



African Communist

1st Quarter 2017

Issue 194



RECLAIMING OUR VICTORIES!

Assessing SA's armed struggle against apartheid

The SACP's strategic tasks as the NDR consensus stalls

Trump: why it happened & what to do about it



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Cover photo: MK combatants during MK's final parade, at Currie's Fountain, Durban, on 16 December 1993. Picture: Rafs Mayet

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EDITORIAL NOTES

Radical economic transformation in the interests of all, but primarily the poor

Over the past few months an increasingly shrill, factional and narrow black economic empowerment (BEE) voice has been heard. The ANC's correct 2012 Mangaung National Conference call for a second radical phase of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) is being dumbed down in these quarters to a narrow question of radically increasing private black (or rather African – another relatively new back-sliding development) capitalist ownership of the economy.

Since at least the late 1920s the Communist Party in South Africa has recognised that the economic, social, political and cultural empowerment (or rather the collective self-empowerment) of and by the African majority lies at the heart of the struggle for national liberation and socialism in South Africa. The current imperative of a second radical phase of the NDR is precisely grounded in the fact that this collective national emancipation remains largely unfulfilled, notwithstanding some important advances since 1994.

In our post-apartheid South Africa, inequality, poverty and unemployment are still massively marked by race (but also by gender, class and geographical location). Indeed, while it is important to remember that income (and even more asset) inequality between black and white remains extraordinarily and disgracefully high, class formation within the African community post-1994 has resulted in intra-African inequality becoming the main contributor to our extraordinarily high

Gini coefficient income inequality measure.

A number of independent academic studies and, indeed, the ANC-led government's own assessments, have noted this reality. According to one representative academic study: "From a policy point of view it is important to flag the fact that intra-African inequality and poverty trends increasingly dominate aggregate inequality and poverty in South Africa. Race-based redistribution may become less effective over time relative to addressing increasing inequality within each racial group and especially within the African group". (Trends in South African Income Distribution and Poverty since the Fall of Apartheid, 2010). An HSRC study found that growing intra-African inequality contributed some 33% to overall inequality in South Africa, while intra-white inequality contributed 21%.

Expressed in less academic language what this is saying is that the assumption that enriching a select BEE few via share-deals, or measuring empowerment progress in terms of direct individual black percentage ownership of the JSE, or (worse still) looting public property in the hands of state owned corporations in the name of broad-based black empowerment is resulting in the very opposite – increasing poverty for the majority, increasing racial inequality, and persisting mass unemployment.

One reason for the failure to drive a thoroughgoing, radical transformation of our political economy after 1994 is, precisely, attributable to the impact of the narrow BEE currents that are now, once more, surfacing voraciously.

A number of things need to be remembered about the evolution of BEE in South Africa. In many respects, narrow BEE was not the invention of the national liberation movement, but of white capitalist circles in the early 1990s. Realising that an impending non-racial democracy would deprive monopoly capital of its reach into the state, established

capital sought strategically to pre-emptively co-opt into their share-holding ranks a stratum of blacks and particularly those with likely ANC-linked political connections.

Pre-emptive moves by established capital to transfer some white share ownership to Africans started in the early 1990s, years before the ANC ever began speaking of BEE. In 1990 the National Sorghum Breweries was sold. In 1993, the Afrikaner-dominated conglomerate, Sanlam sold 16% of Metropolitan Life to a black empowerment consortium, New African Investments Limited (Nail).

Indeed, references to “empowerment” (not yet even “black” empowerment) were only first included in ANC policy documents in the run-up to its December 1997 Mafikeng conference. In the 1997 economic policy document the ANC stated:

“National Empowerment Policy: The ANC should clearly articulate a National Empowerment Policy that will focus on those who have been historically disadvantaged and particularly black people, women, youth and the disabled and rural communities. The empowerment process must constitute part of a more radical and profound change in social relations. Changing ownership and workplace relations are part of this wider process of empowerment. Within the National Empowerment Framework government should establish a National Empowerment Fund which must lead to the stimulation of saving, shift people from the informal to the formal sector, and from predominantly retail to more manufacturing SMMes.”

Like the SACP’s 2014 *Going to the Root* discussion document, this 1997 ANC policy statement correctly locates the question of “empowerment” within the overall imperative of a “more radical and profound change in social relations”, including workplace relations. In 1997 a National Empowerment Fund was seen as a means of stimulating **saving**, and not as an instrument for leveraging indebted BEE share-holding.

Likewise, the ANC document seeks to shift SMMEs towards productive (and job creating) manufacturing activity away from an excessive focus on retail. All of these are fundamentally correct strategic perspectives which have since been consolidated in further policy development – with the emphasis on broad based BEE, for instance, or with the current objective of fostering productive, hands-on, black industrialists.

Unfortunately, in practice, many of these good intentions on paper have been eroded by a hungry black parasitic stratum and, also, by established capital which prefers the lesser evil of co-optation of politically connected personalities rather than any thorough-going transformation of our political economy. The evocation of **white** monopoly capital by the likes of Mzwanele (aka Jimmy) Manyi, or Andile Mngxitama, or the Gupta media ironically plays directly into this co-optation agenda. As the Freedom Charter recognised more than 60 years ago, the problem with monopoly capital is not just that it is white but that ultimately it is **monopoly capital**. The extraordinary levels of oligopolistic domination of South Africa's economy date back to the late 19th century. The mining-energy-finance monopoly complex lay at the heart of the development of South Africa's colonialism of a special type, and its persisting dominance of our economy has resulted in the chronic challenges of unemployment, poverty and inequality, rural underdevelopment, and the suffocation of small and medium business.

Darkening the pigmentation of monopoly capital is not the issue.

But apart from the failure to contribute to the structural transformation of our political economy by the narrow individual BEE ownership project now being advanced aggressively from certain quarters, there are other deeply negative consequences of this trend.

We have already noted the drift into a narrower Africanism from these quarters. This is partly an internal ANC right-wing reaction to Gupterisation (“why should non-Africans be the principal beneficiar-

ies of political favouritism and state capture?”). But even where the more conventional formula is invoked – “blacks in general, Africans in particular” – what is really at play is “blacks in general, Africans in particular, and **me** and **mine** specifically”.

This emergent comprador and parasitic capitalist stratum has a very limited sense of solidarity. Much of the inner turmoil within the ANC has its roots in this reality. Factionalism and electoral slates tend to have little to do with principled programmatic differences, and everything to do with individual enrichment.

For many decades the SACP has recognised the centrality of the all-round self-emancipation of the black majority in the struggle for social justice and, indeed, socialism. For as long as South Africa remains a capitalist-dominated society, there is no earthly reason why capitalists in our country should be overwhelmingly white (and male). As much as the deracialisation of the economy and creation of an African capitalist class is important, for the SACP the struggle is mainly about rolling back and progressively abolishing the oppressive chokehold of monopoly capital over our society. This requires many initiatives not least an increasing emphasis on social (not private) ownership, and on the values of solidarity. This must include the consolidation of a progressive, democratic, developmental state (and not the factional looting of our state owned enterprises and development finance institutions); and the fostering of collective, social entrepreneurship (and not dog-eats-dog individualism) in the context of a solidarity economy. (Pat Horn’s interesting account of the solidarity economy in Nicaragua in this issue is extremely relevant in this regard).

The aim is that the next issue of AC, to be released at the end of April, will focus mainly on what is meant by the second, more radical phase of the transition and radical economic transformation. Readers are encouraged to write articles for the proposed issue on these topics.

There are encouraging signs that across the ANC and our broader Alliance, there is a growing determination not to be bullied by those who conceal their personal self-enrichment agendas behind lofty appeals to “black economic empowerment”. We must continue to expose these fraudulent agendas. But we must also give substantive content in theory and practice to real alternatives. Let us advance a genuine second radical phase of the national democratic revolution.

CENTRAL COMMITTEE POLITICAL REPORT

Our strategic tasks – now and over the next 10 years

If our liberation struggle was so expensive, how has it become so cheap? Is the NDR in an interregnum? What is to be done?

Revolution means to have a sense of history; it is changing everything that must be changed; it is full equality and freedom; it is being treated and treating others like human beings; it is achieving emancipation by ourselves and through our own efforts; it is challenging powerful dominant forces from within and without the social and national milieu; it is defending the values in which we believe at the cost of any sacrifice; it is modesty, selflessness, altruism, solidarity and heroism; it is fighting with courage, intelligence and realism; it is never lying or violating ethical principles; it is a profound conviction that there is no power in the world that can crush the power of truth and ideas. Revolution means unity; it is independence, it is fighting for our dreams of justice for Cuba and for the world, which is the foundation of our patriotism, our socialism and our internationalism. – Fidel Castro, May Day 2000 speech¹

Is the NDR in an interregnum?

The fundamental structural challenge facing the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) is our capitalist economy. The key constraint is that of seeking to drive radical socio-economic transformation on a terrain of a highly monopolised, semi-colonial capitalist trajectory. It is a semi-

colonial economic trajectory with stubborn structural features of unemployment, inequality and poverty. It is important that for us as the SACP this must be the point of departure in our analyses of the challenges facing our revolution. But it is also a capitalist economy with its own unique and peculiar historical features whose evolution and manifestations must be properly grasped in all the phases of the evolution of our struggle.

It was primarily in response to this reality that the ANC Mangaung Conference came up with a strategic programme to drive a second, more radical, phase of our transition. However, for a variety of reasons, the ANC and the Alliance have failed to give coherent content and direction to this 'second phase'. The SACP is the only organisation that made a serious attempt on this score and sought to engage its own structures and the Alliance on its paper *Going to the Root*. However this was also not very successful and there seemed to be little appetite for engagement on this matter. Why?

The SACP has spent most of this year trying to answer the above and other related questions, including the all-important question of what is to be done. Perhaps let us (re)-pose some of these questions as part of laying a foundation for political discussion in this Augmented Central Committee (ACC). Most importantly, discussions on these matters must also lay a basis for some of our Congress discussion documents. In particular, we have said that one of the key discussions in the run up to our Congress, and one of the outcomes from the 14th Congress itself, must be the identification of key strategic tasks of the SACP in the next 10 years.

If the NDR is indeed in an interregnum, what are the reasons for this and what is to be done? What are the character and some of the defining features of this interregnum? Is this interregnum not also a reflection of a possible (deepening of the) rupture in the (multiclass) con-

sensus (since 1994) around the NDR itself? And is the rupture in the consensus of an ideological or organisational character? Or is it both? If the SACP is correct in arguing that the 3 August electoral losses could be a reflection of the ANC's inability to win hegemony over and lead the main motive forces of our revolution, could this perhaps be a reflection of the rupture in the consensus amongst those motive forces? Let us seek to answer this latter question a bit more closely and in some detail, as part of laying a basis for what is to be done.

If our observation is correct that all we did at the ANC's Polokwane Conference was to deal with the symptom and not the fundamental causes of the problems besetting our movement, what then are these fundamental causes? To pursue the idea that we possibly are seeing a rupture in the consensus around the National Democratic Revolution, we need to go back to the past history of our liberation movement to illustrate how this consensus has been forged over decades, as well as where things could have started going wrong. But an historical overview also gives us another vantage point to look at the challenges we have and the way ahead.

One of the most significant developments of the 20th century in South Africa was the formation of the ANC in 1912. This was the primary foundation stone, which was to later become a significant factor in building a consensus around the NDR. Perhaps the ANC's biggest historical achievement was its ability to unite the African people across tribal divisions. This is an achievement we dare not underestimate as many progressive and promising revolutions faltered on the altar of tribal and ethnic divisions.

The unity of the African majority still remains a solid foundation for building a new, united non-racial nation. Without undermining the huge and impressive achievements of the Cuban revolution, I was however struck by the fact that one of the contributory factors to the

unity of the Cuban people is a single language – Spanish, from Havana to Santiago de Cuba! The ANC had a much more complex task on this score, uniting different language and cultural groups and truly making itself ‘Umbutho weSizwe’ building a consensus by uniting African people (As one liberation struggle song said: uMZulu, uMXhosa, Mo-Sotho hlanganani!). The task of uniting the African people remains an important one in refashioning and cementing the consensus around the NDR, and the SACP must also play its vanguard role in this regard in relation to especially the unity of the working class, and forging a progressive middle class committed to build a developmental public service in particular.

Much as the formation of the SACP was a significant development for the working class of our country to build its own political vanguard, it was the CPSA’s 1929 Native Republic Thesis calling for the establishment of a native republic as a stage towards a socialist republic that really grounded the Party strategically within the South African context. This was the first such explicit articulation of the relationship between the struggle for liberation of black people, and a socialist republic. It was a far reaching resolution that laid the foundation for the emergence of the very early origins of the idea of majority rule with an essentially African government and social formation but with democratic rights for all. It was an important contribution to the forging of a revolutionary consensus.

The Native Republic Thesis also gave very explicit tasks to the Communist Party in relation to the ‘national movements’:

“The Party should pay particular attention to the embryonic national organisations among the natives, such as the African National Congress. The Party, while retaining its full independence, should participate in these organisations, should seek to broaden and extend their activity. Our aim should be to transform the ANC into a fighting na-

tionalist revolutionary organisation against the white bourgeoisie and the British imperialists, based upon the trade unions, peasant organisations, etc, developing systematically the leadership of the workers and the Communist Party in this organisation. The development of a national-revolutionary movement of the toilers of South Africa against the white bourgeoisie and British imperialism, constitutes one of the major tasks of the Communist Party of South Africa”.

However the decade of the 1920s in South Africa was characterised by significant mass urban and rural struggles led by the Industrial Commercial Union (ICU), which though it was a trade union in form, acted more as a broader militant and mass movement combining the struggles of workers, peasants, and particular labour tenants being evicted from white farms. In many respects the ICU in the 1920s played a much more effective and militant, broad movement role than the ANC at the time.

The national democratic revolutionary consensus was tested and forged through trying times and in the crucible of struggles and big debates and disagreements both within and between the ANC and the SACP. The disagreements were paramount immediately after the adoption of this thesis and the SACP’s decision to work with and build the ANC. In the 1930s, both the ANC and the SACP were weakened, partly because of the debilitating nature of the debates around a way forward in the struggle against white colonial rule. Ideological debates within the SACP were also preoccupied by analysis of class struggles in Europe and the rise of fascism in the 1930s, especially in Germany and Italy.

It was the election of a new leadership core of the SACP around Moses Kotane in 1939 that created conditions for taking the SACP out of its debilitating internal factionalist battles, whose intentions centred on the clarion call contained in the famous ‘Cradock Letter’, written by Kotane in 1934. This laid the basis for the revitalisation of a campaign-

ing SACP in the 1940s on a number of fronts, including intensified work in building a progressive and militant trade union movement, but also beginning to take up struggles affecting particularly African communities, reaching out and working with Indian and Coloured communities as well.

The new Kotane leadership, perhaps on evaluating a decade of trying to work with the ANC, decided to encourage African party cadres to join the ANC directly as members and also stand to be elected for leadership positions in the ANC. Perhaps this was out of realisation that seeking to influence the ANC only from outside was not yielding the desired effect of radicalising the ANC. This formed another crucial dimension of the consensus around the NDR, the principle of dual membership by members of the SACP, not only in the trade union movement but also in the ANC itself. Although this was not a new practice in the SACP, it was now elevated to a higher level in relation to the ANC, and therefore an important development in the history of our revolution.

Of particular importance is how the Party, over and above its work in building and supporting progressive trade unions, was also involved in the building of what it referred to at the time as national movements, primarily the ANC. In the 1940s the CPSA continued its traditions of developing internal capacity for political education, using some of the cadres that had gone to the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 1930s for political education and exposure to socialist construction. The SACP revitalised its 1920s practice of night schools for the political education of its cadres on a larger scale in the 1940s. This later became a key element in the NDR - the education of the cadres of the movement as a whole beyond just the Communist Party, especially during the 30 years of illegality of both the ANC and the SACP.

It was no accident therefore that the apartheid regime, on ascending to power in 1948, targeted the Communist Party as its most immediate

enemy and banned it in 1950 through the Suppression of Communism Act. It was also the strongest component of the fledgling liberation movement at the time. The CPSA's mass and militant activism and struggles during its golden decade of the 1940s had a direct effect on the ANC, which had largely still remained an organisation of petitions. One of the mass actions that had a huge impact on the ANC and the movement as a whole was the great 1946 mineworkers' strike led by communist leader JB Marks and other communists. The Transvaal and Natal Indian Congress passive resistance campaigns against group area removals, which were also led by Communists, were another important contribution to a more active and mass campaigning ANC.

The radical programme adopted by the ANC and deriving from the ANC Youth League's 1949 programme of action, was directly influenced by the Party led activism of the 1940s.

The 1950s was a particularly significant decade in defining and shaping the direction of the NDR, as well as deepening the consensus, through separate, but complementary, mass activism as well as joint programmes of action – all leading to the formalisation of the Congress Alliance committed to non-racialism, both in active struggle and in principle for building a new South African society. These were key components in cementing the consensus around the unfolding democratic revolution. During the 1950s in particular there were also important rural struggles, although the evolving democratic revolution in South Africa was largely led by the struggles of the urban working class.

One of the most important developments of the 1950s was the adoption of the Freedom Charter. Though the idea of collective demands of the majority of South Africans came from the ANC, the Congress of the People deliberately involved the entire Congress movement. The Charter in many ways laid the foundation for a broader Congress consensus about the demands of the South African people, with a conceptualisa-

tion of an alternative South African society.

A major advance in defining a theoretical and programmatic articulation of the consensus around the NDR is contained in the SACP's 1962 Programme, the South African Road to Freedom. This programme achieved a number of things simultaneously:

- Most importantly, it sought to resolve a nagging question that had not been adequately addressed since 1929 as to what was the main character of the South Africa's capitalist political economy. The 1962 programme conceptualised this as Colonialism of a Special Type. The CST concept wove together three interrelated strands of national liberation struggle which had been implicit but un-developed in the 1929 Native Republic thesis:
- From the mid-1930s (and moving away from the Native Republic Thesis) the CPSA had tended to conceptualise racial oppression in SA as a version of fascism. (See, for instance, Brian Bunting's book on the emergence of the National Party – *The Rise of the South African Reich*). This strategic perspective corresponded to the Communist International's 1935 shift of emphasis away from an anti-imperialist focus to popular fronts against emerging fascism in Europe. The SACP's 1962 CST thesis returned our strategic focus much more centrally and appropriately to the colonial nature of national oppression in SA.
- Closely related to the above the CST thesis helped to clarify the relationship between the national and class struggles in South Africa, by embedding national oppression within the systemic relations of production of South African monopoly capital. This had been a central issue that had remained theoretically vague within SACP perspectives in the previous decades (see, for instance, Jack and Ray Simons' attempt in *Race, Class and Colour* – where "capitalism" is seen as the "economic base" and "national oppression" as an "ideological

superstructure”, an “ideological” hangover from the “frontier” past and in contradiction with the capitalist economic base).

Understanding SA’s pre-1994 political economy as CST also located our national liberation struggle within an internationalist struggle against imperialism in a new, post-1945 era. SA’s late-19th century capitalist industrial revolution had established SA as a semi-peripheral capitalist economy within the imperialist chain. A South African NDR, it was now affirmed, had to be a struggle for national sovereignty and not an old-style national struggle led by an emerging national bourgeoisie. The 1962 programme helped shape the direction of our struggle, and firmly embedded the concept of a NDR. The programme also significantly shaped the first Strategy and Tactics of the ANC as adopted in Morogoro in 1969. Were it not for the Morogoro Conference and its resolutions, the ANC and the liberation movement as a whole would not have been able to give leadership to the resurgence of worker and youth struggles in the early to the mid 1970s. It probably would have been as moribund as the PAC, unable to use this ferment to intensify the offensive against the apartheid regime. The organisation of our struggle in the 1980s into the four key pillars proved to be one of the most important strategic and organisational factors in pushing back the apartheid regime (the armed struggle, the underground, the mass struggles and the international isolation of the apartheid regime).

The semi-insurrectionary period of the 1980s, marked by a fusion of workers, youth and community struggles introduced an important dimension into the NDR, that of building people’s power from below as a crucial driver in the NDR.

The 1994 democratic breakthrough and the consensus

Without by any means suggesting that there were no internal debates

around the direction of the NDR prior to 1994, it was nevertheless after the 1994 democratic breakthrough that some serious discord began to develop over the consensus around the NDR.

The first deviation came only two years after the democratic breakthrough with an imposition of a neo-liberal economic policy. It was a neo-liberal deviation from which our revolution has not fully recovered from, and in fact has left very deep scars. It was an imposition declared non-negotiable, in a decision made by government and later imposed, without any discussion, as ANC policy.

The neo-liberal restructuring was also accompanied by a serious attempt after the ANC's 2002 National Conference to restructure the ANC itself, away from being a national liberation movement into a narrow electoralist parliamentary party, undermining the movement character of the ANC. This attempt was largely influenced by the "Third Way" political current associated with Blair, Schroeder and Bill Clinton – in effect the re-engineering of Labour/Social Democratic/Democratic parties away from their centre-left welfare orientation towards managerialist parties implementing neo-liberalism with a "human face", side-lining trade unions and shifting public social wage interventions into user-pay, privatised, debt-financed provision (the privatisation of Keynesianism).

The nature of a post-apartheid NDR and the appropriate organisational form of a sustained national liberation movement were already pre-figured in the debates of the 1980s, in, amongst other things, the differences around the character of MK. Those associated with Slovo, Hani and Comrade Mzala argued for an MK that fused with the rolling-mass semi-insurrectionary struggles of the 1980s, others around Joe Modise saw MK much more as the nucleus of a future conventional army to be built up outside of the country. These strategic differences within the ANC/MK were never resolved, but represented

two different perspectives on the future – the one appreciating the necessity for ongoing organs of popular power in a post-apartheid South Africa, the other having a much more state-centred approach to a future SA.

Similar divergences were detectable in the debate over whether to sustain the MDM structures associated with the UDF, or their collapse into centralised organisations. The latter view prevailed with serious and persisting problems in the civic, women’s and youth sectors.

From 1993 these strategic and organisational differences were also played out around the interpretation of the RDP: the Mbeki-ites stressing the “people-centred”, “top-down” delivery state character of the RDP (but not its equally explicit “people-driven” aspirations). After 1994 the SACP and the ANC national secretariat sought to develop localised MDM-type RDP Councils, but the 1996 Class Project marginalised both the RDP and any mass-based organisational mobilisation around it. .

A central plank of the Mbeki-ite drive to reconfigure the NLM and ANC as a state-centric, bureaucratic, narrowly electoralist formation was to marginalise the SACP in particular and to transform Cosatu into a narrow trade union formation. There were venomous attacks by both President Mandela and Mbeki on the SACP at our 8th Congress in 1998. Secondly, though Cde Mandela was having his own political irritations with the SACP, (and later apologised for the imposition of Gear), Cde Mbeki was driven by a desire to sideline and ultimately weaken the SACP and destroy the Alliance.

During Cde Mbeki’s Presidency of the ANC there was large scale factionalist marginalisation of the SACP and Cosatu as well as those who were not part of a circle closer to him. What also started developing was a system of patronage characterised by factionalist deployment into key positions in the state. The Black Economic Empowerment process,

which was not only narrow and elitist, but also got captured by these patronage networks thus benefitting those closer to the Mbeki faction to the exclusion of ‘outsiders’.

Although the ANC had always had different internal tendencies and sometimes groupings, but it was during Mbeki’s era that provincially based factionalism that drove the national behaviour of the ANC begun to take hold. And there was also a close relationship between factionalism and patronage, as factions were less based on ideological differences, but increasingly based on access to resources and means of accumulation.

It was also after the 1994 democratic breakthrough that there was serious neglect and decline of both mass mobilisation and cadre development. These two are usually the first casualties of factionalism, as a cadre independently capable of mobilising the people on an ongoing basis and also further developed through political education is not easily malleable to factionalist manipulation. It is not in the interests of factionalists to educate cadres and to undertake ongoing mass mobilisation.

In Polokwane the ANC removed Mbeki, but never really tackled these underlying problems. In fact, from the Port Elizabeth National General Council (NGC) in 2000 till the 2014 NGC, if not earlier in the Mahikeng Conference in 1997, all the ANC political and organisational reports had already identified many of the problems besetting the organisation. However, the main problem is that there has been very little, if any, action that has been taken to address these problems, such that they have now possibly mutated to the extent of threatening to swallow the organisation itself. For example, the problem of factionalism and slates has long been identified, but each conference and NGC is followed by many branch meetings, regional and provincial conferences beset by the same problems. For instance, right after the last NGC, all ANC or League conferences held have been characterised by slate

politics with no action from any of the ANC structures, especially the National Executive Committee.

If our liberation struggle was so expensive, why has it become so cheap?

Our Central Committee discussion document published in the last edition of *The African Communist* outlines, fairly comprehensively the serious problems besetting the ANC, our movement and revolution in the current period:

- Money-driven factionalism has become so entrenched in the movement such that in some regions it is leading to intra-ANC assassinations in the lead up to the recent August 3 local government elections. Over 20 such assassinations occurred, illustrating the extent to which large parts of our movement have been corrupted;
- The deepening grip of the parasitic bourgeoisie on parts of the state, especially in the SOEs, is exemplified by the recent revelation that the head of the Gupta family is now the seventh richest person in South Africa! The Guptas have not made their wealth through expanding and developing the forces of production, they have made their wealth through parasitic milking of public resources. If there has been any denial of the reality of the corporate capture of the state for purposes of private accumulation from both inside and outside our movement, Atul Gupta's ranking in the top ten wealthiest South Africans is the decisive counter proof!
- The corporate capture of much of the ANC's institutional machinery has become endemic, manifesting itself in, amongst other things, brazen manipulation of internal elections, membership lists, deployments, etc;
- Not since 2007 have we seen such signs of division amongst national leadership and wilful bypassing of ANC and Cabinet mandated positions on matters relating to the SABC, SAA, digital migration,

nuclear energy and the so-called Zwane task team on the banks. There is a climate of recklessness and a 'don't care' attitude in many of our parastatals, including violations of the rule of law and basic governance protocols.

However, the untransformed semi-colonial economic trajectory is the principal foundation from which corruption derives. Given the high levels of poverty and unemployment, access to a political position in the movement becomes access to some form of 'employment' and access to resources. The difficulty in entering the highly monopolistic economy, unless assisted by government, and lack of other economic opportunities outside the mainstream economy reinforces competition and manipulation of processes to access ANC and therefore governmental positions. This constitutes the objective reasons for corruption in our movement and society. Therefore a more radical transformation and de-monopolisation of our economy is an essential condition to fight corruption and factionalism in our state and organisations.

Therefore the interregnum is principally driven by a state of protracted stagnation in both our economy and a paralysed national leadership of the ANC, incapable of confronting corruption and especially unable to drive a more radical phase of our transition through confronting both monopoly capital and the parasitic bourgeoisie that threatens to take over our movement.

The situation would have been much worse with a likely decline into a failed state situation if, post-2009, a left axis in the state, led by the SACP, had not used the post-Polokwane opening, particularly in the first Zuma administration (2009-2014), to drive a range of important radical transformative programmes and, on the other hand, to block or at the very least expose and delay some of the worst corporate capture initiatives.

It is very important that we collectively and self-critically assess the

performance of leading SACP personalities in the executive and legislatures over the 2009 to 2016 period – not least because part of the EFF/Numsa as well as mainstream media anti-Party line is that SACP personalities have been sitting comfortably but captured in senior government positions (and, so the argument goes, the only reason why the Party is now speaking up against Zuma is that we have “fallen out”, or fear losing positions in 2019).

Among the key SACP-led, left axis initiatives have been:

A significant impact on overall economic policy orientation

In particular, the left axis in government post-2009 has succeeded in shifting government from a neo-liberal posture on state owned companies and trade policy to a developmental policy largely embodied in the New Growth Path with explicit jobs goals. Two million new jobs have been created since the adoption of the NGP in 2010, despite a global economic crisis that reduced demand for SA minerals.

Labour Policy – the left axis helped to shift labour policy from an emerging strategy that favoured dismantling key protections of workers to strengthened labour laws on labour-broking and short-term contracts, expanded coverage through UIF for workers who became unemployed, minimum wages for farm and domestic workers and a new minimum wage is being developed.

Competition policy – the left axis in government shifted competition policy away from an administrative processing of mergers to an active tool to combat collusion and cartels (in key sectors like fertilisers, bread, poultry, construction). The shift also saw a globally innovative approach to imposing employment and other developmental conditions when companies sought to buy or sell another company (Walmart, Coca-Cola, AB InBev, Clicks). Other mergers were blocked (Vodacom and Neotel) and abuse of market power was acted against

(Sasol, Media 24). Monopoly capital abuses in other sectors have been investigated (private health, gas, grocery retail); and measures to criminalise cartels and collusion have been implemented.

Trade policy – Post-2009 SA has emerged as a global leader in developing progressive trade policy from a developing country perspective. We have made trade policy a tool of industrialisation and shifted away from the free-trade model, introducing employment as a key criteria in tariff considerations; re-oriented trade with the global South (STAT), and increased exports to the rest of Africa.

In the face of the Global Recession the left axis in government developed and implemented measures to shift the economy out of recession in 2009, including a fund to retrain workers instead of re-trenching them; and a fund for companies in distress (R6,1-billion).

Infrastructure development – the left axis played the leading role in increasing the scale and scope of infrastructure investment with additional funding, a new coordinating structure (the Presidential Infrastructure Co-ordinating Council); and an integrated approach to delivery (I8 SIPs); linking local manufacture of components to infrastructure projects (buses, wind-towers, solar units, etc.)

Industrial funding – the left axis in government was central to driving increased industrial funding by the IDC by more than 100%. A major focus has been the funding of green energy projects, and a focus on a black (productive) industrialists programme.

Localisation – the left axis in government has driven localisation programs, among them the return of taxi-production to SA (the units were previously imported); the development of a new designation of products for the localisation of all state procurement (clothing, textiles and footwear, furniture, canned foods, etc).

Sector development – the left axis in government shifted the clothing, textile and footwear sector from a sector in rapid decline, losing

20 000 jobs a year to a stable sector maintaining employment of around 150 000 workers; supported food-processing and beverages through measures on trade, competition and industrial funding, resulting in a growth of employment in the sector; and rescued Scaw Metals when Anglo sold it; introduced a pricing mechanism to support local use of scrap metal; supported beneficiation, particularly through resourcing the development of fuel cell technology.

The spatial economy – overcoming CST geography

Pre-2009 it was the SACP that led the way in calling for a strategic focus on transforming the spatial political economy of apartheid – in particular through integrated urban policy, linking transport planning with housing, and transforming the Housing Department into a Human Settlement Department. While progress has been uneven since, at least these strategic priorities are now generally recognised.

Post-school education and training

Since 2009 there has been a massive expansion of student numbers and of public spending on university and vocational training. The huge expansion of student numbers, a major achievement in itself, has of course brought its own challenges (notably around affordability).

Towards a social/solidarity economy and the right to work

Over the 2009-2014 and the present administration, the left-axis in government has helped to shift strategic thinking away from the mistaken idea of a “well-performing” “first economy” and a laggard “second economy”, towards a different approach to “informality”, SMMEs, co-ops, and public employment programs – conceptualising these as elements of a potentially de-linked social or solidarity economy in which use values (assets and services) for working class and popular

strata and communities, rather than profit-maximisation and integration into monopoly-dominated “value chains” is the strategic priority. SA’s globally innovative public employment programmes in which the public sector is the employer of last resort have now expanded to over 1-million work opportunities a year, or some 220 000 in employment per day.

This is an incomplete list of left-axis strategic interventions in government since 2009 (we need to expand it and further assess it in preparation for our 2017 national congress).

The question will be asked, however: If the SACP-led left axis within government was relatively successful in the above interventions, why are we still suffering from crisis levels of inequality, poverty and unemployment?

There are two fundamental factors:

- The 2009, post-Polokwane relative breakthrough for the SACP and left axis at a government level, coincided with the impact on our domestic economy of the global capitalist crisis and particularly the dramatic end of the commodity super-cycle. The contra-factual is extremely relevant in this regard: If the post-2009 left axis in government had not been relatively successful in driving the above strategic initiatives the situation would certainly have been much worse. Unlike Brazil, for instance, our economy is not in recession. Unlike Australia, we have not lost our auto manufacturing sector. And despite crisis-levels of unemployment, it is our public employment programmes that have consistently seen job growth, as with this week’s announcement of the quarterly employment statistics which show “community and social services” (ie: public employment) once more contributing the majority of new jobs (78 000).
- While the 2007 anti-neoliberal ANC revolt at Polokwane created significant new space for SACP cadres in government deployments

in President Zuma's first administration (2009-14) and, perhaps to a lesser extent in the current second Zuma administration, there was always a deliberate attempt to check and counter-balance SACP influence in government. In essence, there was an attempt to triangulate and therefore contain the three major tendencies within the movement:

- The left axis;
- The comprador "new tendency" (with whom the left axis had struck a marriage of convenience at Polokwane); and
- The significant remnants of the 1996 class project who had not left for business, or departed to COPE.

In the 2009-14 administration, while SACP (and ex-Cosatu) deployees were located in key economic portfolios, Treasury remained firmly within the legacy of the Mbeki 1996 class project era. The SACP had campaigned for a central planning capacity, this was half-conceded (but in the shape of a non-governmental National Planning Commission), and it was equally handed over to the 1996 class project. Meanwhile key SOEs, and most of the social sector ministries went to "new tendency", and often parasitic bourgeois elements. As for the security cluster the SACP was entirely excluded from there.

The left axis-led interventions noted above were, therefore, often constrained by counter-balancing interventions, which meant that a thorough-going radical second phase of the NDR, capable of sustained transformative momentum was compromised.

Contrariwise, we should also note, in this context, that many SACP comrades deployed into key portfolios - for example, in communications (both in the executive and in parliament), or in energy put up tough resistance to corporate capture and were eventually demoted or forced to resign. However, if they had not fought against corporate parasitism, even larger scale looting and degeneration into failed state

status would have been accelerated.

Once again, it is important to assert and develop these analyses to counter the claim that SACP cadres in government have been passive, comfortable prisoners of a “hyena state”, and that the Party “has only woken up recently” for fear of losing positions.

It is also important to note a shift in the alignment of forces between the first Zuma administration 2009-14, and the current post-2014 administration. This latter administration has been marked by even more aggressive and reckless interventions by the Gupta-captured network, which often conducts itself as a shadowy, parallel state outside of collective cabinet discipline and above any answerability to Parliament or the ANC. Part of this recklessness is attributable to a sense that things are not assured for them beyond 2019; and part of the recklessness is the desperation of those for whom the net is closing in as scandals pile up.

The growing recklessness of this parasitic tendency, and its attacks particularly on Treasury, has opened up better possibilities for a re-calibrated relationship between the left-axis and Treasury. The sacking of former Finance Minister Nene and attacks on SARS have further isolated this tendency from a wide range of middle-of-the-road ANC NEC members, ANC stalwarts and ex-MK combatants.

But the reckless arrogance of the parasitic tendency in government has also been given some leeway by the weaknesses of Cosatu and its inevitable inward-looking preoccupation over the past two or three years.

And, finally, while the SACP-led axis in government has done relatively well over the past seven years, the SACP’s mass campaigning work has not reached the levels of the early 2000s and, for instance, the original Financial Sector Campaign. Going forward we need to ensure a better balance between our mass work and our leadership role within the state.

Integrally linked to the above is perhaps another reality that the organisational form taken by the Alliance since 1994 has exhausted itself and is no longer able to be the bedrock upon which to drive a second phase of our transition. We need to ask bigger questions of whether all of our Alliances formations' organisational methods aren't outdated. For example why is our movement's leadership and authority absent in the current student protests or unable to provide leadership on these.

The key strategic tasks of the SACP in the NDR over the next 10 years

The key strategic task over the next ten years is the mobilisation of the principal motive forces of the revolution to drive a radical second phase of our NDR, with the SACP at the centre of this task. The main vehicle for this must be a rebuilding of a militant working class-led popular movement made up of all those forces with an interest in a radicalised programme of transformation to benefit workers and poor of our country.

A radical working class movement

For instance over the past 20 years the progressive trade union movement, especially Cosatu, and particularly industrial unions, have been fighting rearguard defensive battles, essentially against the neo-liberal restructuring of the workplace and our economy, linked to the effects of Gear and the globalised developments of capitalism, Perhaps it is in the nature of the trade union movement to fight defensive battles against retrenchments, casualisation, labour brokers, privatisation, e-Tolls etc. These are by no means small struggles. But until the working class (within and beyond the trade unions) is integrally connected to a wider national democratic mobilisation and is organised politically as the working class and class force for itself, it won't as a class be able to turn defensive struggles (largely affecting the formally employed) into

an offensive for radical economic transformation and the overall development of our country.

In the current situation facing our own country, no other class force is able to rise and provide leadership towards radical economic transformation of our country. South African monopoly capital is incapable of providing such leadership as its primary focus, both in the short and long term, is narrow profit maximisation and indeed expatriation of investments and assets. The BEE class that emerged out of narrow BEE is equally unable to lead because of its compradorial dependence on monopoly capital, largely in the mining and financial sectors, and also now facing narrowing opportunities in the light of a relative decline in the mining industry and deepening monopolisation in the financial sector.

The parasitic bourgeoisie is also unable to provide any leadership in driving economic transformation as its primary goal remains that of looting the state as a means of accumulation. Unions also have intrinsic limitations. They are organised in the work-place, they tend to represent the more formally employed with marginalised sectors of the proletariat (farm-workers, domestic workers, the casualised, the under-employed and the unemployed) largely unorganised. This is one of the reasons why Numsa's attempts to launch a vanguard workers' party and also an MDM-style United Front have been a failure (at least so far). Building a radical and militant working class movement will require in the first instance the deepening and protection of our relationship with Cosatu. In addition the SACP needs to pay close attention to rebuilding Cosatu's industrial unions and expanding into unorganised areas.

However it is going to be important for the SACP to extend its work and engagements beyond Cosatu and seek to reach out to all organised workers. This will also help to contribute towards the one country one federation aspiration. However building a single union federation is not

a board room exercise but requires the mobilisation of workers around common concrete demands. For example there are common aspirations of workers across federations and unions like fighting against labour brokers and casualisation, the transformation of the financial sector to invest in job creating activities, the industrialisation of our country and growing the productive sectors of our economy, including building worker co-operatives. It is specific demands and campaigns around these issues that the SACP should seek to encourage broader worker campaigning and co-operation as part of building a militant working class movement.

Another important matter around which to mobilise organised workers is that of fighting the parasitic bourgeoisie and rolling back its capture of the state and state owned entities. This is a campaign that has not been taken up by any of the unions both inside and outside Cosatu, and yet it poses one of the most serious threats to transformation and defending workers' gains. Incidentally those interested in the corporate capture of the state are targeting the capture of the very unions organising the areas or sectors of the state they are interested in.

To achieve the above requires that we seriously revitalise, resource and strengthen the SACP's Trade Union Commission and that it must report at least twice a year to the Central Committee, one of which must be at the Augmented Central Committee. The trade union commission must also have similar structures created at provincial and district levels. This Commission must develop a nationally co-ordinated programme to strengthen our bilateral relations with Cosatu and all its affiliates, as well as to reach out to all organised workers and their unions, especially those likely to accept a minimum programme of action to defend workers. This must also include intensified work amongst those unions that have left Cosatu for example Numsa and Fawu, while supporting the building of Limusa and other Cosatu initiatives to or-

ganise farm workers and other workers in the food industry.

Building a working class-led popular movement

One of the observations we made in the analysis of the 3 August local elections was that the ANC (or even the Alliance) has lost contact with the principal motive forces of the NDR. Largely this is as a result of ANC structures, particularly branches and regions that are inward looking and focused on who is to be a councillor or a delegate to this or that conference. In the process the ANC has lost leadership of communities and capacity to address their needs.

The starting point for rebuilding a popular movement as part of the mobilisation of the motive forces of the NDR must start with engagement and joint activities with working class economic forms of organisation outside of the workplace. This must include the mobilisation of stokvels, burial societies, co-operatives, as well as building civic and residential organisations to take up community issues. Localised struggles against evictions and the predatory behaviour of mashonisas are very important campaigns to pick up at local level. The best way to do this is not to drive these programmes from head office, other than overseeing and co-ordination, but to strengthen our branches and districts to reach out to these structures and take up their issues at local levels. Also it is important that we do not rush to create new structures as such, but start by reaching out, through programmes of action, to already existing institutions and organisations, with many facing enormous challenges and stresses.

The SACP must simultaneously seek to build a front of these popular forces at the same time as it seeks to rebuild the strength of the ANC. In fact it is by building such a popular front that we can contribute to building an ANC and SACP that are rooted amongst the people. The SACP must deliberately seek to play a leading role in building this

front, as there are doubts on how capable the ANC is to successfully confront gate-keeping and corruption of its own internal processes. It is these very crooked practices that are now so entrenched in ANC structures that it turns many people against it, making it unable to lead a range of progressive forces in various localities. Such a popular front must both be in the ANC but independent at the same time.

Key and strategic policy interventions

There are a number of new policy areas and interventions that the SACP needs to pay particular attention to and also prepare some short position papers as we go to our Congress. These are not a replacement on our focus on the five priority areas of our revolution:

Building a layer of progressive and patriotic professionals and managers in the state

Every successful revolution requires the fostering and development of a patriotic, and often revolutionary, layer of professionals and public sector managers, capable of driving a progressive agenda to realise the objectives of such a revolution. But similarly every class society requires its own professional and managerial cadre to advance its own class interests in society.

For the SACP, it is therefore in our deepest interests that much as we seek to advance the revolutionary interests of the workers and poor of our country, we must simultaneously pay close attention to the struggle for a production of a patriotic cadre of professionals that are loyal to, and advancing the interests of, the consolidation of a NDR, with an inclination towards advancing the interests of the working class. This is not a task for some coming future, but a struggle that must be waged in the here and now.

It is precisely because every society, capitalist or socialist, and what-

ever its phase or stage of its struggle, requires such a professional cadre, and that is why such a professional or managerial cadre is a contested terrain. It was Marx and Engels who first pointed out that the middle and professional classes are a wavering class, subject to contestation by the principal class forces in a capitalist society, the bourgeoisie and the working class.

In every class and/or national liberation struggle, there is always a simultaneous struggle for the loyalty and winning over of the middle strata. In our own immediate struggle against the apartheid regime, there was a serious contest over especially the loyalties of the black middle strata, including the managerial and professional components of such strata.

Part of the struggle between the apartheid regime and the national liberation movement was that over winning the loyalties of these strata. This was a struggle over the loyalties of the, albeit relatively small, corporate middle stratum, the bantustan professional petty bourgeoisie and the professional layers of teachers, nurses and other professionals. Part of the shifting of the balance of forces in favour of the working class and the national liberation movement had a lot to do with the winning over by the liberation movement of significant layers of the professional and other sections of the black middle strata.

However, the defeat of the apartheid regime in 1994 did not mark an end to the class contestations in South African society, including the contestations over the emergent middle strata after 1994. This struggle in essence now involved the struggle over the loyalties of the black middle and professional strata between principally the capitalist class and the working class. It is a struggle that has simultaneously been fought between the emergent class forces in control of the post-1994 state, the dominant capitalist classes and the working class.

One of the most important class developments since 1994 is that

there has arisen anew, an old class force – that of a parasitic bourgeoisie that is largely dependent on its hold over the state in order to pursue its accumulation interests. This is not a new class stratum, but it has now taken a new form that has relative autonomy from both the established capitalist classes and the working class. Its power derives from its hold over the (new post apartheid) state apparatuses. Its autonomy derives from this class stratum's privileged relationship to government and significant sections of the state. Perhaps the most significant aspect about this parasitic bourgeoisie is that it both has dependence but also relative autonomy from the sections of established capitalist classes. It is its relative autonomy that is giving it power (and audacity) to try and dislodge the hold of the old monopoly capitalist classes from the state.

Let us take a brief detour to give a closer analysis of the parasitic bourgeoisie and the Gupta phenomenon in order to properly understand the threat posed by this to the production of a loyal layer of a professional and managerial cadre for the public sector. Capitalism has always created favourable conditions for speculation and corruption existing alongside mainstream accumulation. The primacy of private profit over social needs inherent in the system lies at the heart of this.

The current era of capitalist globalisation has massively increased opportunities for such tendencies. Greater mobility, financialisation, the proliferation of tax havens and greater opportunities for use of electronic transfers have opened up many more opportunities for speculative capitalists. And that is why all of a sudden the FICA Bill has become such a contested matter in our case.

The Gupta family can be identified as representing one form of speculative capitalism, in this case are highly dependent on corrupting decision makers within government and public entities. From what has emerged of their basic modus operandi, it is to exploit 'political

influence' to gain access to resources, licences, contracts and tenders on favourable terms and then to divert large amounts of the profits accumulated to off-shore tax havens and accounts.

The activities and practices of such capitalist bootleggers can in no way be seen as any kind of progressive bulwark against the monopoly capitalist owners and controllers of the means of production, that remain the main adversary of the working class.

Gupta-style 'empowerment' focuses on enrichment of selected individuals who can fuel their own corrupt enrichment and transfer of loot off-shore. Decisions taken by such 'captured' individuals are expected to favour the specific the specific interests of this group against the broader interests of transformation.

It is within the above context that many professionals and managers would be targeted by this rent-seeking behaviour thus corrupting them and undermining our goals to build a developmental state. The trade union leadership operating in parts of government and the public sector that are of interests to the parasitic bourgeoisie is also targeted for 'capture'. Another strategy of luring the sections of the professional and part of contesting is through offers of BEE type shareholding in certain companies.

Another challenge in this area relates to the fact that our civil service is not yet fully integrated from its past components from the central apartheid state and the Bantustans. In parts of our civil service elements from the old Bantustan services seem to be rising to occupy very key strategic positions in a manner that could pose a serious threat to the functionality of government and the state.

It is therefore important for the SACP to build capacity to drive a campaign for a clean and patriotic managerial and professional cadre in the public service. It is in the deepest interests of the workers and the poor that we have such a cadre.

To achieve the above will require, inter alia, that we forge a very close relationship with the public sector unions, primarily inside Cosatu, but also extend our engagements with other potentially progressive public sector unions that are outside Cosatu, in line with the strategic perspectives advanced earlier.

The rise of populism; the political dimensions of the neo-liberal crisis – a “crisis of representation”

The current capitalist crisis began as a financial crisis in the US in 2007/8. It has now assumed both a global and a multi-faceted character, marked in particular by sluggish economic growth through most of the developed capitalist world. One of the latest manifestations of this multi-faceted crisis is in the political domain, bringing uncertainty and disruption to a prevailing liberal electoral politics. The mainstream global media are describing it as a “crisis of representation”.

The neo-liberal state and party political space was constructed in response to capitalism’s last major crisis in the mid-1970s. It was piloted by Thatcher and Reagan and sought to roll-back the Keynesian, welfare state that had flourished in much of the developed capitalist world after 1945. It was characterised by a managerial, technicist political elite, zealously implementing what came to be known as the Washington consensus. It was consolidated by both centre-right and subsequently centre-left “Third Way” politicians like Blair, Schroeder and Bill Clinton (whose “Third Way” politics Thabo Mbeki admired and sought to emulate here in SA).

A popular and often successful electoral rejection of this politics occurred through the 2000s, sweeping notably through many countries in Latin America. The 2007 Polokwane events and the 2009 incoming ANC-administration, with its own internal dynamics and contradictions, can be understood as part, if an uneven part, of the electoral

wave of rejection of neo-liberal politics in many countries of the global South.

Now in the advanced capitalist world itself, we are witnessing a major electoral backlash against the neo-liberal Washington consensus. Part of this backlash has been led by left-leaning political projects (Bernie Sanders who would have likely out-performed Hillary Clinton against Trump; Jeremy Corbyn who has had to engineer a grassroots rebellion against his own Labour Party parliamentary caucus; Syriza in Greece; Podemos in Spain; Die Linke in Germany; etc.).

The rise of right-wing populism in Europe and the US

However, for the moment through much of Europe and in the US, it is “anti-establishment” right-wing populists who have succeeded most significantly in mobilising popular discontent. This popular discontent is grounded in the increasing precariousness of employment, high levels of household debt, and deepening social inequality for large swathes of the working class and middle strata. The immediate economic policy target of these right-wing populist movements is neo-liberal “free trade” policies being pursued in the context of the “disruptive” introduction of digitised technologies (the so-called fourth industrial revolution) and “winner takes all” markets. These right-wing populist movements also mobilise on the basis of racist anti-immigrant and anti-minorities sentiment.

In the developed world the main social base for this right-wing populism are vulnerable “middle class” strata (including sections of the industrial working class). Study after study has shown that in contrast to the several decades prior, inter-generational “downward social” mobility has become the norm as established white and blue collar jobs are displaced by a combination of the introduction of new digitised technologies and moving of production processes to lower waged

economies in the third world. Right wing in form and substance, the predominant form of political populism in the developed world rejects globalisation, regionalism and free trade, as well as demonstrating hostility towards established politics and “the establishment”, while also being deeply racist and xenophobic. The rise of Donald Trump and Brexit can both be recognised as having this hall mark, with the potential election of National Front leader, Marine Le Pen, as President of France being the next major test. Should Le Pen be elected (and this is now no longer unthinkable) and should she follow through with her pledge to take France out of the European Union, that would probably be “game over” for the EU.

Two variants of populism South Africa

The global crisis of neo-liberalism is spawning other forms of populism in the developing world. In South Africa this crisis is super-imposed upon and further aggravates persisting crisis levels of racialised poverty, inequality and unemployment. The 1996 class project led by President/Deputy President Mbeki was essentially an attempt to stabilise a post-apartheid South Africa on the basis of neo-liberal macro-economic policies (including trade liberalisation, globalisation, and privatisation) that would, supposedly, produce sustained growth.

The leading social force in this project was to be a new, ANC political-managerialist stratum closely linked to a rising BEE generation of “patriotic capitalists”. Sustained capitalist growth, it was reasoned, would enable significant redistributive measures to be “delivered” by the managerialist elite to a broader populace and a welcoming electorate – thus enabling the electoral reproduction of the ANC-aligned political stratum in government.

This whole strategy has largely imploded economically, socially, ideologically and politically. The inherent weaknesses of a neo-liberal

strategic agenda for South Africa have now been compounded by the global neo-liberal capitalist crisis.

While we cannot simplistically read our South African reality off a global time-line, it is not entirely accidental that the Polokwane events, the 2008 recall of Mbeki, and the 2009 election of the first Zuma-led administration, all occur at the moment that the current global crisis of neo-liberalism begins to unfold.

Between 1994 and c.2007 there were “winners” and relative “losers”.

The key beneficiaries of the first post-apartheid decade included:

- Established monopoly capital which was able to return to relative profitability, thanks to Gear-related trade and financial liberalisation, de-conglomeration, mergers and acquisitions and disinvestment.
- A first wave of BEE beneficiaries, accommodated within the ranks of established monopoly capital through the “social contract” between the new political elite and established monopoly capital
- A new political/public sector managerial stratum closely linked to the ANC-led Alliance. This stratum also included a trade union leadership whose career trajectory tended to carry them into the political/public sector managerial stratum, or into business.
- Professionals and middle strata from “minorities” – despite gripes about affirmative action measures, generally professionals and middle strata from “minorities” that had enjoyed relative educational and training possibilities prior to 1994 (whites, obviously, but also much of the Indian community, and a professional and artisanal stratum in the Coloured community). These social strata either sustained their relatively privileged positions (in the case of white middle strata), or enjoyed new possibilities and advancements. These strata have increasingly been mobilised into liberal centrist politics, notably through the DA.

Despite massive formal sector retrenchments (particularly in mining and agriculture), generally most South Africans saw some improvement in their lives post-1994, largely due to major redistributive efforts (social grants, RDP housing, water and electricity connections, the significant expansion and formal de-racialisation of higher education and training). However, in the absence of radical progressive, structural transformation, particularly of the productive economy, and in the absence of a radical land reform programme, these re-distributive efforts:

Are often overwhelmed by the size of the social needs, and are fiscally impossible to expand indefinitely;

Which, in turn, has provoked a deep sense of frustrated expectation with the resulting disillusion, social alienation, fragmented communities and anger, not least among a post-apartheid black youth generation.

The failure to drive inclusive, employment-creating growth has resulted in a mass of the relatively excluded – the rural poor, particularly women; informal sectors; low-skilled workers (rock-drill operators, for instance); unemployed youth; black lower middle-strata whose suburban ambitions are precariously maintained through high-levels of house-hold debt; the “missing middle”, etc.

This is the terrain on which all manner of regressive social phenomena have sprouted – violence against women and children; xenophobia; the spread of “happy-clappy” evangelism (at the expense of the more established churches and the more secularist traditions of, for instance, the SABC in the early post-apartheid period) – including all manner of quackery and fake “prophets-of-doom”; the resurgence of “identity” politics including, in rural areas, a resurgence of ethnic traditionalism, and even renewed life being breathed into narrow Africanist and BC discourses; the use of “muti” by AMCU-inspired

strikers, etc.

These are all signs of social distress, and they have destabilised the post-1994 political settlement, introducing deepening factional volatility within the ANC-led alliance, as well as breakaways from Cosatu and the ANC, and diminishing ANC electoral support – our own “crisis of representation”.

It is into this terrain that we have seen, also, the emergence of demagogic populist political projects:

- Some more “left” in form, and best exemplified by the EFF (although it is not alone); and
- The other essentially “conservative” and “traditionalist” in character (exemplified by the Gupta-captured network – the “premier league” (two of whose premiers cut their political teeth in Bantustan parties), the ANC YL and WL, the so-called MKVL, etc.)

Of course, “left” and “conservative” in this context are provisional terms. Both versions exhibit many of the same characteristics (cults of personality; pseudo “fancy-dress” militarism exemplified by “commander-in-chief” Malema on the one hand, and the MKVA “PEP-store camouflage” leadership on the other). Both versions flirt with an anti-white Africanism; both show little regard for the rule of law and the democratic Constitution; and both adopt anti-imperialist and anti [white] monopoly capital rhetoric. Both fish in the revivalist waters of a conservative Christian evangelism and both flirt with traditional leadership.

These similarities are not unrelated to the fact that much of the leadership of both currents emerged largely from the same political roots in what the SACP characterised as a post-Polokwane ANC “New Tendency” associated with aggrieved second generation aspirant BEE business-people and politicians side-lined during the Mbeki era.

There are differences between them however. EFF-style populism

has as its core social base alienated African youth in cities and small towns to whom a more left-styled rhetoric appeals. The core base of the parasitic populist tendency tends to be more rural, more conservative, slightly older, often social grant beneficiaries and others in clientelistic dependency relations with politicians and political slates. While both populist tendencies preach a gospel of “instant personal gratification”:

- The left tendency calls for this on behalf of popular strata (“land invasion”, a R12 5000 monthly national minimum wage for all workers, “free higher education now” for all students, etc.);
- The conservative tendency takes immediate, smash-and-grab personal gratification for themselves as a natural right (Nkandla, Gupta mining rights, Hlaudi’s bonuses) while preaching a gospel of patience and dependence to their “flock”. Church leaders are advised to “pray for us” rather than being involved in politics.

These differences then underpin a symbiotic relationship between the two populist currents, with the excesses of the one demagogically justifying the excesses of the other. Nkandla is used demagogically to argue for #Fees Must Fall Now. The brashness of the EFF is used to invoke a conservative back-lash, a “respect for authority”, and the abuse of the state’s security and intelligence forces.

Populism left and right – the battle of ideas and the role of the SACP

A critical vanguard role for the SACP in the present is to expose the ideological and programmatic demagoguery of both populist currents. In particular, the Gupta-captured, “conservative” populism is engaged in an active fight-back ideological campaign within the ANC-led alliance and the Party. We need to systematically expose the hypocrisy of their arguments:

- When we attack Gupterialisation their counter-argument is “what

about the Ruperts and Oppenheimers?” – as if Gupta-isation of SARS, Eskom, Transnet strengthens the capacity of the state to deal with established monopoly capital;

- They claim to be “anti-imperialist” – as if illegal money laundering and expatriation of surplus to Dubai and other tax havens strikes a blow for national sovereignty;
- They say they are the victims of an imperialist “regime change agenda” directed from London, but their propaganda offensive, involving fly-by-night NGOs like Mngxitima’s “Black First Land First” and Mzwanele Jimmy Manyi’s “Decolonisation Foundation”, is run by the notorious, right-wing, UK-based, Bell Pottinger image consultancy;
- They claim that the imperialist “regime change agenda” is grounded in South Africa’s active participation in Brics. It is true that imperialist circles will not be happy with SA’s alignment with a Brics agenda, and it is also true that Brics provides a useful, potential counter-weight to an otherwise US-dominated unipolar world system. However, the progressive nature of Brics should also not be exaggerated. In the recent period in both Brazil and India, right-wing governments have taken power. Russia under Putin is not the Soviet Union and China has its own national priorities.

Populism and a liberal constitutional counter mobilisation

Both the “left” and “conservative” populist currents are increasingly reckless and, if left unchecked, are likely to result in a failed state scenario unfolding in South Africa. This is increasingly recognised by a wide array of South Africans. Over the past 12 months, since the removal of cde Nene as Minister of Finance in December 2015, and with almost daily new revelations of parasitic misbehaviour and with growing evidence of a parallel state operating outside of cabinet discipline

and outside parliamentary answerability, a broad wave of social mobilisation has gathered momentum, spanning mainstream churches, company CEOs, first generation BEE beneficiaries, and ANC stalwarts and genuine MK veterans, rallying around groupings like “Save South Africa”. The mobilisation is directed against certain venal forms of corporate capture (the Guptas) and many but not all of these forces are calling for President Zuma to step down.

The SACP has had a presence within some of this mobilisation and there has been explicit or tacit support from within parts of the ANC and from Cosatu. It is important that we continue to do so, to avoid a complete hegemony over this mobilisation by liberal or 1996 class project tendencies – without becoming factionalist ourselves.

The broadness of this mobilisation is a strength but also a weakness. The critique of the present reality tends to be largely moral, and framed within a liberal constitutionalism. It is often directed simply at personalities (important as that might be) without offering a clear analysis of how the ANC and the country descended into the current challenges, and without therefore providing a clear, radical transformational agenda.

This is the complex terrain on which the SACP has a critical role to play in refusing both populism and a return to neo-liberal “rule of law” constitutionality.

Energy

There are really very big issues in this space, and the SACP has been absent. This area is crucial in the transformation of our economy, apart from some of the mega projects that are planned. Yet we have a relative advantage to start engaging with all the issues here given the fact that the Portfolio Committee is chaired by a member of this CC, and another CC member was a minister in this portfolio, albeit briefly.

One of the most critical issues to be engaged relate to the whole issue of the energy mix of our country and the role and place of each of the components of this mix. For example, we have never debated the issue of nuclear energy as the SACP nor have we, for instance, see the future of coal and the huge reserves that South Africa has. There are also big debates on renewables, and generally the issue of energy is at the centre of the transformation of our economy and driving a second more radical phase of our revolution!

Water

South Africa is a water-scarce country, and this resources is vital for our livelihoods as well as a critical input into the economy. The sector is faced with huge challenges, including the threat of mining acid to our water resources. The SACP for instance may want to consider starting a campaign against mine water drainage and for the bosses to pay for this destruction.

Water also has very big projects in the pipeline, primarily the building of dams and these are a target of tenderpreneurs. We need organisation and mobilisation to ensure that these funds are not wasted or siphoned off. As the SACP we have also not participated in comprehensive campaigning around how to save water. There is talk also of considering desalination of sea water as part of mitigating the possibility of run out of clean drinking water.

The criminal justice system

Twenty-two years into our democracy, there are still huge challenges facing our criminal justice system. It is also a system whose parts have been abused at various times since our 1994 democratic breakthrough. The SACP has also been on the receiving end of some of the abuse by some in these institutions. There are also disturbing signs of securo-

cratic tendencies, with the increasing use of intelligence agencies to do dirty political work. The recent reports around the funding of a trade union to counter AMCU in the platinum belt, as well allegations that intelligence agents were used to monitor some staff members at the SABC.

The current state of many of our institutions in the Criminal Justice System is in a highly unsatisfactory state and their behaviour leave a lot to be desired, whether it be the Hawks, Ipid, parts of the police and in the National Prosecuting Authority, and its disastrous handling of the Minister of Finance. In short, we need to develop significant capacity to interact with this system, and we ignore it at our own peril. These institutions are also a prime target for being corrupted by the parasitic bourgeoisie as part of covering its tracks.

Building the capacity of the SACP – ‘socialism is the future, build it now’

In order to realise the key strategic objectives outlined above, we have to admit that as of now we do not have the necessary strategic capacity. The second more radical phase of our revolution cannot be realised unless it is underpinned by a strong SACP pursuing the objectives of its programmatic slogan ‘Socialism is the Future, Build it Now’. Radical economic transformation needs, from our standpoint, to be driven by the struggle to build elements of, momentum towards, and capacity for socialism. The driving of a second phase is in itself a terrain towards the realisation of some of the goals of our programmatic slogan.

Driving a second more radical phase will also require that we confront the stubborn and persisting realities of colonialism of a special type. It is therefore important that we place colonialism of a special type at the Centre of our key strategic thinking and objectives over the

next ten years.

A key strategic and programmatic task that still remains a crucial missing link is how to properly integrate gender and a gendered approach into the key strategic tasks and programme of the SACP. Part of dealing with this is that patriarchy and patriarchal practices and attitudes are a reality in our movement, including inside our own Party structures. Part of building strategic capacity of the SACP must include a conscious struggle to greatly enhance women participation in the Party at all levels and creative struggles and conceptualisation of non-sexism inside the ranks of our Party, our movement and the revolutions as a whole.

Having identified the key strategic challenges and tasks above, it is going to be important for the SACP between now and the first CC next year to convene discussions on building the strategic and organisational capacity of the SACP over the next ten years. This must aim at realising our strategic objectives. The Party Building Commission must produce a discussion document by the next Central Committee for discussion and approval as a discussion document towards the Congress. Over the years we have had many discussions over how to strengthen the SACP. What needs to be done now is not vastly different from discussions we have had before.

The SACP needs to strengthen itself organisationally at all levels. For instance, our head office needs to be professionalised, improve its work ethic and manage performance much more tightly. Our head office must be able to drive and co-ordinate national programmes and campaigns as well as effectively manage deployment of CC cadres to Party activities across the country. The provincial offices need to be strengthened along the same lines as national office and ensure organisational presence of the SACP in all parts of our provinces.

However the mainstay of building the strategic and organisational

capacity of the SACP must be strong district structures. We must have wall to wall district organisation and structures which must lead the building and servicing strong branch structures, drive local campaigns and ensure that the SACP is independently rooted amongst the people. All of our districts must have dedicated and resourced district organisers and offices. Political education and cadre development must be intensified at all levels but with particular attention being paid to the development of a solid commissariat at district level. The mainstay of Party organisation must be the district.

Over the next decade elaborate attention and resources must be paid to strengthening party branches and units where appropriate. The primary intention of making districts the mainstay of Party organisation is so that we can have structures supporting the building of strong Party branches and units. Our weakness continues to be the fact that overwhelmingly our branches are community based and we hardly have any workplace Party structures. We need to create these. In addition we must build Party branches in all of our university campuses and TVET colleges. These institutions, especially the universities are very important in the broader struggles of the battle of ideas.

Our head office and all our sub-national structures must also be strengthened to do sectoral organisation in order to ensure Party influence in a number of sectors. For example the SACP needs to build relations and its presence in the arts and sports, as well as create local reading, writing and performance clubs and initiatives. There is a glaring lack but space for left wing ideas and creativity in these spheres.

Lastly, but perhaps most importantly the next six months in the lead up to our Congress, we must use our discussion documents to make the Party and its socialist ideas felt throughout the country. We need to create a buzz and ideological impact as we move towards our Congress. We need to publicly release most if not all of our discussion documents

immediately after our February 2017 Central Committee. By end of April we need to convene a broader Imbizo of working class and community organisations to share some of our key documents and listen to the views of a variety of class forces on the Communist Party and its policies and thinking, as well as collectively discuss the challenges facing our revolution and how to confront them. We must use such a gathering as the launch of initiatives to start building a working class led popular movement.

As we move towards our 14th Congress our approach should be that our Party programme, the South African Road to Socialism still remains valid, but needs to be updated incorporating the strategic tasks of the SACP over the next 10 years. ●

Endnote

1. Cde Fidel Castro's May Day speech of 2000, delivered in Havana. It is now used as an oath for Cubans to sign up to, affirming their dedication to the revolution and Cde Fidel's ideals. It was signed by tens of thousands of people during the period of official mourning following Cde Castro's death last year

UMKHONTO WE SIZWE

How the armed struggle succeeded

Ronnie Kasrils reviews MK's 30-year armed struggle and its contribution to forcing the apartheid regime to the negotiating table *

The people's patience is not endless. The time comes in the life of any nation when there remain only two choices: submit or fight. That time has now come to South Africa. We shall not submit and we have no choice but to hit back by all means within our power in defence of our people, our future and our freedom.

Thus ran the clarion call of the Manifesto of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) clandestinely posted in public places in South Africa as the first bomb blasts heralding its existence exploded at apartheid offices and installations on 16 December 1961.

The birth of MK was a cumulated response to the systemic repression and brutality of the apartheid system manifested in the 1960 Sharpeville massacre; the outlawing of the African National Congress (ANC) and Pan Africanist Congress (PAC); the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) having been banned in 1950; the closing down of all means of

* This is an expanded version of an address delivered at the University of Witwatersrand on November 25, 2016 on the topic of *The Historiography of Umkhonto We Sizwe: The politics of armed struggle in Southern Africa*.

non-violent struggle; and the fact that change was seen as impossible unless revolutionary force was utilised. The ANC – and, with it, the South African Communist Party (SACP) which played a significant role in the establishment of MK (see for example Cde Isu Chiba’s interview in *Men of Dynamite* cited below) – faced the same question as the other racially and colonially enslaved countries of the region. The resort to armed resistance was not exceptional to South Africa.

The 1960s saw the similar turn to armed struggle in Angola, Mozambique, Namibia and Zimbabwe, and further afield in Guinea-Bissau and earlier in Kenya and Algeria and beyond. The latter two struggles were rooted in the post-World War II decade of the 1950s which saw most notably the triumph of the Vietnamese over the French and the victory of the Cuban Revolution, both of which were to feature in contributing to the advance of our struggle.

The terrain in Vietnam and Cuba, as in Mozambique and Angola, with vast forests and mountains was highly suited to guerrilla warfare. Zimbabwe’s conditions were favourable once the shared borders with Zambia and then Mozambique opened up to its freedom fighters. Namibia’s inhospitable desert topography did not deter that country’s insurgents. And neither did South Africa’s lack of forested areas or of friendly borders deter MK – not in almost 30 years of protracted endeavour. There are other factors to be considered, including the role of the peasantry which had hardly survived as a productive class in South Africa, but as Amilcar Cabral noted: “Our people are our mountains.” In fact that is the decisive factor in successful guerrilla warfare whether rural or urban. Making the same point Mao Zedung utilised a different metaphor: “the people are the sea in which the guerrillas swim.” The Irish and Cypriots used the urban environment to advantage, as did MK. The epoch and context of the times, and particularly the international conjuncture, is yet another fundamental factor as to whether

guerrilla struggles might be valid or not. The collapse of the colonial system post World War II certainly was a key factor in the armed resistance in those countries where the colonial power was reluctant to concede peaceful change.

The resort to arms showed that the liberation movements had a great deal in common, including a common enemy and common goals, and consequently cooperated and assisted one another to a great degree in the spirit of fraternal solidarity and exemplary internationalism. They were all able to overcome tremendous odds and achieve the mutual objective of freedom and independence. Much has been written and debated about MK's contribution to the liberation of South Africa. And much more will still be written and debated, not as an academic game but rather to clarify the lessons and preserve the heritage for today's and future generations of our people. That is why developing a people's history is so important – a people's history being consistent with an authentic decolonised history of a national liberation struggle for freedom and independence from the totality of a foreign yoke.

These were protracted struggles, linked to the imposition of colonialism. Liberation historiography consequently embraces different eras and contexts and the changing circumstances with which the revolutionary movements have to contend. This is demonstrated in the changing perspectives from the period of the launching of armed struggle to the time of negotiations and liberation.

About historiography

Briefly put, the study of historical writing, which we are attempting in this review, is termed historiography. Historiography stands on three legs grounded in specific contexts and eras:

- The listing and categorising of the available literature and sources in their specific context and times (categorisation implying more

than a bibliographic list);

- Assessing and critiquing the literature; and
- Illuminating the key themes and debates.

The above three facets of the historiography will assist in clarifying what I believe should be the essential objectives of scientific historiography: deepening understanding of the subject under review through analysis, contextualisation, debate and where necessary revision; highlighting the gaps and limitations of the existing literature; pointing to new areas of research and analysis; and above all being armed with the necessary ideological orientation (derived for example from historical materialism). A people's historiography, rooted in political economy, class engagement, labour and the masses, should be in search of the truth to establish and convey better understanding. To do so we must make it patently clear which accounts genuinely serve the cause of the freedom that has been fought for, and expose those which defend injustice. That is where we need to part ways with scholastic purists or the nay-sayers who believe truth can only be arrived at by "dispassionate objectivity" which is blind to the "just war" rationale and the context of the time.

In historical terms MK historiography is relatively recent; more so when considering the evolving literature and debate around let us say the French Revolution, World War I or the Russian Revolution. We need to bear in mind as well that much information about the liberation struggle from primary, organisational and participatory sources is still secret; documents and reports are unavailable or lost; many participants are yet to tell their stories; not to mention the fallibility of personal attestation and bias, limitations of memory and ideological factors. What is exciting is the steadily growing genre of autobiography of MK experiences which enriches the historiography and necessitates ongoing updating from time to time. Of particular note is Cde Fanele Mbali's *In Transit* featuring the

1960-70s; Cde James Ngculu's *The Honour to Serve* in the post-1976 era; Cde Stanley Munong's *If We Must Die* and Cde Wonga Bottoman's *The Making of an MK Cadre* from the perspective of 1980s recruits. Concerning time and context, and how these help us to understand the varying perspective of revolutionary participants, one needs to trace both the formal statements of the movements concerned and the writings and speeches of the leading theoreticians.

In MK's case the statements of Cde Oliver Tambo and writings of Cde Joe Slovo are exceptional. Cde Slovo's *No Middle Road* written in the early 1970s and *Has Socialism Failed?* in 1990, demonstrate the changing circumstances and challenges that had to be grasped. At this point let me pay tribute to both men who worked so closely together: Cde Tambo for his inspirational and unifying leadership of MK and the ANC; Cde Slovo for his contribution to both the theory and practise of Marxism and the armed struggle, including his drive and creativity in commanding MK's special operations.

As much as we encourage serious scholarly work, it is the account of those who actually participated in fighting for freedom, the primary sources, that are invaluable and with the passing of time should not be lost. There is a view among some academics that memoirs should not be treated as primary sources, as they are deficient from a scholarly point of view and lack objectivity. Yet many autobiographies of South Africa's struggle history in my view pass muster as scholarly works with the advantage that they are embedded in first-hand experience and in fact the best of them provide acute critical insights. As much as there is a growing literature, the history of MK is under-recorded and, more particularly, along with the history of Apla (Azanian People's Liberation Army), is barely featured in the annals of the country's conventional national military historiography and museums, still dominated by the racist narratives of the SADF and its colonial predecessors.

Against these are Liliesleaf (Rivonia), the Apartheid Museum (Crown Mines), the Mandela Capture Site at Howick, and Freedom Park in Pretoria which are counters to such domination and need to be assisted by ongoing transformation and liberation historiography.

For these reasons there is a need to work on establishing and listing as full as possible a historiography of the growing struggle sources available: oral and written, interviews, articles, memoirs, biographies, policy statements, speeches, documents, polemics, debates, poems and songs, museum displays, films and archival sources etc. This is a necessary step towards the task of categorising the available records, distinguishing between those who fought the just war and those who fought to preserve the racist-colonial system. I am also of the view, given the fundamental importance of context and era, that we need to establish a more thorough periodisation of MK's history which I will attempt to offer as a guide. These phases, with the relevant policy statements, and hard lessons learnt in the preceding phase, are key to grasping the evolution of the objectives, strategy and tactics of the armed struggle. I stress this point for, at the recent Witwatersrand Conference on the "Politics of Armed Struggle in Southern Africa" labour commentator, Terry Bell, crassly declared at the opening event that the ANC-MK, failed to learn from its mistakes – although after being lambasted he stated "at least up to 1980" (25 November 2016).

In the limited space available I will at least want to deal with the question of whether MK achieved its goals and what might have been left undone. By way of illustration I will briefly list the number of its operations as but one indicator of its activity – albeit a prime reason for its existence. A full investigation would look at the economic cost to the country; the casualties on both sides; the amounts of weapons captured; which police records such as those of apartheid General HD Stadler in his studies refers to. But such statistics including classifica-

tion as “terrorist operations” can be and are deceptive and mechanical and attest to the costs of struggle rather than outcome.

Whatever the setbacks or characterisation by the repressive regime, it is the final battle, the outcome of the war, that determines who won. Just consider the debate about the Battle of Cuito Cuanavale, which was a defensive victory by Cuban-Angolan forces over the SADF, creating the springboard for the brilliant advance on Namibia’s borders and the sea change in the region. A people’s victory was evident – yet to this day reactionary apartheid order and quasi-liberal claims persist about who won the war.

In a similar way reactionary, denialist views exist about MK’s role seeking to belittle its incalculable contribution. Historiography must be a battle to establish the truth.

I will examine how far MK had progressed by 1990 and whether its objectives had been achieved.

Periodisation (phases of MK armed struggle and policy foundations)

A thorough periodisation of the phases of armed struggle, attendant policy and the changing historical context, role and rivalry between international powers, is absolutely necessary in guiding assessment and research, and understanding the shifts in strategy and tactics. This also relates to the reaction of the regime at different times, its resort to increased repressive legislation and declarations of states of emergency, its increased militarisation, the “total war” strategy, the recourse to the use of “hit squads”, the aggression towards and invasion of Angola and the Front Line States, the promotion of counter-revolutionary bandit groups such as Unita in Angola and Renamo in Mozambique and its support from imperialist forces. It is worth noting Marx’s observation that revolutionary struggle brings on fiercer repression from counter-revolution which compels the revolution-

aries to develop greater organisational capacity and tactics.

The ANC Submission to the TRC sums up the phases as follows: Historical context and Resistance to 1960; and Repression and Total State Strategy 1960s to 1990.

Within this submission a note on armed operations refers to the stages as: Sabotage campaign; Wankie campaign; 1976 Soweto uprising to 1985 and thereafter; and in essence breaks down as follows:

- 1961-69: Establishment of MK December 1961 to the Zimbabwe Campaign – Wankie and Sipolilo;
- 1969-1979: From the Morogoro Conference to 1976 Youth Uprising and aftermath;
- Towards People’s War and People’s Power: The Green Book; political-military co-ordination; increased MK operations; [this would be 1980 onwards – RK];
- ANC and Internal Mass Revolt – Role of Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) in 1980s;
- Role of SDUs (Self-Defence Units) post-1990.

I submit the following categorisation as perhaps a more refined and extensive guide to historical research, the changing balance of forces and context which changes with time, and perhaps a more pointed way of indicating gaps in the literature which need to be filled:

- 1945-1960: Establishing the context in the post-World War II context of victory over fascism and collapse of the colonial system and influence of the cold war – national, regional and international including the role of the United Nations Organisation; the move from non-violence to violent confrontation; guerrilla wars became prevalent in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Note: the relevance of the wars of resistance to colonial conquest over the preceding centuries need to be considered, lasting in South Africa until the Bambata Rebellion of 1906.

- 1961-1963: Establishment of MK; Sabotage Campaign to Rivonia arrests; including the draft Operation Mayibuye document (as flawed as it might be), foreseeing the unfolding of guerrilla warfare and the objective of insurrection.
- 1964-1967: Attempts at Recovery: Wilton Mkwayi and Bram Fischer's endeavours; internal structures destroyed; rear bases (Tanzania and Zambia) and problems of getting home; initial training in China, Algeria, Ethiopia, Egypt, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Cuba and the Soviet Union. Training in China, Ethiopia; – Egypt fell away as a rear base as those in Cuba and the Soviet Union and later GDR (East Germany) grew; (Yugoslavia provided military training in the late 1980s); emergence of the Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM) and the first of many UN resolutions calling for sanctions against South Africa.
- 1967-1968: Zimbabwe campaign involving a fighting alliance between Zipra (the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army of Zapu) and MK.
- 1969-1975: Morogoro Conference – assessment of problems, failures, challenges and way ahead; particularly the absence of political work inside the country as prerequisite for armed struggle; elaboration of strategy and tactics; creation of Revolutionary Council (RC) in Lusaka to direct internal struggle; stepped up propaganda and infiltration; Black Consciousness and student activity; workers' strikes in Namibia and South Africa; the collapse of Portuguese colonialism; liberation of Angola and Mozambique; SADF invasion of Angola – with Cuba providing vital assistance and MPLA triumphs March 1976.
- 1976-1979: The Soweto rebellion the turning point; increased MK recruitment; Mozambique and, particularly, Angola provide bases; revival of MK operations; Swaziland, Lesotho and Botswana springboards; GDR, Cuban, Soviet training; delegation to Vietnam

on people's war; "Green Book" results – setting out strategy for advancing struggle and concept of people's war. Note: Soviet, GDR and Cuban training geared to guerrilla and underground struggle as does MK's own training programme (Soviet term "MCW" – Military Combat Work) denotes new focus of training in linking armed struggle with mass struggle, creating underground networks, infiltration of enemy forces and the goal of insurrection; note too the increase in Zanla (Zimbabwe National Liberation Army) guerrilla activity across the Mozambique border and its emphasis on "political mobilisation" of the peasantry.

- 1980-1984: New front opens as Zimbabwe becomes independent; establishment by ANC of "Senior Organ" structures to integrate political and military work under RC; developing concept of Four Pillars of Struggle stressing primacy of political leadership and mass struggle, reinforced by armed actions, underground work and international solidarity; dramatic rise in MK operations from 20 in 1980 to 61 in 1984; Politico-Military Command (PMC) replaces RC (1983) for better co-ordination of political and military tasks; development of underground structures; emergence of UDF, Cosatu (Congress of South African Trade Unions), MDM (Mass Democratic Movement) ; protests grip the country and Young Lions flock to MK's banner; MK-Fapla (People's Liberation Armed Forces of Angola) joint operations against Unita (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola) in Angola; spies, informers, infiltration and mutiny; 1984 Nkomati Accord non-aggression pact between Mozambique and apartheid South Africa.

- Pretoria's "total onslaught"; states of emergency; regime death squads and raids on Matola, Gaborone, Maseru, Swaziland, Harare and into Angola denote the rising fears of the regime and its attempts to destroy MK; overcoming mutiny and Nkomati reversal;

- 1985-1990: MK operations increase from 104 in 1985 to 249 in 1988; Kabwe Conference 1985 – stepping up armed struggle; Tambo (1985): “Make South Africa ungovernable and apartheid unworkable”; international isolation increases; beginnings of dialogue with business and academics; secret regime talks with Mandela and Thabo Mbeki’s parallel external channel; Operation Zikomo which steps up infiltration of MK cadres post-Kabwe to carry out politico-military work; significance of Operation Vula 1988-90; Battle of Cuito Cuanavale 1987-88, the historic turning point for the region; independence for Namibia; Fidel Castro’s statement: “Africa’s history will be written as before and after Cuito Cuanavale”; MK camps relocate to Uganda; mass upsurge “unbans” ANC; the regime increasingly losing control within the country; international and domestic capital seek political reform to stave off revolutionary change.
- 1990-1994: De Klerk’s February 1990 speech; ANC-SACP reorganise; MK’s cessation of armed struggle; third force and regime violence; SDUs (Self Defence Units) and MK’s role; Transitional Executive Council; 1993 MK disbands and integrates with other forces into new SANDF (South African National Defence Force); April 1994 ANC gains power in first democratic elections.

Assessing MK’s role

“In building up our own popular army we aim ... not only at the overthrow of the fascist regime, we aim also at building up a politically conscious and revolutionary army, conscious of its popular origin, unwavering in its democratic functions and guided by our revolutionary orientation”
– OR Tambo

In moving towards enumerating MK’s operations I am by no means stating that MK actions are the sole criteria for measuring whether MK was a success story. However, the fact that under extremely adverse

conditions MK was able to recover from setbacks and keep up a protracted offensive against the apartheid regime, and maintain and grow its organisational capacity, for well-nigh 30 years, is a testament to its durability and success.

The ANC, SACP and MK never abandoned their mission, kept coming back from what the regime repeatedly announced was the “end of the struggle”. This resilience kept the spirit of hope alive among the people. Guerrilla struggle is the weapon of the weak over the strong and its ultimate efficacy can only be judged by the final outcome: has fundamental change been achieved? Was that change achieved by the contribution of MK’s activities?

South Africa’s topography, lack of a friendly border, lack of a peasantry, large white population rooted in the country, huge security apparatus, its strong centralised state, powerful resources backed up by Western supply and support, speedy communication and super highway network and level of development, by no means suited classical guerrilla war. In fact there was concern among some on the left, particularly university based, that the role of workers’ struggle and trade union organisation should not be watered down. The severity of repression, however, often led to reliance on the force of arms.

In any event the liberation movement always stressed the relevance of mass struggle, where its capacity would emerge strongest, and as that evolved so the development of the strategy and tactics came to recognise MK’s role as secondary to and reinforcing the political struggle – although it remained decisive in reinforcing and strengthening the political struggle. While military operations only began to progress beyond armed propaganda in the 1980s, the demonstration that the white regime was not invincible, was losing control in the townships and bantustans such as the Transkei, coalesced to play a paramount role in inspiring the masses and tilting the balance of forces in favour of

insurgency. The formation of MK was instrumental, as was the role of the victorious guerrilla struggles in the southern African region which, with Soviet and the decisive Cuban support on the ground, ultimately brought the SADF to a halt.

The nature of MK operations and dramatic growth in the 1980s was a key factor in moving from armed propaganda to a point approaching people's war and the threat of insurrection by the time FW de Klerk threw in the towel in February 1990. By that stage MK's Operation Secret Safari alone had smuggled 40 tons of weapons into the country and the number of MK had grown to 10 000 of which perhaps half were fully trained and many more were auxiliaries within the country. (See MK's Comprehensive Personnel Register – CPR – below which enumerates numbers in excess of this).

The revolutionary army was growing; there was some arming of the masses; sections of white youth, mobilised through the End Conscription Campaign (ECC), were refusing to serve in the SADF; MK intelligence department (MKIZA) was obtaining information from within the enemy forces (through operatives such as Rocklyn Williams and Roland Hunter); elements within the bantustan armies, particularly the Transkei, were being won over. These were key factors in the growth of a revolutionary army. The legendary Vo Nguyen Giap's Five Fighting Factors (an MK term) as the key to Vietnam's victory over the French (1954) and then the Americans (1975) became the subject of intensive study in MK ranks. We synthesised these as:

- A just cause providing moral superiority over the enemy;
- Correct theory and leadership;
- A united and determined people;
- The invincible art of guerrilla warfare; and
- International solidarity.

These and the theory of a revolutionary army were elements of what

MK referred to as military combat work (MCW) which combined political and military work. Its development, based on Soviet partisan warfare in World War II, was an inestimable threat to the regime.

The MK numbers meant that when the time came in 1994 to form a new integrated national defence force (the SANDF) there were significant MK cadres to enlist, with 12 becoming generals (some were over age such as General Lambert Moloï and not incorporated) and by 1998 General Siphwe Nyanda became the SANDF commander. A Certified Personnel Register (CPR) compiled for the inclusion of all previous forces – statutory and non-statutory – into the new SANDF listed 28 888 MK members of which 11 738 elected to join (16% of SANDF's strength); 7 238 demobilised, and the rest had taken jobs elsewhere, could not be traced or failed to report at all. (See Rocklyn Williams' Brief Historical Overview of MK 1961-1994).

It is possible that 8 000 received comprehensive training during the 30 years of MK's existence: approximately 2 000 in the Soviet Union, many returning for advanced courses; 800 in the GDR (80 a year for a decade at Tetrow but also small groups in Berlin); 300 in Cuba; 50 in Yugoslavia; the rest in Angola, and various African states such as Algeria, Egypt, Tanzania, Mozambique, Uganda, Zimbabwe and a few score in China, Cyprus and Czechoslovakia in the early 1960s. This is a rough estimation and needs accurate research. I know of one recruit of Muslim background who Joe Modise arranged to be trained with the Palestinians in Lebanon just prior to their expulsion in 1982. There may have been more.

MK started off from inside South Africa with a small contingent of cadres as its pathfinders. Approximately 100 operatives at its inception carried out almost 200 sabotage actions (December 1961-July 1963). At the end of that period some 300 cadres had been involved in operations and possibly up to 1 000 recruits had left the country for military

training. However, by 1965 the underground in South Africa was effectively smashed. It was that underground network that was meant to receive the returning cadre and situate them safely in the country. They were from then, however, save for few, effectively locked out of the country for many years.

Thus the struggle leadership came to operate from exile. MK never gave up despite tremendous odds; going through ups and downs, from low to high points, until it was able to consolidate and grow from exile bases following the 1974-75 liberation of Angola and Mozambique. One of the stiffest obstacles to surmount was the enormous distance from home and dangers of moving through Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland and into a country infested with apartheid agents and informers, where the underground had been destroyed and no safe havens existed. This remained a key problem right through to the late 1980s and took considerable courage, risk and ingenuity to overcome. The two mutinies in Angola, at the Viana and Pango camps, in 1983-4 (only two in 30 years!) and some sporadic acts of defiance that occurred over the years emanated from this problem, as did the idea that applied for a time that guerrilla actions could create the political platform for survival rather than the reverse. (Note: this went along with the incorrect theory of Regis Debray in his account of the Cuban revolution, despite being severely criticised by Joe Slovo: "Latin America and the Ideas of Regis Debray" in *The African Communist* No.33 1968).

With the strategy and tactics of armed struggle undergoing major shifts, the 1976 Soweto uprising proved the turning point. Recruits flocked into MK – drawn by the impact it had made and the capacity it had. By 1980 a new approach of people's war, based in time around the four pillars of struggle and the revolutionary army, saw a dramatic upturn in MK operations. Some success in building underground networks, and the mass upsurge in political struggle, partly inspired by

armed actions, aided this progression. Our concept of a revolutionary army consisted of (i) the advanced highly trained core; (ii) armed auxiliaries among the populous; (iii) elements of the enemy forces won over to the side of the revolution (such as from the bantustans); and (iv) intelligence sources within the enemy working for the revolution. We did not envisage the capacity of winning over sections of the enemy forces as in the Russian Revolution, Cuba and Portugal.

Any assessment of the success of MK needs to take into account the overall impact of its military operations; its growing capacity to strike at the enemy; its ability to inspire the people; better prospects of survival amongst the people; the linking of its actions to the mass upsurge; neutralising enemy agents and informers; and the rendering of apartheid unworkable and the country ungovernable.

To this we need to factor in the psychological effect on both the government and the white population of armed actions; and the alarm of Western powers at the growing threat of armed revolution. The consequent pressure, aligned with other factors, on the apartheid regime and business interests, was part of the equation.

To appreciate the growing confidence within MK it is necessary to bear in mind as well its battle record in Zimbabwe and presence in Zipra forces up to 1980 and close links with Zimbabwe's armed forces to 1990; and its intensive counterinsurgency actions against Savimbi's Unita bandits during the 1980s in Angola. Some MK combatants such as Cde Joe Jele were involved with Frelimo inside Mozambique before liberation. Such actions played a significant role in building MK's combat record and experience. The courage and contempt for death shown by MK cadres from Cde Vuyisile Mini (hanged in 1964); the likes of Cdes Basil February and James Masimini who fought to the death in Zimbabwe, Cde Ahmed Timol's underground role; young lions such as Cde Solomon Mahlangu; the daring commander Cde Barney Moloko-

ne who led the Sasol and other operations, Cde Phila Ndwandwe (Portia) and Cde Ashley Kriel defiant unto death, are unforgettable martyrs reflective of MK's mettle throughout its 30 years existence.

MK operations

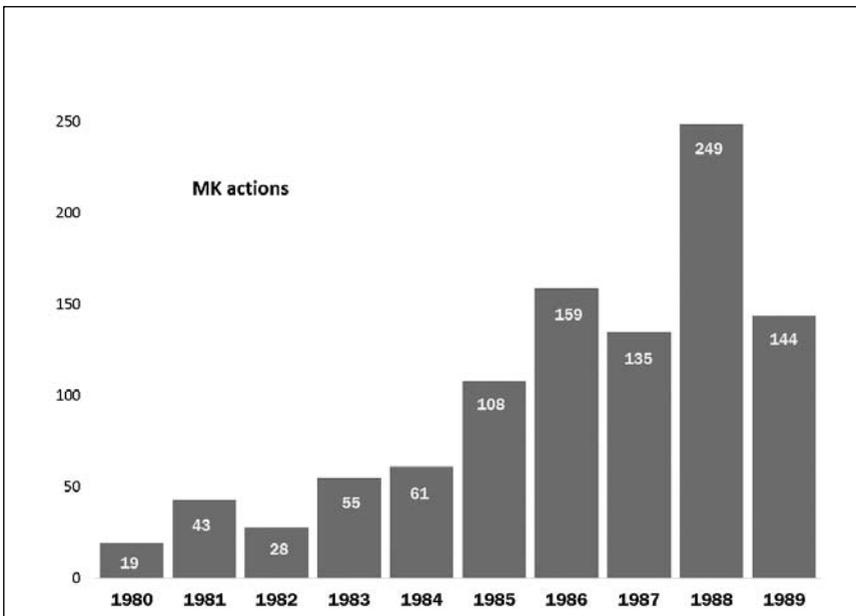
Below are military operations carried out by MK combatants .

- 1961-1963: 170 operations were listed in the Rivonia indictment alone. The initial charge sheet listed more than 200. In March 1966, the police chief, Lieutenant-General JM Keevy, stated that there had been 409 acts of sabotage in South Africa since 16 December 1961 but these include Poqo, some dozen of the African Resistance Movement (ARM), and MK, which would have been responsible for the bulk.
- 1967-8: Zimbabwe campaign – at least four major battles and other skirmishes in the bush.
- 1969-76: this period was a low point of operations but lively propaganda distribution carried the message that the liberation movement was alive; some underground units were established; infiltration of small numbers took place; an aborted sea landing in 1972 reflected the drive to get cadres back home. Numerous trials, including that of Winnie Mandela and others, avidly transmitted the message of no surrender. There was also the ANC's Radio Freedom broadcasts, established in Lusaka as early as 1972, Luanda from 1976-7, Madagascar, Addis Ababa and elsewhere.
- 1977-1979: the favourable conditions arising from the Soweto uprising of 1976 saw the resumption of MK actions to almost 20 a year, including sophisticated operations such as rocket attacks on police stations at Booyens, Moroko ((by G5 Nyanda-Shoke unit), Soekme-kaar; and physical clashes with the police in the rural areas such as at Derdepoort. The interception of Solomon Mahlangu's unit in down-

town Johannesburg was a setback but enthused the masses.

- 1980-85: The 1 000-plus operations in the 1980s pointed to a dramatic rise in MKs capacity. The year 1980 opened with the Silverton siege in Pretoria – again with a failure as the three guerrillas were killed – however the black population was greatly inspired by their audacity; soon thereafter the country was rocked by the Sasol oil refinery attack of June 1980, led by the redoubtable Barney Molokwane (the billowing black smoke visible from Soweto and Johannesburg forty kilometres away); the August 1981 rocket attack on the Voortrekkerhoogte military base outside Pretoria; the May 1983 car bombing of the South African Air Force headquarters in Pretoria; the bombing of Eskom power plants in the Transvaal; the attack on the Koeberg nuclear plant near Cape Town were operations of growing sophistication which shook the regime.
- 1986-89: following the Kabwe Conference of the ANC in June 1985 MK attacks were stepped up and by 1988 peaked at 249; Operation Zikomo saw an unprecedented infiltration into the country; car bombing of police outside the Johannesburg and Roodpoort magistrates courts; the audacious launching of a driverless automatic car laden with explosives at the Johannesburg Drill Hall in July 1987; repeated bombings in Durban and environs and Robert McBride's dramatic rescue from hospital in Pietermaritzburg of his wounded commander, Gordon Webster, under police guard; the laying of landmines within the border areas; the establishment of guerrilla bases in Ingwavuma, Zululand; a mortar attack on the SADF radar post at Klippan in the Western Transvaal in 1989; attacks on the police and military in the Eastern Cape; bomb attacks and sieges in Cape Town; the establishment of a political-military leadership in the country (Operation Vula) and so on. (Reference: *South African Military History Journal* Vol 11 No 5 – June 2000: A

brief historical overview of Umkhonto We Sizwe (MK), 1961-1994 by Rocklyn Williams). It is quite probable that far more than the 1 000 recorded MK operations were carried out in the 1980s. For example the Ahmed Timol Unit carried out over 30 bomb attacks, several on police stations, during 1988 alone (Ref. Jamal Chand’s TRC indemnity application). MK historian Janet Cherry, who worked for the TRC, informally suggested to me that there might have been as many as 2 000 operations.



Statistics 1980-89 from University of Maryland Global Terrorism Database. This coincides with MK Intelligence calculations for the same period which refers to bona fide MK operations and does not include the incalculable spontaneous acts of violence emerging from mass defiance. Howard Barrell cites 281 acts in 1988 and more than 200 in 1989).

Insurrection or negotiation?

Had the cessation of MK actions in August 1990 not come about as a result of negotiations it is evident that such operations would have increased even more. In the new, favourable conditions of mass upsurge on a scale never before seen in South Africa the strategic objective of basing MK forces within the country, with the massive amounts of weaponry that had been smuggled in, and linking with the increasingly militant populous, rising working-class organisation and consciousness, would have seen significant advance towards the insurrectionary possibilities foreseen in such documents as the ANC's *Strategy & Tactics*, The Green Book, the SACP's *Path to Power*, and Operation Vula (see Maharaj & O'Malley's *Shades of Difference*).

In his paper (cited below) MK combatant Cde Patrick Mangashe argues that the ANC's armed struggle was halted in mid-stride (by the negotiation process), and can thus not be regarded as having run its full course. He further states that the advent of the UDF brought with it new impetus to the armed struggle by creating conditions that had not existed since 1961. Note that neither he nor I say that the liberation movement could have defeated the apartheid military machine on the battlefield. There was the general acceptance that neither the regime nor the liberation movement could crush the other, but my point is that the build-up of MK capacity and mass insurrectionary energy could have tipped the balance even more substantially in our favour.

Neither would we denounce a peaceful solution with which Cde Mandela is credited. I do not wish to say that revolutionaries should be indifferent to the high cost of prolonging the struggle. And it may be callous to say that there can be no risk-free strategy. The period 1990-1994 saw more casualties than the preceding decade in the country but then one has to consider the burden, suffering and danger of unrequited objectives migrating into the future. History does not often

present the opportunity of a revolutionary break with former power relationships. What of the high cost of compromise that fails to address the root cause of the people's problems? Are we not struggling with such frustrations in South Africa today?

The path to power

At its 7th Congress held in Cuba in April 1989, the SACP, discussing the mass ferment in the country aligned with the increase in armed actions, and contradictions facing the regime, considered the question: "In what way can we talk of insurrection as a possible path to power?"

The thesis is worthy of study. The Party's Path to Power programme observed: "The crisis facing our ruling class will be aggravated still further by a combination of mass upsurge, in which working class action at the point of production will play a key role, mass defiance, escalating revolutionary combat activity, intensified international pressure, a situation of ungovernability, a deteriorating economy and growing demoralisation, division, vacillation and confusion within the power bloc.

"When all these elements converge in a sufficient measure, the immediate possibility of an insurrectionary breakthrough will present itself. Such a situation will, of course, not simply ripen on its own; its fruition depends, in the first place, on the work of the revolutionary movement. But we must also be prepared for a relatively sudden transformation of the situation. In the conditions of deepening crisis, events triggered off by the tiniest conflicts, seemingly remote from the real breeding-ground of revolution, can, overnight, grow into a revolutionary turning point (Lenin). The regime's grip on its reins of power could be swiftly weakened and the stage set for a sustained national uprising leading to an insurrectionary seizure of power."

And it stressed: "The subjective forces – both political and military – must be built up so that when these seeds of revolution begin to ger-

minate, the vanguard will be able to seize the historic moment. In this sense, all-round mass action, merging with organised and armed activity, led by a well-organised underground, and international pressure, are the keys to the build-up for the seizure of power. Seizure of power will be a product of escalating and progressive merging mass political and military struggle with the likelihood of culminating in an insurrection.”

What the Party’s top leadership were unaware of, despite the presence of three comrades involved in the secret talks (to which they were sworn to secrecy) was that the possibility of negotiations was maturing. Of course the ANC’s 1989 Harare Declaration on its minimum terms for a political settlement was an open document and signs of pending talks were in the air and needed to be addressed. Turning to such a prospect the statement went on: “There is no conflict between this insurrectionary perspective and the possibility of a negotiated transfer of power. Armed struggle cannot be counterposed with dialogue, negotiation and justifiable compromise, as if they were mutually exclusive categories. But whether there is an armed seizure of power or negotiated settlement, what is indisputable to both is the development of the political and military forces of the revolution”.

The line of reasoning continued with a warning: “We should be on our guard against the clear objective of our ruling class and their imperialist allies who see negotiation as a way of pre-empting a revolutionary transformation.”

The thesis continued with a most far sighted judgement (my italics added): “*The imperialists seek their own kind of transformation which goes beyond the reform limits of the present regime but which will, at the same time frustrate the basic objectives of the struggling masses. And they hope to achieve this by pushing the liberation movement into negotiation before it is strong enough to back its basic demands with sufficient power on the ground.*”

“Whatever prospects may arise in the future for a negotiated transition, they must not be allowed to infect the purpose and content of our present strategic approaches. We are not engaged in a struggle whose objective is merely to generate sufficient pressure to bring the other side to the negotiating table. If, as a result of a generalised crisis and a heightened revolutionary upsurge, the point should ever be reached when the enemy is prepared to talk, the liberation forces will, at that point, have to exercise their judgment, guided by the demands of revolutionary advance. But until then its sights must be clearly set on the perspectives of a seizure of power.” (*The Path to Power*)

The revolution disarmed?

One is left to speculate on the extent to which the balance of forces was shifting in favour of mass insurrection. What might the outcome have been, given the growth of MK’s capacity and the rising insurrectionist mood of the masses, had negotiations not halted the process in its tracks? This certainly merits further examination, more particularly in the light of the 7th Congress warning that the ruling class and imperialist allies would seek negotiations to pre-empt a revolutionary transformation. What was apparently not envisaged was the manner in which a Faustian Pact (a devil’s bargain) of compromise between elites “bartering” political power for the economic status quo, (albeit providing considerable opportunities for the development of a black business class). Is this not what the SACPs *Path to Power* had warned against?

Undoubtedly those involved could not imagine the unintended outcome of pork barrel politics, systemic crises and the degeneration of today’s South Africa most particularly under the leadership of Jacob Zuma (See the Introduction to 4th edition *Armed & Dangerous*, Jacana Media 2013 by Ronnie Kasrils). I am not saying that we should not have gone in for a negotiated settlement when the opportunity arose

and which prevented civil war. Neither am I implying that there was anything approaching a conspiratorial “sell-out”. I am of the view that the Mandela-Mbeki leadership, of which I was a part, approached the negotiations in a strategic but arguably too secretive a manner.

Rather I raise for consideration, along the lines envisaged in the Path to Power, that arguably we could have won far more demands at the negotiating table; reining in the riches-at-all-costs mentality of corporate capital and obstructing through the hegemony of people’s power the emergent rent-seeking crony capitalists of the Zuma era. How could such opportunists come to the fore? Were we not too optimistic in believing that gaining the reins of political power would lead to conquering economic control?

Those who might assert that the revolution was disarmed do not think solely of the cessation of the armed struggle. But did we not allow a gap to develop between the political elite and the masses; between the ANC and the former UDF and organised labour, the UDF ingloriously dissolved without a murmur from its top leadership (so many of whom rushed first into government and then into big business) while Cosatu was at the apex of its strength? One is left to imagine the leverage those forces, with a vigilant MK on guard, even in a truce situation, with the masses on the rise could have given to our delegation at the negotiating table! True, our adversaries had much powder in their guns but did we not have the strategic initiative? Were the masses not ready for sacrifice and revolt? Would the release of that energy not have provided a working class hegemony and assertion of discipline and control over unrestrained corruption and would-be crony capitalism?

Or perhaps it was us in the leadership, some contending to this day that the balance of power was not in our favour, who had lost the will and the belief in the masses? Those who might contend that the

Western powers would have subjected us to impossible pressure and threat of sanctions need also to consider the support we enjoyed from international solidarity and with regard to the USA the backing of the African-American community. I am not contending that we should have gone for insurrection or bust. The negotiated opportunity was a prospect we could not have ignored.

The question posed, as in the 7th Congress programme, is about how much more we might have gained had we not reined in the MDM, the trade unions and MK. Within a couple of years the SACP and Cosatu were up in arms against the non-negotiable introduction of Gear (Growth, Employment and Redistribution) at the expense of the RDP (Reconstruction and Development Plan), tactically decided on the removal of Cde Mbeki for Cde Zuma only to lose to a Zuma administration that could not be managed by the left. Zuma consistently played victim resorting to the conspiracy card, without ever providing a shred of evidence.

Hark the words in the *Path to Power*: “The imperialists seek their own kind of transformation which goes beyond the reform limits of the present regime but which will, at the same time frustrate the basic objectives of the struggling masses”. Yes indeed great powers have been concerned about the outcome of our struggle and indeed they and their minions will conspire. One is left to muse about where we have come from and speculate again on how much more leverage we might have mustered behind the negotiation table. For that I refer one more time to the SACP’s 7th Congress Programme which boldly declares that in all things “the masses are the key.”

Dealing with the growing insurrectionary potential of the masses at that time the *Path to Power* states:

“While the exact moment of the seizure of power depends upon objective as well as subjective factors, there can be no doubt that

what the masses do, led by the liberation alliance, influences the objective factors and hastens the arrival of that moment. It is precisely this subjective factor which, in the last five years, has dramatically transformed the objective situation. The unique series of partial uprisings, the dramatic growth of the mass democratic movement, the emergence of giant trade union organisation, escalating armed actions and international mobilisation against the regime, are all interdependent processes which have changed the whole objective framework of struggle.

“There is no aspect of the crisis facing the regime – whether it be the rapidly deteriorating economic situation or the divisions and vacillations within the power bloc – which has not got its primary roots in the soil of people’s struggles. It is the all-round escalation of these struggles, combined with, and dependent upon, the consolidation and growth of mass and underground organisation, which will lead to the revolutionary breakthrough.”

The opportunity of revolutionary breakthrough does not arise very often. We can speculate about lost opportunity not out of romantic nostalgia but to try and rethink what has gone wrong and learn the lessons for the current challenges.

MK and the outcome

But back to MK’s growing capacity at that time where even a critic such as Howard Barrell had evaluated MK’s role as follows: “MK’s main achievement over the three decades to 1990... helped to stimulate a combative political spirit among the ANC’s support base and to further militant popular campaigning. MK cadres dared to struggle, and set an example to millions. In this respect, MK played a vital role in bringing South Africa to the verge of a negotiated end to white minority political domination.” (*MK: ANC’s armed struggle*, page 71).

What of the outcome we have been discussing? One indication of what has been lost relates to the fate of MK veterans. The ANC and its MK Military Veterans' Association (MKMVA), in most dubious hands, actually led by a deserter from MK ranks, has to date failed to project to the South African people the outstanding achievements of MK and its operatives because they are too busy defending their self interests. Now and then on anniversary dates such as the execution of Cde Solomon Mahlangu some martyrs are glorified and medals haphazardly awarded to veterans without adequate certification. A recent convening of an MK Veterans Council by General Siphiwe Nyanda and others as part of an attempt to rectify problems faced by the ANC is an important event in MK history (Nasrec, Johannesburg, 17 December, 2016).

We are suffering from a strange case of the victors failing to write history. Unlike the Chinese, Vietnamese, Cubans and Mozambicans for example, MK does not feature in school history curricula, no official films have been produced, and no military record is established. There is little contestation from government or ruling party concerning the many attempts to undermine MK's notable achievements. Today's youth – the born-frees – know little about MK's role and the sacrifice of its cadres. This must be rectified or MK's legacy will be lost.

One other point among many about the integrity and profile of the MKMVA that must be sorted out is the age of its members, many whom appear to be extremely young. If an MK member was 18 years old in 1993 at the time it wound up then she/he would be 41 years old in 2016. It is high time that research is conducted into the MKMVA; its leadership; its structures and membership; its role which has come in for serious questioning as a private army of a particular political persuasion. What is quite bizarre is how its leadership stems from the in-

take of 1992 and how the mgwenya (1960s veterans), the 1976 intake, and 1980 young lions, have been left out in the cold.

Conclusion

As a militarily powerful state, recognised by both sides in the Cold War as globally strategic, overseeing a highly successful and relatively advanced (and thus complex) economy, radical change in apartheid South Africa was always going to require a combination of revolutionary forms of pressure to bring about the overthrow of the system.

Thus it required not only the development of a militant trade union movement; a revolutionary political movement; global public opposition to apartheid; but also activities that could trigger, within the capitalist global powers, sufficient uncertainty about the sustainability of white rule to force South Africa's domestic and international business partners to insist on change. MK's activities clearly contributed to the latter, and to the growth of at least the beginnings of an insurrectionary phase in South Africa that further contributed to Western alarm. That concern existed even though the prospect of a "red revolution" receded with the fall of the USSR.

While it might be argued that international pressure was an important factor in ending apartheid, that pressure did not come about because the West disapproved of apartheid, it came about because it was alarmed. And it was alarmed because the prospect of insurrection and an armed seizure of power (backed by a general strike and national insurrection) had, by the late 1980s, become objectively alarming.

The fact that MK's armed struggle did not climax in an armed insurrection does not negate its success. A leaflet issued at that historic time when MK emerged on 16 December, 1961 declared:

"We hope – even at this late hour – that our first actions will awaken everyone to a realisation of the disastrous situation to which the Na-

tionalist [party] policy is leading. We hope that we will bring the Government and its supporters to their senses before it is too late, so that both the Government and its policies can be changed before matters reach the desperate stage of civil war. We believe our actions to be a blow against the Nationalist [government] preparations for civil war and military rule.”

Armed struggle was always one of several pillars forming part of the ANC struggle to end apartheid; the combination achieved the replacement of apartheid with democracy. MKs founding manifesto set out its objectives as: “the overthrow of the Nationalist government, the abolition of white supremacy and the winning of liberty, democracy and full national rights and equality for all the people of this country”.

MK succeeded in achieving those objectives, whatever the outcome of the current juncture of the National Democratic Revolution.

Literature and sources

As stated, there is a growing list of literature of all kinds and what I provide hereunder is a selected bibliography of just some of the titles by way of demonstrating the range. If I had time it would have been incumbent on me to align and date the writings with the periods they deal with, for as I have mentioned above the era and context in which observations are made are most relevant. This must be regarded as a work in progress. As historian Luli Callinicos has pointed out to me: “Historiography adds further opportunity to explore more detailed complexity and nuance of each of the periods that you have identified.”

MK participants/activists

Political memoirs and autobiographies

Partly about MK: in the lives of Mandela, Sisulu, Govan Mbeki (including *The Peasants' Revolt*), Kathrada, Goldberg, Joe Slovo, Raymond Mhlaba, Rusty Bernstein; Joel Joffe's *The State vs Nelson Mandela*, Ben Turok, Michael Dingake, Rica Hodgson, Mac Maharaj with Pdraig O'Malley *Shades of Difference* provides exceptional insights and robust critique; Indris Naidoo's *Island in Chains*; Barry Gilder's *Song's and Secrets, London Recruits* edited by Ken Keable (clandestine internationalist support, smuggling of literature and weapons); Aziz Pahad's *Insurgent Diplomat* (with insight into the secret talks on negotiations), Jay Naidoo *Fighting for Justice* etc. Most of this literature was produced post-1990, and as memoirs generally cover the political life and times of the writers, commencing with those born in the second decade of the 20th century such as Mandela and Tambo.

MK memoirs and biographies

Books: James Ngculu's *The Honour to Serve* (one of the best insider accounts of MK life, camps, training and a balanced view of the mutinies in Angola); Nathoo Babenia's *Saboteur* (1961-3 sabotage campaign), Stanley Munong *If We Must Die*, Wonga Bottoman's *The Making of an MK Cadre*; Fanele Mbali's, *In Transit*; Connie Bram's *Vula* (although for a full understanding Mac Maharaj's O'Malley interviews are imperative); Raymond Suttner's *The ANC Underground*; Imtiaz Cajee's *Timol: A Quest for Justice*; the Kathrada Foundation's *Dynamite Men* which uniquely provides insight into SACP sabotage units prior to the establishment of MK; Tim Jenkin's *Escape from Pretoria*; Ronnie Kasril's *Armed and Dangerous* and *The Unlikely Secret Agent*; Luli Callinicos' *Oliver Tambo: Beyond the Engeli Mountains*; Anthony Sampson's *Mandela*; Hugh Lewin's *Bandiet* and *Stones against the Mirror* (on the

African Resistance Movement). These accounts focus on the MK years – 1961-1990 – and apart from *Babenia* and Lewin’s *Bandiet* are all produced post-1990 and increasingly more recently.

Journals: *African Communist* and *Umsebenzi* – SACP journals (the latter’s relaunch in the late 1980s coincided with the major escalation of mass struggle into a genuine semi-insurrectionary phase and its coverage of SDUs in the early 1990s); the ANC’s *Sechaba* journal; policy statements, analysis; commemorative anniversaries; Dawn MK’s Angola monthly camp journal and notably its Special 25th Anniversary 1986 edition with personal accounts covering the Sabotage Campaign, Zimbabwe episodes, the *Aventura* project – attempted landing by sea and Operation Ingwavuma (1980s guerrilla base in northern Zululand); *Thinker*, November and December 2013 personal accounts of sabotage campaign, Tambo and the camps, Special Operations, weapons transport and infiltration; *Journal of South African Studies*, for example articles by Arianna Lissoni, Luli Callinicos, Ben Magubane, Janet Cherry et al. *South African Historical Journal – Special Issue: The ANC at 100*. See especially Callinicos’ *Oliver Tambo and the Dilemma of the Camp Mutinies in Angola in the Eighties*, with a pertinent assessment of that controversial topic.

MK policy statements/analysis

MK Manifesto December 1961; Operation Mayibuye (1962 draft); Rivonia Trial 1964; SACP/ANC literature and statements; Morogoro Strategy & Tactics 1969; *Green Book* 1979; *Make SA Ungovernable – Make apartheid unworkable Tambo’s 1985 Speech*; Joe Slovo’s *No Middle Road*, 1974; the 1989 *Harare Declaration*; the SACP 1989 programme *Path to Power*; *For the Sake of our Lives* 1991 guidelines on forming self-defence units (SDUs); ANC Submission to TRC August 1996 and 12 May 1997 with notes on MK operations. The above are crucial docu-

ments which follow the genesis of the theory of the armed struggle, correction of strategic errors, emphasis on creating a political and underground base for armed actions, and the progression from sabotage and armed propaganda through to the concepts of People's War and insurrection. *The Harare Declaration* points to the culmination of a possible peaceful negotiation of the conflict. In this respect the message of the MK Manifesto to the white community in 1961, hoping that civil war can be avoided, needs to be noted regarding the outcome arrived at by the final negotiations which adheres to that logic.

Oral interviews

SADET Oral History Project; Wolfie Kodesh recorded interviews in the 1990s; and struggle archives (Mayibuye Centre); SA History Online etc.

Academic accounts

Thula Simpson's *Umkhonto We Sizwe* (this recent and massive tome identifies extraordinary number of incidents involving MK); Howard Barrell's *MK: The ANC's Armed Struggle* (Penguin), which is pro-MK in contrast to his subsequent very critical doctoral thesis, *Conscripts of their Age – ANC operational strategy, 1976-1989*; Julie Frederikse *The Unbreakable Thread*; Janet Cherry's *Umkhonto We Sizwe*, a Jacana pocket history; Hugh Macmillan's *Chris Hani* and *Jack Simons* two separate biographies in the same pocket series; and his excellent *ANC The Lusaka Years*; Janet Smith and B. Tromp *Hani – A Life Too Short*; Ben Turok *The ANC and the Turn to Armed Struggle*; Joe Slovo: *Latin America and the Ideas of Regis Debray*, *African Communist* No. 33 (1968); Vladimir Shubin *ANC: A view from Moscow and The Hot Cold War*; Piero Gleijeses *Conflicting Missions and Visions of Freedom* (latter two authors' brilliant works on the international and regional situations, Soviet and Cuban

roles); Filatova and Davidson *The Hidden Thread – Russia and South Africa in the Soviet Era*; Soviet soldiers accounts in the Road to Cuito Cuanavale; Victoria Brittain *Hidden Lives Hidden Deaths – South Africa's Crippling of a Continent*; the late MK combatant and scholar, Rocklyn Williams' *Brief Historical Overview of MK 1961-1994* is an invaluable source (Ref: *South African Military History Journal Vol 11 No 5 – June 2000*); William Minter's *Apartheid's Contras – an inquiry into the roots of counter-revolutionary war in Angola and Mozambique*; *The Thirty Years War for Southern African Liberation: A History* soon to be published by John S. Saul; Patrick Mangashe's paper to the Wits Conference: *The armed struggle, the underground and mass mobilisation in South Africa's Border region, 1986-1990, through the experience of MK Cadre emanates from Operation Zikomo* (referred to above) and attests to the development of politico-military insurrection and what was possible by the late 1980s through the eyes of a combatant; Gavin Cawthraw's *Brutal Force – The Apartheid War Machine*; Sasha Polakow-Suransky's *The Unspoken Alliance – Israel's Secret Relationship with Apartheid South Africa*; Eddie Maloka's *The South African Communist Party*; Jacob Dlamini's *Askari* is an objective insight into those who turn traitor; and Jacques Pauw's *Heart of the Whore* is an account of the regime's hit squads; De Wet Potgieter's *Total Onslaught – apartheid's dirty tricks exposed*; Burger & Gould's *Secrets and Lies*, which deals with Wouter Basson and the CBW programme; and James Saunders' *Apartheid's Friends* is an impressive account of the history of the Security Services.

Virtually all of this growing literature has been published in the post-1994 period with most post-2000 and even much more recently post-2010.

Historical record

From Protest to Challenge, indispensable six volumes 1882-1990 Ka-

ris, Carter, Gerhart, Glaser et al; SADET's *The Road to Democracy* based on extensive struggle interviews ; TRC complete record post-1994; Archives: Mayibuye Centre UWC; Wits; Fort Hare; O'Malley interviews post-1994 – <http://www.nelsonmandela.org/omalley/index.php>”www.nelsonmandela.org/omalley/index.php); Committee on South African War Resistance (Cosawr) and End Conscription Campaign archival material based on 1980s campaigning.

Film/documentary

Secret Safari: MK weapons smuggling – Director David Brown; *Vula Communications*: role of Tim Jenkins; eNCA TV; *Action Kommandant*: the life of slain MK cadre, Ashley Kriel; *Indians Can't Fly*: the capture and killing of Ahmed Timol – Director: Enver Samuels; *Speech of Flame* – about Barney Molokoane unit and Sasol operation – Director Sam Mofokeng; *To Catch a Fire* – feature film written by Shawn Slovo about the Barney Molokoane unit, Joe Slovo, MK Special Ops; *Cuba-South Africa: After the Battle* – Director Estella Bravo; *Dieci giorni con i guerriglieri del Mozambico libero (Ten Days with the Guerrillas in Mozambique's Liberated Areas)* – Director Franco Cigarini; *The Routes to Freedom* – Director Patrick Ricketts; *Kalushi*, feature film, about the life of freedom fighter Solomon Mahlangu – Director Mandla Dube; *Mandela – Long Walk to Freedom* – Director Justin Chadwick (2013); *Mandela's Gun* – Director John Irvine (2016)

Generally post-2010 productions

Hostile/critical

Memoirs

Bruno Mtolo's *Road to the Left* (a traitor's account of 1961-3 sabotage campaign); Terry Bell and Ahmeen Kajee's *Fordsburg Fighter* – a de-

serter's account 1961-67. But note Dlamini's *Askari* which is not hostile and provides a more balanced account of defectors than the previous two books which decontextualise and de-historicise the experience of the camps. A problem of some of those dealing with defectors, traitors and mutiny is that they virtually exclusively extrapolate from the individual to the general and thus in their unbalanced generalisations throw out the baby with the bathwater. Revolution and armed struggle is a rough terrain and the protagonists are no saints but for every defector there is the story of countless heroes rising above the privations and at times abusive treatment in continuing with their sacred mission.

Academic

Stephen Ellis' *Comrades Against Apartheid* and *External Mission*, Paul Trewelha's *Inside Quatro* and other writings suffer from the former's intense anti-communism and the latter's emotional antagonism to the liberation movement, in both cases approaching conspiracy theory; Ellis' well-researched *Genesis of the ANC's Armed Struggle 1946-1961*, *Journal of South African Studies*, June 2011 is considerably better; Anthea Jeffries' *People's War* is an outright defence of the Inkatha Freedom Party and an effort at attributing the blame for violence on the ANC's "terror" war; Allister Sparks whose books typify liberal viewpoints such as Jeffries' that MK and the ANC in exile are responsible for all the ills from which the country is presently suffering. It is worth noting the man's background as probably the most antagonistic of editors towards the ANC in the South African media 1960-1989 (other than Tertius Myburgh), and his abrupt about-turn when it became politically expedient to get into Mandela's good books in 1990. Most of his journalistic work retains an aftertaste of his initial antagonism when he referred to MK combatants as "terrorists".

SADF and police literature

Magnus Malan and Jannie Geldenhuys' memoirs; Helmoed Heitman's *War in Angola*; Leopold Scholtz's *SADF Border War 1966-89*; Jan Breytenbach's *32 Battalion* and *Eden's Exiles* among others writing on Angola; Reid-Daly's *Selous Scouts on Zimbabwe*; Peter Stiff *Warfare by Other Means*; William Minter's *Apartheid's Contras*; WS Van Der Waal's *Portugal's War in Angola 1961-1974* – these last two are highly recommended. Apart from Breytenbach who admits the SADF failed to achieve its objective at Cuito Cuanavale and lost in Angola, this literature, including his writing, sees the communists behind the “terrorism” in the region and is faithful to the surrogate forces he commanded. Foremost of South African Police (SAP) literature about the “revolutionary onslaught” is that by General HD Stadler *The Other Side of the Story*, General JV van der Merwe and others *Die Glorie Jare van die SA Polisiemag*, Hennie Heyman's book on General Mike Geldenhuys, A Jansen's Eugene de Kok, J Pittaway's *Koevoet – The Men Speak*; and the very interesting electronic magazine *Nongqai* edited by Hennie Heymans chronicling SAP history; Gordon Winter's *Inside Boss*; Neil Barnard's *Secret Revolution*; Marius Spaarwater's *Spook's Progress*; Eugene de Kock's *A long Night's Damage*. Barnard claims the “armed onslaught was in many respects an abject failure. Where did the ANC set up a military base on South African territory, or even just a camp, as prescribed by the theory of revolutionary warfare? In fact, they were not even safe in neighbouring states.” Well, we by no means claim to have adhered to the classical prescriptions of revolutionary warfare without developing our own concepts in theory and practice as has been demonstrated. The ultimate point is not how safe were we in the neighbouring states (for all their criminal efforts apartheid forces certainly failed to root us out) but how safe was the apartheid system?

The earlier literature has been published before the 1994 transition

with more recent works such as Spaarwater's and Barnard's appearing in recent times, all with a propagandist and defensive slant. ●

Cde Kasrils was part of MK from its earliest years, and is a former SACP Central Committee and Politburo member, ANC NEC member and Cabinet Minister.

NICARAGUA

A social solidarity economy in living practice

Self-employed (own-account) workers make up nearly two-thirds of Nicaragua's workforce and generate half the country's GDP, writes **Pat Horn**

In our global neo-liberal capitalist world, not much is known about low-profile alternative socialist practices which are making a difference to the lives of ordinary people in small corners of the world. In what can be best described as anomalies in the overall neo-liberal economy, there exist pockets of what is known in countries such as Brazil and Argentina as the Solidarity Economy. This is where members of the working poor provide goods and services for the benefit of their communities rather than for profits, according to rules which are not governed by capitalism.

In Nicaragua, what is known as the Social Solidarity Economy is more than an anomaly in the economy – it has been institutionalised into a national system. A key actor in this process has been the trade union confederation of own-account (self-employed) workers CTCP (*Confederación de Trabajadores por Cuenta Propia*).

CTCP developed from an association of traffic-light vendors into a confederation of federations and unions of different sectors of own-account workers. Established in 2005, CTCP “brings together people who work in the streets selling all kinds of cheap goods and services. They produce food such as tortillas, soft drinks and traditional sweets.

Some are the owners of small and micro-businesses, while others have workshops for mechanics, carpentry and tyre repairs. Others work as *cambistas* (money-changers), artisans, tailors, seamstresses, barbers, grocers, porters with handcarts, litter pickers and hawkers, taxi drivers, rickshaw tri-cyclists, lottery sellers and mobile phone sellers. Some work in people's homes as plumbers, labourers or electricians; others are professional people and craft workers¹”.

CTCP's approach is based on its analysis of the political macro-economy within which it operates as a representative organisation of own-account workers – documented in the First Self-Employed Workers' Manifesto of the CTCP-FNT authored by Dr Orlando Núñez Soto². In the section of the manifesto entitled “The construction and consolidation of a social economy: programme, strategy and tasks³” it describes “the birth of what today has become a self-employed proletariat which now seeks a place in anti-establishment theory and practice, rather than merely being counted as poor or as an electoral mass when an election year comes around⁴”.

It goes on to argue for the importance of organising this self-employed proletariat into “a social movement which aims to improve the correlation of forces in their country of residence, struggling to improve their standard of living, not only in terms of their own income, but also by gaining access to national surpluses – specifically to the nation's budget, as they are the group that proportionally pays the highest taxes. This is so because in their countries indirect taxes are far higher than direct ones, a burden that must be carried by the vast majority of the population, among them the self-employed proletariat. But most important is the objective of advancing towards the individual and associative control of production, transport, local and international trade, distribution and consumption.⁵” Own-account workers were mobilised to join CTCP as part of this strategy, which is consciously differentiated

from the way in which CTCP perceives mainstream development strategies which objectify the poor as being in need of social aid instead of recognising them as impoverished “worker-producers” capable of being the agents of social transformation.

For the CTCP, the objective is to move from a trade association to the next level. “Once organised by trade association it is necessary to rise to the political level to become a large social and national movement and to exert pressure on public institutions and State social and economic policies⁶”. The CTCP has been largely successful in achieving this. It has succeeded not only in substantially influencing government policies in relation to own-account workers, but also in calling in the commitment of the FSLN (the *Sandinista National Liberation Front*, the ruling party) to the restitution of rights to those who have been impoverished by neo-liberal economic policies.

Affiliated to FNT⁷ (*Frente Nacional de los Trabajadores*), one of many Nicaraguan trade union confederations, CTCP has 58 186 members in 156 unions and eight federations, with a women’s committee and a youth committee. A serious development of mainstream women’s leadership has occurred in CTCP since my first visits to Nicaragua in 2009 and 2012. CTCP now has key women leaders (not confined to the women’s committee only). The deputy general secretary and president of the youth committee are, for instance, women.

About 65% of their members are between the ages of 16 and 36. There is a high level of poverty in Nicaragua, though social and economic inequality has decreased in recent years, and life expectancy has increased to 74,5 years. Nicaragua has a population of about 6,5-million people, of whom some two million are own-account workers. About 80% of food is produced locally by *cuentapropistas* (own-account workers). Despite their central importance in the economy, from 1990-2007 own-account workers were excluded from public policies.

Half of CTCP's membership is estimated to be in the Nicaraguan capital, Managua. The other 50% is in the following regions: Matagalpa, Jinotega, Chinandega, Boaco, Carazo, Chontales, Condega, Esteli, Granada, León, Masaya, Matriz, Nueva Segovia, Río San Juan, Rivas (bordering Costa Rica). The regions where CTCP has not yet managed to organise members are Bluefields and the Coastal Caribbean (Zelaya region) – the distance to these areas from Managua requires substantial resources to travel to organise. In the region of Rivas, which borders Costa Rica to the south, there is a *Programa de Integración Fronteriza* (Programme of Frontier Integration) for construction of indigenous markets (*tiangués*) with provision of capacitation, technical assistance and credit for cross-border own-account workers.

CTCP has a strategic work-plan for 2015-2020. The organisation's development objective is to reduce the factors that prevent people from coming out of their precarious situation.

CTCP says this is possible because the government has placed peo-

STREETNET INTERNATIONAL

The author is coordinator of StreetNet International, an alliance of street vendors launched in Durban in November 2002. Membership-based organisations (unions, co-operatives or associations) directly organising street vendors, market vendors and/or hawkers among their members, are entitled to affiliate to StreetNet International.

The aim of StreetNet is to promote the exchange of information and ideas on critical issues facing street vendors, market vendors and hawkers (i.e. mobile vendors) and on practical organising and advocacy strategies.

ple at the centre of development, with poverty reduction as the main objective and with own-account workers the priority. Specific objectives are the involvement of the sector in the plans, programmes and projects which promote the “Christian, socialist and solidarity” government of Nicaragua; and socio-economic development to stabilise the lives of own-account workers, in line with government’s human development plan.

For the protection of its members, CTCP relies primarily on a government decree of 1 June 2009 prohibiting the eviction of street vendors and informal traders from their places of work. The decree reminds municipalities of their obligation to facilitate all forms of work which provide food security and the dignity of a fixed income, without creating legal obstacles or modernisation processes which continue to replicate the extreme poverty created by neo-liberalism in Nicaragua.

The Nicaraguan government has established a “Dialogue, Negotiation and Consensus” model to promote tripartite agreements between the state, private enterprise and workers. This has helped consolidate macroeconomic stability and improved governance in the country. When there is a development project that impacts on own-account workers, inter-institutional commissions are activated, such as the National Commission for Customs Integration, the National Transportation Commission, the National Commission for Education, the National Commission for Youth Employment and the Commission on a National Minimum Wage.

As a result of the CTCP’s work on the ground, there is now much greater government recognition of the central role played by the own-account sector in Nicaragua. The sector generates between 60% and 75% of all jobs, and it around 50% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Moreover, the sector re-distributes economic surplus more equitably than the so-called “mainstream” capitalist economy.

Organisational context

FNT, to which CTCP is affiliated, was established in 1990. For FNT and CTCP, building on the proclaimed “Christian, Socialist, Solidarity” values of Nicaragua, the practice of associativity is the key to encouraging people to work together. For an economy of small producers to be able to compete in a capitalist-dominated open economy, they have to be able to produce a better quality than they could do individually – hence their focus on the Social Solidarity Economy, as developed in the “Self-Employed Workers’ Manifesto of the CTCP-FNT”.

From 1997 the FNT entered into a new phase in its relationship with the ruling FSLN, forming an alliance with mutual recognition. In 1999 a single platform was launched by the FSLN and FNT, and a joint municipal strategy was designed.

Relationship with local government in Managua

There are seven districts in the capital city of Managua, each with a mayor (*Delegado*) appointed by the party in control of the district municipality. Not all the municipalities are *Sandinista*-controlled, but they are all governed by a National Development Plan coordinated at municipal level, financed by means of national transfers to local government, as a key part of nation-building. Communication and social dialogue is central to the approach, and relies on a consistent high level of political will to respect the rights of own-account workers.

Eric Canale, Delegado of District 3, Managua⁸ has been working with CTCP for five years in the Central Managua and UCA (Universidad CentroAmericana) area, collaborating on the orderly management of space. District 3 is part of the Municipality of Managua, as the *Delegado* Canale has the political authority to direct the work of municipal officials assigned to that district.

Currently, stationary vendors in fixed workplaces pay taxes to the municipality, mobile vendors are exempt from paying direct taxes, but all pay indirect taxes. According to Canale, the strategy that has been followed is to restore rights and to dignify work by providing them with fixed workplaces. Because of the 2009 decree, there is no question of simply evicting them. The municipality relies on their credibility with CTCP. The main problems for the municipality arise when they have to deal with informal traders who are not members of CTCP (the most representative, and only known, organisation of informal traders). They have to continue to negotiate and engage in dialogue to find mutually acceptable solutions, even though the negotiations are unstructured (i.e. there were no terms of reference or signed agreements at the time of writing this report).

Responsibility for building kiosks for vendors is shared, and there is a tripartite arrangement that includes the private sector that owns the malls. There is a national commission for regulation of the transport sector, and CTCP participates directly in this commission.

There is also an ongoing discussion with the finance ministry about undertaking the task of institutionalising own-account workers as a sector of the economy. Through the Central Bank, statistics have been collected about the contribution of own-account workers to the economy. In 2015 their contribution was found to be around 50%.

Speaking to members of CTCP, it is difficult to discern any evidence of the tensions, contradictions and dislocations between the national and local levels of government that so commonly prevent smooth management of street trading in other countries. It has to be interrogated whether this can be attributed to a genuinely higher level of political will, as claimed by CTCP and the *Delegado* of District 3 of Managua – and if so what would make Nicaragua so different from other countries in this respect.

Could a higher level of genuine political will in practice be attributed to Nicaragua being a “home-grown” socialist country, eschewing neo-liberalism and consciously evolving and practising a bottom-up form of democratic socialism? The difference between traditional socialism and the current-day *Sandinista* socialism is explained in the CTCP Manifesto as “the goal is not that all means of production become property of the State, as happened in the State socialism of the past century, as these too would have to be expropriated. It is desirable that strategic companies be public, at national or municipal level, and furthermore be under some degree of democratic control of society as a whole. The point is to move forward in order to progressively incarnate the old idea that power should rest in the councils, from the economic, political and cultural points of view: councils of workers, women, soldiers and small farmers, employees in any of the services, consumer groups and other like-minded associations among the population at large. No one is excluded from setting up the organisation he/she wishes to in order to advocate for collective and common interests for themselves and the remainder of society⁹.”

Trade union context

When we met representatives of the FNT (*Frente Nacional de Trabajo*), Secretary General Dr Gustavo Porras, National Executive Secretary Lic Jose Angel Bermudez and Jose Antonio Zepeda and Maritza Espinal-es¹⁰, we discussed the motivation for the *Sandinista*-led Government of Reconciliation and National Unity to call the country a “Christian, Socialist, Solidarity” Nicaragua. The motivation for calling it socialist was clear – promoting new forms of production and distribution, and the restitution of rights. The reference to Christianity, I was told, was not intended to mean a religious preference, but rather to affirm human values. The National Development Plan is centred on humanity

and human beings – and the concept of dialogue has been key to creating the political and economic stability that currently exists in Nicaragua. There have been successes in health through a community health approach, and there is public free education up to tertiary level. An approach of equal opportunity and women’s empowerment has been introduced in each social and economic sector. The revolution is being consolidated by the wide-spread practice of decision-making at popular level. The FSLN learnt a lesson after losing elections in the 1970s – it had to become more intelligent in recognising what the people want.

This is what led to own-account workers being taken into account. Notwithstanding the fact that Nicaragua is a socialist country, it has to survive within the reality of a global economy. Investors need stability, space to operate, and certainty about the situation they invest in. The Nicaraguan government has been increasing social security by 8% per year. The State cannot provide major employment, but has to facilitate a favourable environment for people to be able to work. The Nicaraguan government has recognised the importance of family work in Nicaragua, and established a Ministry of Family Economy and Cooperatives (in addition to the Ministry of Public Finances and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry). This Ministry was formed by consolidating two previous bodies (the IMPIME institute of SMEs and the Ministry of Rural Development) into one new Ministry.

FNT confirmed that the CTCP developed after the initial establishment of the FNT, not by design but out of necessity. National police, who were *Sandinistas*, had to make peace with the *vendedores semoforos* (traffic-light vendors) and recognise their situation from a basic foundation of humanity. This is where it started. Since between 60% and 70% of the workforce consists of own-account workers, it became clear that they had to be organised as workers.

The aim of the National Development Plan is to end poverty by 2030. Self-reliance and improvement in the livelihoods of own-account workers is clearly integral to achieving this.

Other alliances and working relationships

CTCP has sought collaborating partners who share their vision of transforming the system, rather than project-based collaborations limited to selected groups of beneficiaries, which is often promoted by development partners.

At international level, this was what led to CTCP seeking affiliation with StreetNet International, as a space for developing international solidarity with own-account workers world-wide. At regional level, CTCP took on the role of coordinating the Red SEICAP (*Red de Sindicatos de la Economía Informal de Centroamérica y Panamá*) of workers of the Social Solidarity Economy of America.

Internationally, CTCP is affiliated to WFTU (World Federation of Trade Unions) while FNT is affiliated to ITUC (International Trade Union Confederation).

This article was written in collaboration with CTCP in Nicaragua. ●

Cde Horn, the StreetNet International Coordinator, is an SACP member from eThekweni

Endnotes

1. <http://www.nscag.org/trade-unions/>
2. Soto, Dr ON Soto "The Solidary Social Economy in Proleterianised Nations and the Role of the Self-Employed Proletariat in the Transformation of the System" 4th ed, CTCP, Managua, 2011
3. Ibid p.36

4. Ibid p.37
5. Ibid pp.38/39
6. Ibid p.39
7. <http://www.fnt.org.ni>
8. Interviewed in Managua in April 2015
9. Soto, Dr. ON Soto "The Solidary Social Economy in Proleterianised Nations and the Role of the Self-Employed Proletariat in the Transformation of the System" 4th ed, CTCP, Managua, 2011, p.39
10. Meeting in Managua in April 2015

USA

After the Trump election: Fight! Resist! Organise!

The Communist Party USA is mapping a course of broad Left unity and solidarity to counter the Trump presidency, writes **John Bachtell**

The road to freedom, peace, equality, and preserving life on Earth is a long one; full of twists and unexpected turns – and reverses. The 2016 election is one of them.

There's no sugar-coating it. The election of Donald Trump as president along with a Republican Senate and House (Congress) was a tremendous defeat with far-reaching consequences that will ripple for years to come.

Defeats are part of life and struggle. But they should not lead to paralysis. It is not the end of the road.

Let us recall those who suffered setbacks during the darkest days of the struggle against slavery, the Civil Rights, Suffrage, and labour movements, and never gave up. We can do no less. We too must pick ourselves up, assess mistakes, and return unbowed to the long walk to freedom.

After all, political fortunes can reverse quickly. Upon winning a narrow re-election in 2004, George W Bush, in his hubris, attempted a privatisation of Social Security. A huge mass movement rose to block it, and the unravelling of his administration began.

This is especially important to keep in mind today because

Trump's election did not represent a mandate for his policies. The majority of voters rejected them. That's reflected in the youth, who are undaunted and already self-organising in the #notmypresident protests.

What is urgently needed now is unity. Every conceivable movement and ally prepared to defend social advances and democratic norms must be mobilised, starting with the labour-led people's movement, Black Lives Matter, climate justice groups, the Dreamers, the LGBTQ community, and women, in alliance with the Democratic Party and all parts of what was the Hillary Clinton electoral coalition, and those inspired by the Bernie Sanders campaign.

This is the basis of gathering popular majorities to oppose Trump on multiple fronts. No one should be left standing on the sidelines.

This moment calls for the broadest solidarity and action to block the coming reactionary legislative assault and attacks on democratic rights and civil liberties. It calls for protecting the lives, homes, and communities of those being targeted and defending policies addressing the existential threat posed by climate change. We must begin preparations now for the 2018 election cycle.

It begins with extending solidarity to family, friends, neighbours, co-workers, and fellow students.

It can involve resistance to federal policies by entire municipalities and states.

It's imperative this movement encompass "red states" and "red districts"¹ and engage Trump voters. They too will feel the lash, including those who will lose life-sustaining benefits if Obamacare and Medicare are repealed.

There is no getting around directly engaging these voters. During the election, Working America, the community affiliate of the AFL-CIO (American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organiza-

tions), did just that. It effectively canvassed in largely white communities, refusing to allow white workers to be surrendered to the embrace of the right wing.

The Moral Monday² movement in North Carolina led by the Rev William J Barber has assembled a labour-civil rights-religious coalition that is reaching deeply into the rural areas of the state. It is modelled on the idea that a united multi-racial working class and people are necessary for all social advances.

Wolf at the door

Tens of millions awoke on 9 November terrified with the realization the wolf is not only at the door, but has entered the house. Right-wing extremists will dominate all three branches of government and move swiftly to impose their agenda.

The forces of hate and bigotry are emboldened. The danger of scapegoating, discrimination, and violence against Muslims, immigrants, people of colour, the LGBTQ community, women, unions, and other democratic organisations will increase.

Contrary to his claims, Trump is no rogue outsider. He is backed by right-wing billionaires, the Heritage Foundation, and their ilk – all the groups providing policy blueprints and lists of names to stack departments and the judiciary at all levels. These forces now control 31 governorships and two-thirds of state legislative chambers. This is where they have long been ruthlessly unfolding their wrecking agenda.

We can probably expect deep cuts to social programs, a national right-to-work law, greater restrictions on abortions, a national stop-and-frisk law, curbs on LGBTQ rights, voter suppression, repeal of regulations on business, dismantling of the EPA, tax cuts for the wealthy, and massive privatisation.

One of the first things a right-wing government often does after cap-

turing power is to go after the labour movement. Because of their organisation and ability to initialise collective struggle, unions are one of the first targets. While several media outlets reported that half of union households voted for Trump, the actual number of union members casting ballots for him was only 37% . We should expect a major assault on labour rights.

Reactionary policy will unfold in foreign affairs as well, including withdrawal from the Paris Climate Accord and the Iran Nuclear Agreement. Foreign intervention and the nuclear danger are likely to increase.

The new balance of forces will usher in instability and unpredictability, while greatly aggravating class, racial, and social tensions.

All rise in defense of democracy

Without a broad and vigorous resistance from every conceivable sector, a further descent into authoritarianism or worse is possible.

Fascism doesn't come all at once, but in steps and stages. To stop it, the beast must be resisted at every turn.

The White House doors are now open to the most extreme political forces, including the alt-right, the Ku Klux Klan (KKK), white supremacists, and others. Trump carried them all from the fringe into the political mainstream.

These forces now have increased access to the security apparatus of the state, which they employed effectively during the campaign while colluding with the FBI. They also were aided by unprecedented foreign intervention from the likes of Julian Assange, as well as Russian mobsters and intelligence services.

The broad electoral coalition that backed Clinton should not despair. Clinton received the majority of votes. We fought the good fight and are not alone. Trump not only received fewer votes than Clinton; he also

got less votes than both John McCain and Mitt Romney.

However, Clinton received 6,5 million less votes than President Obama did in 2012 and 10 million less than in 2008. While she assembled much of the coalition that carried Obama to victory twice, they voted in fewer numbers.

When inspired and organised to turn out, the entire Obama coalition is the majority. That majority is still here, but it must be mobilised, activated, and expanded.

What happened?

Millions of working families – black, brown, and white – are experiencing economic pain, declining living standards, debt, joblessness, poverty, discrimination, and bigotry. They are fearful and desperately want change and someone to listen to their plight.

And while many sought that change through the history-making vehicle of the Clinton campaign, other voters were convinced what was needed was a “Washington outsider” who would “shake things up.” Trump, the billionaire insider, demagogically and fraudulently exploited their pain, fear, and insecurity through the use of racism, sexism, and anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim hate.

While millions of whites stood with their black and brown sisters and brothers, some (<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/11/09/behind-trumps-victory-divisions-by-race-gender-education>) 58 percent voted for Trump, many voting against their own class interests. Working class brothers and sisters were pitted against each other, and many succumbed to fear.

The question is: why?

The politics of hate and bigotry have been central to the right’s rise to power. The right-wing mass media influences wide swaths of the

country. Millions get their news and opinion, much of it based on lies and conspiracy theories, from Fox News, hate-talk radio, and white supremacist and hate groups. This is especially true of those living in racially segregated communities and rural areas.

Right-wing religious institutions and networks, especially right-wing evangelicals, are purveyors of reactionary ideology.

Republican-inspired racism vilified and obstructed the Obama administration for years. It promoted anti-immigrant hysteria. Islamophobia, homophobia, anti-Semitism, and misogyny have all had an impact on how people think.

Capitalist globalisation, unfair trade pacts, outsourcing, and automation produced deindustrialisation, devastated communities, and left millions of victims in their wake. In some places, the only growth industries are meth labs. Economic stagnation, declining real wages, and a soaring wealth gap have left millions feeling left out, angry, and hopeless.

At the same time, changing demographics⁵, the emerging role of women, the political assertiveness of the LGBTQ community, and other factors are shaping a new multi-racial, multi-national, multi-gender, multi-cultural, multi-lingual people and nation.

Many whites, particularly men, are among the victims of plant closings, wage cuts, home foreclosures, and economic dislocation. They see their dignity and self worth disappear and the world and their place in it rapidly changing. They and their communities are up against powerful global economic forces they cannot fathom and feel helpless to fight. They yearn for more stable and prosperous times.

Instead of adjusting to the new demographic and social realities – and blaming corporate America for ruining their livelihoods and communities – those particularly living in segregated areas aim their re-

sentments against people they don't know or understand.

Trump “tells it like it is.” To many, he speaks to their anger and resentment and is their champion against the “establishment.” He conned many into misdirecting their fears, insecurity, and resentments toward Muslims, Mexican immigrants, African Americans, Jewish Americans, and women.

Pervasive misogyny

As a public figure, Hillary Clinton has been a leader of the movement to advance women's rights and embodies the new changing status of women in society. Consequently, she has been the object of every form of misogyny and hate along the line of advance.

Millions of women and men were inspired by her history-making campaign. Not surprisingly, Clinton won by the highest gender margin in history, even though 55%⁶ of white women voted for Trump, the same as for John McCain.

Sexism and misogyny were at the centre of this entire election and prevented millions of men and women from voting for the first woman president. There is no other plausible explanation for the deep hatred and venom directed at Clinton – manifested in sensational claims that she “can't be trusted,” is a “serial liar,” and “coldly ambitious.”

Clinton's candidacy remains historic, and despite her defeat many other women were elected to Congress. This is the first time the nation has had such a wide-ranging public discussion about misogyny and the pervasiveness of sexual assault. It has helped change how millions think, including the revulsion to Trump expressed by so many.

Reviled by the right

Hillary Clinton has been a lightning rod of the right since Bill Clinton's administration. She forged her own role, stood up to right-wing efforts

to destroy his presidency, and became a political force in her own right. As a leading public figure, she has been vilified for the past 30 years by these same forces.

Republicans took Clinton's use of a private email server and transformed it into a criminal act in the minds of their supporters. Chants of "Lock her up" dogged Clinton every step of the way.

But Clinton is also the face of the establishment, part of the political and economic power structure. Even though she finally opposed the TPP (Trans-Pacific Partnership), because of President Obama's backing of the pact, the Democratic Party as a whole was seen as a supporter of unfair trade deals. In the thinking of many, she is part of the problem, confirmed by her paid speeches at Goldman Sachs.

The campaign did not effectively address the suffering of workers and their communities, especially the rural areas. It did not effectively build on Sen. Bernie Sanders' call to change the "rigged economic system" and radically address vast wealth inequality. This call tapped into mass thinking, energised millions of voters, and was instrumental in shaping the Democratic platform.

Despite running one of the most progressive platforms of any major party in history, Clinton did not effectively connect to the plight of working families.

All these factors were at work in not only undergirding Trump's support, but also undermining turnout among the Obama coalition.

Don't despair!

The nation is deeply polarised. Trump assumes office as the most reviled and unpopular president in history. Over half the electorate voted against him.

Public opinion on all the key issues is against him. Deep internal divisions and contradictions beset the Republican Party. The world faces

an existential crisis that must be addressed and which will only be aggravated by Trump policies.

What's required is the broadest unity in the defense of democratic norms, institutions, and rights. We have to keep fighting for that cherished vision of the inclusive, just, and peaceful America and world we hold so dear. ●

Cde Bachtell is the national chair of the Communist Party USA

Endnotes

1. "Red state" and "red district: traditionally conservative or right-wing states and districts (most likely to vote Republican)
2. <http://www.peoplesworld.org/article/rev-barber-vote-and-organize-to-fix-americas-heart-problem/>
3. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/11/10/donald-trump-got-reagan-like-support-from-union-households/?utm_term=.b2d8e2b72da0
4. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/11/09/behind-trumps-victory-divisions-by-race-gender-education/>
5. <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/democracy/reports/2015/02/24/107261/states-of-change/>
6. <http://nytlive.nytimes.com/womenintheworld/2016/11/10/more-white-women-voted-for-donald-trump-than-for-hillary-clinton/>

USA

Trump and the contradictions

While it is tempting to judge the new US president by his extreme personal idiosyncrasies, **Alex Mashilo** and **Ian Beddowes** argue that his electoral 'victory' is a consequence of a fundamental systemic crisis in US policy

The election of Donald Trump to the US presidency is the outcome of many contradictions. His presidency is likely to continue to be characterised by contradictions.

It is important to emphasise this was not our election but a US election. Our elections are not at all similar to those of the US. Trump did not win this election through a majority vote of the US people but rather by securing at least half (at least 50% + 1) of the 538 votes of the Electoral College. The Electoral College is based on individual states (equivalent to South African provinces), which, according to the size of their populations, are given a number of votes each. The most populous state, California has 55 voting delegates or "electors" as they are called in the US, in the Electoral College that officially elects the president. The smallest seven states plus the District of Columbia (in which lies Washington, the national capital) have only three electors each. In all but two of the smaller states, whichever party attains the majority in a particular state has all the Electoral College votes for that state. As a consequence, there have been four occasions in US history in which the elected president received fewer votes from the voters than his closest opponent.

It proved to be difficult to obtain actual voting figures in the US elec-

tions immediately after the vote count which is anything but transparent, but according to the information we were able to gather at the time of writing:

- Of the 231 556 622 eligible voters, 46,9% did not vote, 25,6% voted for Hillary Clinton (Democratic Party) 25,5% voted for Trump (Republican Party), 1,7% voted for Gary Johnson (Green Party); but
- Of 538 Electoral College votes, Trump secured 306 (56%) and Clinton secured 232.

As we have already said, this was not our election but a US election, but it is important that we must not underestimate the impact its outcome may have on other countries, given that the US is the epicentre of the oppressive regime of global imperialism. We therefore have to be concerned about the implications of those elections as we assess the configuration and balance of forces.

Trump's presidency is an outcome of structural and deep-rooted processes

Viewing Trump as an individual in isolation from the structural forces that propelled his rise to the US presidency are likely to miss the point in the same way as media propaganda that spread from the US throughout the world missed the point in favour of Clinton. Trump's victory is a reflection of systemic challenges that the Washington establishment called the Washington Consensus, a set of policy measures that the US Treasury, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank have been pushing in concert. These neoliberal measures caused the 2008 crisis that first erupted in the US' so-called sub-prime lending market and spread to other financial services and economic sectors to become an international crisis.

Obama's first election as US president in 2008, with his term of office starting in January 2009, took place just after the crisis erupted.

Much of his first term of office, from 2009 to 2012 and second term, from 2013 to 2016 was overwhelmed by efforts to lead a recovery from the impact of the crisis. This did result in certain turnaround achievements within the prevailing capitalist framework, but there were too many losses that had occurred to be fully recovered and surpassed.

The resulting global crisis has not yet ended. It has in fact become multifaceted, from Europe to China, Brazil to Russia, and so on. There are areas where difficulty persists despite a turnaround in some areas without reaching a full recovery in many areas. Capitalist growth remains subdued internationally as it is in countries such as South Africa. Meanwhile, economic growth does not necessarily trickle down to all sectors of society. There are difficulties persisting in the US as elsewhere.

This is the context in which the Trump presidency emerged through an anti-establishment ticket opposing policies pushed by the Obama administration and supported by Clinton. It is an expression not only of Trump as an individual but of those sectors of the US that blame those policies for the position in which they find themselves.

Many changes have occurred in the US economy with a rise in services, and the dominance of the financial sector. The world's manufacturing map has shifted not only from many parts of Europe, but also the US, to China and elsewhere. In North America, Mexico, which is part of the North American Free Trade Agreement with Canada and the US, has benefitted by the outsourcing of production from the US through cheap labour. There are economic interests in the US that have benefitted from this. But there are also those that have lost out. In addition, the current period is characterised by what many scholars who study industrial development and upgrading characterise as a transition to a fourth industrial revolution centred on the rise of

digitisation.

Manufacturing jobs continue to be lost due to increasing automation and robotics, as well as new work and production methods and productivity gains resulting from workplace restructuring. Firms are now able to increasingly produce higher output levels with a continuously decreasing number of workers and an increasing ratio of production technology to workers. These changes result in contradictory political choices depending on who benefits and who loses. It is important to note Trump's emphasis on jobs for US citizens and its links to his ultra-right-wing populist posture on the impact of immigration and its relationship to jobs. There can be no doubt that this appealed to those US citizens who felt negatively affected and as a result decided to back him for president.

As opposed to the emphasis of the Washington establishment on the nature of the globalisation regime or globalism that has risen to dominance since the 1970s and its series of crises (particularly the current crisis), Trump should be seen as an expression of the aspirations of those who retreated inward and launched attacks on that paradigm with a re-assertion of the national interest based on the primacy first of all of the US. But this remains firmly rooted in imperialist thinking.

The backward stances such as the regressive imperialist politics that Trump propagated during his presidential campaign against Cuba must be condemned in the strongest terms. It is important for the peace loving people of the world to become ready to challenge such barbarity and intensify solidarity with the Cuban people, among others. In the US, Trump's demagogic sentiment helped him amass the votes, for example, of anti-Cuban and anti-communist elements. Many of his ideas chime with those backward sections unhappy with policies, such as universal healthcare, which he vowed he will strike down.

The binary left-right characterisation not applicable to Republicans and Democrats

It has been common in the past to characterise the Republican Party as being “to the Right” and the Democratic Party as “Centre Left”. However, any real analysis of the differences between these two parties gives us something far more complex than binary left or right categories. The US is an imperialist regime regardless of which one of the two parties is in charge.

Since World War II, Democratic administrations have generally had a relatively “better” record in the US of supporting trade union rights and the rights of minorities, especially black Americans. The Barack Obama administration pushed very hard for social policy reforms such as the expansion of access to healthcare. Trump has vowed that he will strike down such measures. This is an indicator of which sections of capital he most reflects in the structure of the relations of production - domestically-based capital, which is compelled to remain in the US. Not every section of capital is mobile and can outsource production abroad.

For example, finance, of which Trump has been “critical”, has achieved high-speed mobility under neoliberal globalisation. Agriculture and other forms of geographically-bound activities (including parts of his own business interests) have not. But there is a contradiction. Trump could not win elections only through bourgeois votes. So he designed his campaign programme to appeal to workers in those sectors as well as work-seekers. This is partly why he most probably attacked immigrants, appealing, at the same time to xenophobic sentiments across the spectrum of classes.

Yet, in terms of foreign policy, the record of both direct aggression and of proxy wars the body count, has been far, far higher for the Democrats than for the Republicans. The Korean War, the Vietnam War (to-

gether with the accompanying wars in Cambodia and Laos) were carried out under Democratic presidents. More recently, in the 1998-2003 Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) war, Bill Clinton armed Uganda and Rwanda to invade the DRC because President Laurent Kabila had dared to re-negotiate mining contracts so that some of the profits from the strategic minerals found in the DRC could be used to uplift the living standards of the Congolese people. The resulting war killed, according to the United Nations, 5,4-million people, making it the most destructive war in terms of life lost since World War II.

One of the obvious contradictions here is that President Lyndon Johnson without doubt processed more civil rights legislation benefiting blacks than any other US president, yet he was responsible for the horrific wars in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. Also, in 1965 he also engaged and supplied white mercenaries from apartheid South Africa, Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and Belgium against a resurgence in Congo which, under the leadership of Pierre Mulele, was trying to restore the legacy of the murdered Congo leader Patrice Lumumba. A recent contradiction has been the posture adopted by the Obama administration towards Cuba, including a shift towards restoration of bilateral relations. This needs a brief explanation because it was not in good faith:

The Obama administration maintained a regime change foreign policy towards Cuba and did not, contrary to what he promised at the beginning of his first term of office, lift the entire structure of the draconian economic blockade the US has illegally imposed on Cuba for over half-a-century. The superficial measures he adopted, some of which nevertheless offering important relief, were meant to facilitate merely “a new approach” towards the same objective he referred to in December 2014. On the other hand Trump represents outright paradigm maintenance in terms of open and intensified hostility towards Cuba as hardwired in the status quo that prevailed prior to the “soft

power” manoeuvring introduced by Obama.

When President Obama came into office in 2009 he stabilised the situation left by George Bush, introducing a number of measures, which made life easier for the majority of Americans. But in 2011, together with President Sarkozy of France and British Prime Minister David Cameron, he launched a terrible war on Libya, at that time the country with one of the highest human development indexes in Africa. They bombed Libya into ruins and plunged the country into a state of anarchy and social catastrophe that continues uninterrupted today. As a result, many Libyans have and continue to perish in the Mediterranean seeking to reach Europe, triggering state-supported xenophobic responses. During the destruction of Libya and the murder of Muammar Gaddafi by mercenaries supported by the US and its allies, there was systematic genocide of black Libyans, with the mainly black coastal town of Tawergha completely destroyed.

Neoliberal globalisation and paradigm maintenance

Neoliberal globalisation has been primarily driven by transnational corporations and finance capital. Neoliberalism advocated unrestricted and unregulated capitalism. In the 1960s and 1970s, monopoly capital became far more aggressive by advocating deregulation, including the removal of banking and trade regulations; financial, trade and investment liberalisation; privatisation of state owned entities; out-sourcing of even the simplest operations by national and local government; casualisation of labour; and so on. These concepts were pushed by Margaret Thatcher, British Prime Minister from 1979 to 1990 and Ronald Reagan, US president from 1981 to 1989. What did the Democrats do when they came to power thereafter? Although Reagan and successors George Bush and George W Bush were Republicans, when the Democrat Bill Clinton was in office from 1993 to 2001, he made no funda-

mental changes to the neoliberal agenda.

Similarly Obama, the most recent Democratic president who, forced by the outbreak of the 2008 international capitalist system crisis that first erupted in the US, was forced to concede to the importance of regulation, merely slightly sweetened the neoliberal agenda through some social liberalism. But internationally was even more militarily aggressive than his Democratic predecessors. Hilary Clinton was Secretary of State (effectively the US Foreign Minister) under Obama from 2009 to 2013. As released emails have shown, she was consistently extremely warlike and aggressive. She strongly supported the neo-Nazi coup in Ukraine, the use of Islamic jihadists in Syria, the destruction of Libya, and ongoing Israeli apartheid measures.

The neoliberal agenda received a strong blow from the Brexit vote in Britain. Although there were definitely strong racist and quasi-fascist elements who voted for Brexit, the British left, most notably the Communist Party, also strongly supported the exit of Britain from the European Union. This vote was followed by the election of Jeremy Corbyn, the most progressive Labour Party leader in recent history with massive support from the working class. Clearly there is a critical reaction towards the global neoliberal establishment but its manifestation has been expressed in both progressive and reactionary terms. In the US, Bernie Sanders, the first serious US presidential contender for many years to call himself a “socialist” was only narrowly defeated in the Democratic Party primaries by the pro-Clinton Democratic establishment. With the defeat of Sanders, the candidate who appeared to be most anti-establishment and representative of the interests of productive capitalists based in the US, was the demagogic Trump.

Some of his ideas are clearly racist and sexist. But at the same time he has vowed to bring industry back into the US (it was largely outsourced to countries with cheaper labour). This and his anti-immigrant

and xenophobic attitude brought him support from some sections of workers and work-seekers.

Trump has expressed regressive sentiments on many countries, including South Africa. If this is maintained in his administration's foreign policy outlook the situation will become complex. He has, however, he has expressed his willingness to make peace with Iran and Russia. Both countries have their own internal contradictions with international implications, in terms of their governments' respective outlooks, character and associated foreign policy. Russian President Vladimir Putin greeted Trump's election with enthusiasm. This is an indicator of the likelihood of the end of the current North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's (Nato's) aggression towards Russia. Western Europe has for a long time been subservient to US foreign policy. It is likely to continue tailing US foreign policy.

Trump's "positive" attitude towards Russia, which is not without some mutual "understanding", is also an indicator that the US under Trump may abandon the neo-Nazi regime that came to power through a coup in Ukraine.

By and large, Trump's election reflects, like Brexit, a crack in the neoliberal monolith that dominates the world. How far he will be captured by the establishment remains to be seen. ●

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