon prices. Strictly speaking, it cannot be said that it was a nationalisation - even today, two transnational enterprises (Petrobras and Repsol) handle 75% of the production of natural gas in Bolivia.

What happened was a renegotiation of contracts. As a result, the share of total profits of these transnational companies declined from 43% in 2005 to only 22% in 2013. It is true that the petroleum transnationals remain in Bolivia and make three times what they were making ten years ago. But the other side of the coin is

that the state now has eight times as much income, rising from \$673 million in 2005 to \$5.459 billion in 2013.

This enormous increase in revenue has allowed a leap in public investment. There has been a series of cash grant social programmes. Infrastructure projects have been developed. Basic services have been extended. There has been an increase in international reserves and other measures. Compared to past decades, there has undoubtedly been an improvement in the situation of the population, and that explains the support the government still has.

However, the question is where is this model taking us? Have we become addicted to extractivism and the rentism of a basically export-oriented capitalist economy?

The original idea was to nationalise hydrocarbons in order to redistribute the wealth and advance from extractivism of raw materials to diversification of the economy. Now, ten years later, there have been some economic diversification projects. But we have not overcome the trend. We are even more dependent on exports of raw materials (gas, minerals and soy). Why have we stalled at the halfway point and made ourselves virtual addicts of extractivism and exports? Because this was the easiest way to obtain resources and to retain power.

Of course there were other options. But obviously, none of them would have quickly generated the revenue from



Rally in support of a 2014 Bolivian government law that grants rights to Mother Earth. Advancing toward an agro-ecological Bolivia would have been a road much more consistent with *Vivir Bien* and care for Mother Earth. But it would not have guaranteed in the short term large amounts of economic revenue. And it would have led to a confrontation with the big agro-industrial sector founded on GMO-based soy production and export.

foreign exchange that would build popular support for the government. Advancing toward an agro-ecological Bolivia would have been a road much more consistent with *Vivir Bien* and care for Mother Earth. But it would not have guaranteed in the short term large amounts of economic revenue. And it would have led to a confrontation with the big agro-industrial sector founded on GMO-based soy production and export.

Another Bolivia is possible

DAYS BEFORE THE REFERENDUM IT WAS reported that a solar energy plant would be built in Oruro. It will generate 50 MW of power and cover one half of the demand for electrical energy in the department of Oruro, for an investment of about \$100 million. The news attracted little attention, although it is a small indication of how “Another Bolivia is Possible”.

Bolivia can gradually let go of extractivism and put itself in the vanguard of a real community-based solar energy revolution. If it were to invest one billion dollars it could generate 500 MW of solar energy, which is about one-third of the present national demand. The transformation can be much more profound if we consider that the government has announced it will spend a total of \$47 billion on investments between now and 2020.

Furthermore, Bolivia could support community, municipal and family solar power that would turn electricity consumers into energy producers.

Instead of subsidising diesel for agro-industrial interests, that money could be invested to help lower-income Bolivians generate solar energy on their roofs. The generation of electrical energy would be democratised and decentralised.

Vivir Bien will begin to be a reality when society is economically empowered (as producers and not only as consumers and recipients of social welfare grants) and activities are promoted to recover our lost equilibrium with nature.

The true alternative to privatisation is not statism. It is the socialisation of the means of production. State enterprises often behave like private enterprises when there is no effective participation and social control. Generating solar energy based on community, municipal and family efforts would help empower society in place of the state. And it would help to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions that produce climate change.

The topic of community and family solar energy is just a small indication of how we can think outside of the traditional patterns of “development”. Similarly, we must recover the proposal for a Bolivia of ecological agriculture and forestry. The true wealth of nations in the decades ahead will not be in the destructive extractivism of raw materials. It will be in the preservation of our biodiversity, in the production of ecological products, and in coexistence with nature, in which we have a great legacy through the indigenous peoples. Bolivia must not commit the same errors of the so-called “developed” nations. The

country can leap stages if it knows how to read the real possibilities and dangers of the 21st century and leave behind the old developmentalism of the 20th century.

No one is thinking of putting an end to the extraction and export of gas immediately. But we can't be making plans to extend extractivism when there exist alternatives. Perhaps in the short term they are more complicated to implement. But in the medium term they are much more beneficial for humanity and Mother Earth.

Instead of promoting referendums for the re-election of two people, we should be promoting referendums on GMOs, nuclear energy, megadams, deforestation, public investment and many other subjects that are crucial for the process of change. The process can only be renewed through a greater exercise of real democracy.

A misreading of what has occurred can lead to more authoritarian forms of government and the emergence of a new neoliberal Right, as is happening in Argentina. No doubt there are right-wing sectors operating both from the opposition and from within the government. Nor can we close our eyes to the fact that sectors of the Left and social movements have let themselves be co-opted by power and we have been unable to articulate a clear alternative programme.

The renewal of the process of change involves:

- critically and pro-actively discussing the problems of unviable late capitalist developmentalism underlying the government's Patriotic Agenda for 2025;
- evaluating, explaining and adopting actions inside and outside of the state in order to confront the problems and dangers generated by the logic of power (authoritarianism, clientelism, contentment with the status quo, nouveaux riches, spurious pragmatic alliances, corruption, etc);
- overcoming the contradiction between what we say and what we do, and implementing, in real life, the rights of Mother Earth and projects that substantially contribute to harmony with Nature; and
- being self-critical with ourselves and with the very same organisations and social movements that in some cases reproduce damaging autocratic practices and unwarranted prerogatives for a few.

Vivir Bien is possible! ■

Pablo Solon was a social movement activist who was Bolivian ambassador to the United Nations from February 2009 to July 2011. This article was translated by Richard Fidler and first published in English on his blog <http://lifeonleft.blogspot.co.za>.



Marine Le Pen at a rally during the election. She has tried to position it as a more normal, mainstream party, while keeping its emphasis on anti-immigrant racism and Islamophobia.

Le Pen

MARINE LE PEN TOOK OVER from her father in 2011 as the head of the FN. She has tried to position it as a more normal, mainstream party, while keeping its emphasis on anti-immigrant racism and Islamophobia. Under Marine, the FN has dropped some of the rhetoric around holocaust denial, while unapologetically attacking Muslims.

She's tried to expand the party's base from its traditional centres of support – the petty bourgeoisie and the families of repatriated settlers from Algeria – to the working class.

Since the 1980s the FN has seen its vote totals go up again and again. She is a right-wing populist who's attacking the European Union and immigration, and also saying "neoliberal globalisation is destroying French workers." She's often ambiguous about what she wants to defend in the French welfare state, but she's very clear in her rhetorical attacks

on neoliberalism.

How we got here

WHAT WE SEE NOW IS THE PRODUCT OF thirty-five years of neoliberal transformation. The big breakthroughs for the FN have consistently come at moments in which Socialist governments pushed through neoliberal reforms.

The first big breakthrough happened after François Mitterrand's U-turn towards austerity in 1983. The FN suddenly saw a surge of support. Then, in the early 2000s, the "Plural Left" government tried to push through neoliberal reforms like privatisation, as well as weakening its promises on labour law improvements. In the 2002 presidential elections, Jean-Marie Le Pen made it to the second round of voting for the first time ever. He got destroyed in the second round, amidst huge protests against the FN. But it was a moment where support did also rise for the FN.

Over the last five years the FN has been able to make real gains by positioning itself as the alternative to the neoliberal Socialist government of François Hollande. The Left has not been able to counter that effectively.

National Front transformation

THE FN FIRST CAME TO PROMINENCE IN the 1980s, and they were a hard neoliberal party. Jean-Marie Le Pen's programme was privatisation, deregulation, stop socialism, fight the Marxists and the Soviet threat, and so on. In the 1990s,

French elections: the centrist cul-de-sac

By Jonah Birch

This is an edited version of an interview with Jonah Birch which was published in Jacobin magazine. Jonah Birch is a contributing editor to Jacobin.

IN THE SECOND ROUND OF THE presidential election you have Emmanuel Macron, a neoliberal, ruling-class consensus choice, against Marine Le Pen, until Monday the leader of the far-right National Front (FN).

Macron

FROM 2014 UNTIL AUGUST OF LAST YEAR, Emmanuel Macron was the finance minister under Prime Minister Manuel Valls and President François Hollande. Macron oversaw their very aggressive programme of neoliberal reforms, including significant deregulation. He is a former investment banker who's never been elected to any office, but at this point he is clearly the consensus candidate of the French ruling class.

After the first round results were announced, he was quickly endorsed by everyone from Benoît Hamon on the centre-left (of the Socialist Party, SP) to

French Presidential election system

French presidential elections have two rounds. In the first round, any number of candidates can stand. If one candidate gets more than 50% of the vote in the first round, they are elected. If no candidate gets more than 50%, the two candidates with the most votes stand against each other in another election two weeks later.

The presidential elections are separated from the parliamentary elections. These will take place this year in June.

François Fillon (the candidate of the right-wing Les Républicains).

It's part of Macron's message that he transcends the left-right divide. He wants to position himself as the candidate of the neoliberal centre. He's very close to employers, so there's a lot of support for him among ruling-class circles.



Dockworkers marching against the El Khomri law, the most recent of neoliberal reforms, which raised the number of hours in the work week and limited unions' ability to fight.

as the far-left parties went into decline, the FN essentially reversed themselves. Suddenly they began claiming they were the champions of French workers (not all workers), and they positioned themselves in opposition to neoliberalism.

This is very complicated for them because there are lots of competing tendencies inside the FN, and the far right still has a middle-class base which does not want more regulation. But they have been really effective in making inroads into the working-class vote by positioning themselves as the opponents of neoliberal globalisation.

It's part of their opportunism that they've made that reversal. They talk about "national preference" in jobs, which requires that companies prioritise French citizens over foreigners for jobs. They call for the "voluntary repatriation" of immigrants, and so forth.

Immigration

THERE IS A LOT OF ASSUMPTION THAT far-right anti-immigrant sentiment is driven by the increasing prevalence of Muslim immigrants. There has been politicisation of immigration and in particular attacks on Muslims, like the ban on headscarves in public schools – an absurd and racist measure passed in 2004.

At the same time, mass immigration from the Arab and Muslim world, and from the French colonies, has been a permanent feature of post-World War II life. The numbers kept increasing in the decades following that war. There was a lot of racism during that time. But throughout all of this, the far right never managed to make sustained

headway. Certainly not like they have in recent decades.

Neoliberal globalisation the catalyst

SO IT CAN'T SIMPLY BE THE PRESENCE OF foreigners, or even the presence of racism, that explains the increasing traction the far right has enjoyed since the 1980s.

Instead, you have to look at the neoliberal reforms and direction of French capitalism during this time. France's traditional stability, with full employment, expanding welfare state, improving living standards, has disappeared. Over the last couple of decades, France has increasingly had a two-tier economy where people in more stable, full-time jobs are able to rely on a whole range of social protections that come with those jobs. There's a big gap that's opened up between that group and the growing numbers stuck on the edge of the labour market.

In this situation, given this increasingly precarious and segmented welfare state and labour market structure, those people are really easy to stigmatise. It's easier for the far right to get a hearing when they claim that "it's those scroungers living off basic assistance who are stealing the bread from your mouth and are the reason why your benefits are under threat."

The direction of neoliberalism in France has encouraged these kinds of divisions among workers.

The Socialist Party candidate was destroyed

THE SOCIALIST PARTY (SP) DID historically badly – their candidate, Hamon, got 6.5 percent. But In 2012,

at the end of the Sarkozy administration, the Socialist Party swept into every level of government. Hollande won the presidency, they won the parliamentary elections, and they had a majority of regions as well. They were the dominant party.

Government continued along the path that had already made it so unpopular, which was a complete and utter failure to deal with the crisis of French capitalism. The economy has barely grown since 2008. Unemployment is startlingly high, and the government hasn't managed to put an end to all of that.

The SP's strategy has been to pass these incredibly unpopular neoliberal reforms. They are essentially trying to eviscerate the labour code which protects employees. It's been a losing strategy.

But there is a gap between what happens at the national level in politics and what happens at the local level. In the municipalities there are places where the SP still has very strong bases. We'll have to see what happens in the parliamentary elections. They're definitely going to take a big hit. But there are a lot of people, who for their own local reasons, have a lot invested in the maintenance of this party.

What about the left?

MÉLENCHON GOT VERY CLOSE. HE HAS built up a base for himself. For instance, in 2012 he got 17 percent of the vote in the Department of Seine Saint-Denis, a very large, heavily working-class area north of Paris containing a lot of the traditional "red suburbs." It was 35 percent on Sunday, and he came in first in the department this time around.

His campaign was called France Insoumise (France Unbowed), and there is clearly going to be an effort to turn that into some kind of party. What that will look like is not entirely clear. He appeared with Pablo Iglesias of Podemos at an event on the Friday before the election, and he clearly wants to model what he's doing on what Podemos is doing. But there is no "movement of the squares" in France, as there was in Spain, to give legs to such a party.

Finally, there is concern for the future. There is a danger that even if Macron wins, five more years of neoliberalism will only further increase support for the FN. Until now the FN has had very limited representation in the French Parliament. In the coming elections we may see them make big gains. ■

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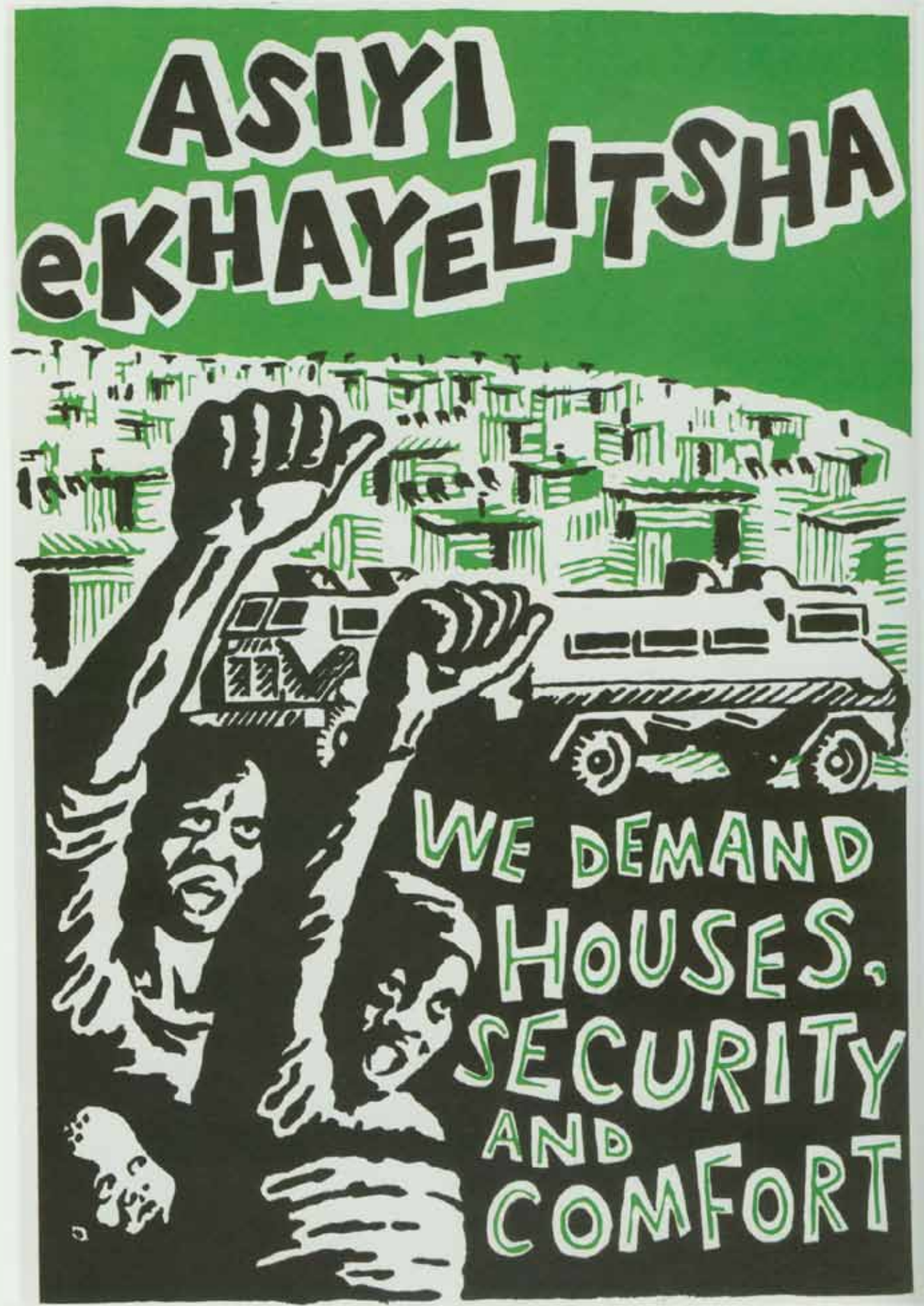
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Amandla! is supported with the generous support of the Open Society Foundation for South Africa.



Amandla! is published by the Alternative Information & Development Centre (AIDC).



Socialism is not about big concepts and heavy theory. Socialism is about decent shelter for those who are homeless. It is about water for those who have no safe drinking water. It is about healthcare, it is about a life of dignity for the old. It is about overcoming the huge divide between rural and urban areas, it is about a decent education for our people. Socialism is about rolling back the tyranny of the market. As long as the economy is dominated by an unelected, privileged few, the case for socialism will exist.

— **Chris Hani**