African Communist

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FORWARD TO THE SPECIAL NATIONAL CONGRESS

2nd PHASE DEBATE CONTINUES

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EDITORIAL NOTES

21 years on: What is to be done?

In the face of a massive global capitalist crisis & aggressive domestic monopoly capital we must defend our revolution and prepare for a second, radical phase of our NDR

It is no secret that we are confronting a very challenging period in our democratic revolution. Twenty-one years after our historic 1994 democratic breakthrough, crisis levels of racialised poverty, unemployment and inequality persist. So what is to be done?

In the first place, it is important to understand the global and regional factors that are impacting upon our domestic challenges. These are rarely acknowledged by opposition forces or by the political commentariat in much of our local media. It is not a question of seeking "external" factors to excuse our own national weaknesses and failures. However, unless we locate our own struggles within a global, continental and regional context, any local efforts will inevitably fail.

The ongoing global structural capitalist crisis has deepened the reproduction of inequality on a world scale. Financialisation, a key feature of the current stage of imperialism, a stage described by Samir Amin as "imperialism of generalised monopolies", is resulting in huge flows of imperialist rent literally being sucked out of so-called "developing" countries on an unprecedented scale. Debt enslavement has extended even to the immediate doorstep of the advanced capitalist economies – as with the current show-down between the people of

Greece and German bankers and the political elite of the EU.

The expansion of the capitalist agrarian revolution into Africa, led by imperialist land grabs, is resulting in massive dispossession of peasant communities. This, in turn, is producing rapid urbanisation without employment, and sprawling slums across our continent. Rural dispossession coupled with ecological crises and civil wars (typically instigated by imperialist interventions), have given rise to intra-national, and international migratory flows on a scale never before seen in human history. Last year alone, some 1-billion people crossed national boundaries, the majority desperate economic refugees, many of them "illegals". Millions of these economic refugees, perhaps some 3-million from Zimbabwe alone, have poured into South Africa over the past decade. These and many other "external" factors have greatly impacted upon the transformational prospects of our post-apartheid South Africa.

They underline the critical importance of an internationalist, anti-imperialist solidarity, and of advancing a progressive African agenda that includes the defence of democratic national sovereignty, the protection and ecologically sustainable use of our continent's immense natural resources, and a balanced regional- and continental-wide programme of co-operative economic development. In short, a broad national democratic perspective is valid for our entire region and continent. But that national democratic perspective must increasingly acquire an anti-imperialist and anti-monopoly capital character, otherwise it is doomed to failure.

But there are also internal South African factors – both "objective" and "subjective" – that have compromised the advance of our own national democratic revolution. These factors have weakened our capacity to respond to our domestic challenges. It is important to understand the dialectical relationship between what we are referring to as

"objective" and "subjective" national factors. "Objective" factors are not some immovable reality within which as a liberation movement we have to move pragmatically, ducking and diving, while practising politics purely as "the art of the possible". This can only result, as Marx once observed, in an aspirant revolution simply "adapting itself to the relations of bourgeois society". At the same time, we should not exaggerate the room for revolutionary advances in any particular conjuncture – unrealistic "great leaps forward", populist adventurism in many other societies have led to major defeats of progressive forces. But, as Cde Joe Slovo, following Lenin, once argued – "untimely action is better than untimely inaction".

Over the past 21 years since our major 1994 democratic breakthrough, the principal error from the side of the liberation movement has not been left adventurism, but a major exaggeration of the "objective" constraints. This has resulted in a significant demobilisation of our subjective capacity to drive the necessary radical transformation of our society. What is more, reality is not static, subjective weaknesses from the side of progressive forces will inevitably result in the consolidation of unfavourable "objective" realities.

As the SACP's discussion document *Going to the Root – A Second Radical Phase of the NDR* argues, the 1994 democratic breakthrough should have been used as a bridgehead to embark immediately on a radical transformation agenda. At that point, South African monopoly capital, the major strategic antagonist against the advance, deepening and defence of an ongoing national democratic revolution in our country, was relatively off-balance. It had taken the risky but necessary step (from its profit-maximising strategic perspective) of supporting a negotiated transition to a one-person, one-vote democratic dispensation. This was not remotely out of any commitment to majority rule, or with a view to participating in a shared patriotic

effort at post-apartheid reconstruction and development.

The last decade of apartheid white-minority rule had resulted in a deepening crisis of profitability for monopoly capital. Economic, financial and oil sanctions played a part in the crisis of profitability. So did the apartheid regime's defensive measures – tough exchange controls and increasing fiscal expenditure on supporting military destabilisation in our region and security repression within South Africa.

For South African monopoly capital, a negotiated transition (to what it hoped would be a low-intensity democracy) was seen as a risk, but a necessary risk. The strategic agenda was to use a "universally acceptable" democratic constitution as cover to rapidly take the on-ramp to globalisation – to run away from democracy. From the perspective of monopoly capital this was, of course, a calculated risk. Having sheltered behind and benefited from a century of colonial and white minority regimes, South African monopoly capital took the risk of being able to penetrate, influence and divert a new (and still largely unknown to it) political elite. The intention included compromising and diluting the executive capacity of a new democratic state from being able to drive forward any popular electoral mandate.

Partly as a result of South African monopoly capital's own significant power and resources (backed by imperialist power and numerous ideological think-tanks) and partly as a result of subjective weaknesses on the part of our liberation movement, the strategic agenda of monopoly capital has made considerable head-way since 1994. There has been a huge drain of surplus out of our country as a result of capital flight – some of it completely illegal, some of it through dual listings, transfer pricing, the shift of nominal headquarters to tax havens, and much more. All of this was unwittingly aided and abetted by unwise relaxation of exchange controls and general runaway liberalisation by the ANC-led government in the mid and late1990s.

Within South Africa, monopoly capital aggressively restructured production – shifting investments out of productive manufacturing and mining and into speculative and non-productive sectors like financial services and shopping malls. Mergers and acquisitions increasingly exposed key sectors of the economy, like agriculture, to the whims of foreign speculative investors. This "radical" but neo-liberal restructuring of our productive economy was accompanied by the equally aggressive restructuring and fragmentation of the working class through casualisation, informalisation, labour brokering and widespread retrenchments. These measures actively undercut the progressive statutory advances won by the working class after 1994. The percentage of workers unionised in the private sector actually dropped from 35,6% in 1997 to 24,4% in 2013. In short, post-1994 a "radical" restructuring of our economy and society was driven, not by progressive forces, but by neo-liberal monopoly capital. Progressive forces were confronted with a new, and in many respects, an increasingly unfavourable "objective" reality.

Of course, this monopoly capital-led offensive has not gone unchallenged. The progressive trade union movement, the ANC-led alliance and government, popular forces in general, and certainly the SACP have waged offensive and defensive battles against this strategic agenda. But the subjective capacity to advance an alternative agenda has been compromised by many subjective weaknesses as well. In the period of the "1996 class project", the ANC organisationally was considerably demobilised – and turned largely into an electoral machine, itself increasingly controlled by gate-keepers. The ideological coherence of the ANC has been weakened, with internal factionalism having little to do with principled strategic issues and more and more related to moneyed contests for positions of power, battles over deployment, and electoral lists. The degeneration of internal movement

politics into a "game of thrones" has also impacted in varying degrees on the ANC's alliance partners – the SACP, Cosatu and Sanco. Monopoly capital has succeeded in inserting its DNA into much of the progressive trade union movement via union investment arms with their linkage into worker retirement funds. Progressive trade unions have also, to some extent, become victims of labour's own institutional advances, with the inherent dangers of creeping bureaucratisation and a neglect of factory floor organisation and work-place mandating.

A critical part of monopoly capital's agenda has been to hollow out the transformational capacity of the new democratic state. This has had several dimensions – the corporate capture of key public institutions (Media 24's effective gobbling up of the public broadcaster is the most egregious example); the corruption of critical strategic nodes of the state; and the playing off of one part of the state (the judiciary, for instance) against the executive to blunt any executive attempt to implement its democratic mandate. The most recent example is the curious decision of the Competition Appeal Court to reverse the fine of R534-million imposed by the Competition Tribunal on a Sasol subsidiary, Sasol Chemical Industries (SCI). The Competition Tribunal had found that SCI had used its dominant market position to impose over-pricing, ranging up to a whopping 41% mark-up, on local manufacturers for propylene and polypropylene – the raw materials for, among other things, household plastic goods like buckets, basins, brooms and water tanks.

The Competition Appeal Court has just announced that it has overturned this finding on the bizarre grounds that account should not be taken of the fact that SCI's feedstock was exceptionally cheap because it was a by-product of Sasol's unique coal-to-oil process! The Appeal Court argued that we should pretend that SCI was operating in a "normal" competitive market without the advantage that it actu-

ally enjoys of feeding off its parent company's by-products.

So how do we turn things around? How do we build the subjective capacity to advance the radical transformation of our society? These are questions that are addressed and debated in several of the contributions in this edition of *The African Communist*, and they are questions that will need to be taken forward at the SACP's critical Special National Congress in early July.

Suffice to say that re-building the subjective capacity to advance, deepen and defend our revolution will need to be pursued across at least three major dimensions:

- Unifying the working class, and particularly re-building Cosatu, with an emphasis on internal democracy, worker control, and service to members at the shop-floor level.
- Mobilising popular activism and capacity, especially at the local level. Our political formations, and particularly ANC branches and regional structures, are increasingly sliding into the narrow politics of politicians, the "game of thrones" syndrome. Where popular activism occurs, it is now frequently beyond and outside of our formations – either as "protest" politics, or as grass-roots developmental work, spear-headed by faith-based formations, volunteer groups, etc. many of whom remain ANC supporters but increasingly alienated from formal organisational structures.
- Building and defending democratic national sovereignty – which means, amongst other things, transforming the state to ensure that it operates with strategic discipline and has the capacity to implement a democratic mandate in the face of the corrosive, anti-patriotic power of monopoly capital and a wide array of anti-majoritarian forces in our society.

These tasks are, of course, inter-related and inter-dependent. Without a unified working class, without popular activism (what the Latin

Americans call "popular protagonism") the chances of consolidating an effective, developmental state are minimal. On the other hand, an anti-state, regime change agenda, with which some on the pseudo-left (like the leadership clique in Numsa or those in the EFF) are flirting, simply plays directly into the hands of a neo-liberal anti-majoritarianism. Notice how the DA, Wayne Duvenhage (with a background in the car-hire business), the FW De Klerk Foundation and the Numsa/EFF axis all converge on the same two repetitive fixations – Nkandla and e-tolls. There is much to be critical about government's handling of both Nkandla and e-tolls. But what about Sasol? What about Media 24? What about Cash Paymaster, that US-corporate mashonisa siphoning billions of rands out of the pockets of South African pensioners and grant beneficiaries? What about Mark Shuttleworth shipping out R2,5-billion in private wealth to an overseas tax haven and still having the gall to appeal against a modest 10% deduction?

In the face of this massive siphoning out of our country's resources, we need a strong, patriotic and democratic state – in all its dimensions, legislatures, the executive, and even the judiciary. Which is why the SACP has saluted the Constitutional Court decision to overturn the Appeal Court judgment that wanted the Reserve Bank to pay back R250-million to Shuttleworth. Private wealth accumulation on this obscene scale cannot be allowed to trump national public interest.

Let us build working class unity. Let us reconnect with and inspire local popular capacity and activism. Let us consolidate a democratic state that is both willing and capable of defending national sovereignty. These are the necessary conditions for a much needed radical second phase of our national democratic revolution.

SPECIAL NATIONAL CONGRESS

Consolidate our revolutionary advances and roll back neo-liberalism

This CC political report provides the basis of the Central Committee report to the Special National Congress

This political report primarily seeks to provide a framework for the Central Committee report to our Special National Congress (SNC) in July 2015. It also seeks to open discussions on the contemporary political challenges facing our revolution.

Our SNC needs to assess the past two-and-half years since our last Congress and map a way forward, including the strategic and programmatic priorities for the SACP and the working class in the lead up to our Congress in 2017 and beyond. As has always been the case, our Congress is not narrowly about the SACP, but also about the Alliance, its components, and the broader challenges facing our movement and revolution at this point. The acid test against which we need to evaluate the past two-and-a-half years is the extent to which we have advanced our agenda to build working class hegemony in all key sites of power and terrains of struggle.

Over the last two-and-a-half years, the SACP and its cadres have made a sterling contribution in governance, especially in driving an agenda that is of benefit to the workers and poor of our country. No wonder our class and political enemies, including the last apartheid

president, FW de Klerk, have resorted to their worn 'rooi gevaar' agenda, seeking to use this to roll back the gains that our revolution is making.

The single most glaring weakness since our 13th Congress is that of weakening mass campaigning and activism by the Party. We dare not forget that since 1994 where we have made the most impact, including defending the SACP from our enemies and detractors, including from inside our movement, has been through our strength deriving from mass campaigning, and ideological clarity on the tasks and challenges facing our revolution.

Over the past two-and-a-half years, there have been a number of issues the SACP could have taken up, including the increasing marginalisation of vulnerable workers, especially women in the domestic, hospitality and services sectors. As we have said before, the struggles for gender equality and women's emancipation must not only be theorised or endlessly analysed but must be taken up through confronting the specific conditions and location of women in the neo-liberal restructuring of the workplace and in the broader economy.

As we proceed towards our SNC it is essential that we discuss ways and means of a serious resuscitation of the mass campaigns of the SACP, especially the financial sector campaign, which must be at the heart of our contemporary struggles against capitalism.

The second phase of our transition, imperialism and the economy

The one defining feature of the conjuncture, including the last few years, still remains the negative impact not only of the 2008 capitalist financial and economic meltdown, but also of the devastating effect of more than three decades of neo-liberalism, not least its impact on our own country and its economy. This is the single most defining feature that runs through what we have been facing over the last while.

Since our 13th Congress, we have seen imperialist aggression in Libya and (imperialist supported armed rebellion) in Syria, which have not created democratic regimes as these military interventions claimed. Instead, since the Nato attack on Libya and the sponsorship of violence against the Syrian government, these interventions have created what are perhaps the most unsafe and insecure conditions in the Middle East. The imperialist military interventions have given birth to one of the most backward and reactionary forces in the form of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (Isis). In these wars sponsored by imperialism, women continue to suffer as captives in conditions of violence, including being used as objects of sexual pleasure and rape by male combatants. One of the worst examples in this regard is the kidnapping of hundreds of young women by Boko Haram in Nigeria. The struggle against imperialist and other wars must also be fought on the terrain of the struggles for gender equality.

The Brazilian sociologist and political activist, Emir Sader, argues that today in the world the main (often male dominated) axes of power can be divided into three great monopolies: "… of arms, of money, and of words. The first reflects the militarisation of conflicts, an area in which the United States believes it exercises unquestionable superiority. The second relates to neo-liberal policy, the commercialisation of all social relations and natural resources, which seeks to create a world in which everything has its price, everything can be bought and sold, and whose utopia is the shopping mall. The third has to do with the monopoly of the private media over the profoundly selective and anti-democratic process of shaping public opinion".

In South Africa today there is strong similarity and reproduction of the latter two types of capitalist power and monopoly, the dominance of both the ideology and the continuing neo-liberal restructuring of our mainstream economy, and the dominance of bourgeois media.

Sader makes a further important observation about the current capitalist global conjuncture. He argues that "neoliberalism's biggest achievements were not in the economic field, where most of its promise had lain, but in the social and ideological fields". The neo-liberal (Thatcherite/Reaganomics) "resolution" of the profitability/over-accumulation crisis was achieved through, inter alia, "globalisation", increasing commoditisation of untapped global natural and labour resources, and financialisation, including what some have called the "privatisation of Keynesianism" – demand stimulation through the massive extension of credit including to the working class for housing, car purchase, university education – resulting in a massive debt crisis.

Economically the neo-liberal stage of capitalism has not resolved capitalist internal contradictions – it displaced them for a while, only to deepen them in the medium term – hence 2008 going forward.

However, while the global economic crisis (and all of the other symptoms – widening global inequality, the destruction of nature, etc) has demonstrated that the neo-liberal phase of global capitalism has not resolved its economic problems, we should not underestimate its massive successes in the ideological/social terrain – the global fostering of a consumerist culture, the introduction of an individualistic culture into wide swathes of society previously relatively untouched by the capitalist market – from academic research to health-care. This "made in Hollywood" ideological/cultural hegemony has had a deep impact on the working class everywhere, on the new so-called Third World "middle classes", and even on the urban and rural poor. The hegemony of this neo-liberal "Westernising" ideological and cultural offensive has, in turn, meant that opposition to it and its many social ills has in many cases taken a simply reactive form by deeply conservative fundamentalist forces (neo-fascist in Europe, religious

fanaticism in Asia, parts of Africa and the middle East, etc).

The neo-liberal hegemony has been fostered by the social fragmentation of the global proletariat (something to be elaborated upon in the "Challenges facing the trade union movement" paper to be discussed at the SNC) and a subsequent loss, in many cases, of class solidarity. The neo-liberal ideological offensive has also succeeded in portraying the state (and politics) as essentially "corrupt", and "bloated" "living beyond its means" (whether in Greece, or South Africa, or Brazil) – so that relatively progressive social movement mobilisation also often adopts a mechanical "oppositionist", "watch-dog" role – which plays directly (if unintentionally) into the imperialist-led agenda of regime change projects ("Colours Revolutions") against Third World states that exhibit any ambition for, or degree of, national sovereign capacity in the face of the imperialist agenda.

The 2008 global capitalist crisis is the biggest since the Great Depression of the late 1920s. But it was unlike the Great Depression, which saw the growth of the communist left, followed by the advances of the social democratic left in most of the advanced capitalist centres of Europe in the 1930s (though actualised after World War II). Indeed, the growth of the communist and social democratic left was also in response to the often-heroic struggles against the rise of fascism in the late 1920s and early 1930s. There is however no serious counter-hegemonic left alternative that has effectively emerged after 2008 to challenge the major citadels of capitalist power. One consequence of this is the re-emergence of confidence by monopoly capital. This is evident in greater determination by the imperialist powers to impose neo-liberal policies once more, on Greece, for instance, and on developing countries, through, for example, current WTO processes and attaching conditionalities to the Agoa (African Growth and Opportunity Act) renewal. Although the US is not necessarily keen

to drop its Agoa relationship with South Africa, as this would run the danger of ceding further market space in Africa to China, it is pushing South Africa very hard. The failure of a left alternative to emerge is a question that the contemporary communist and other left forces will have to ask and seek to answer, as part of seeking to advance alternatives to neo-liberal capitalism and the capitalist system itself.

However, there continues to be growing resistance to neo-liberalism in many parts of the world, with some promising signs of the emergence of alternatives to this capitalist trajectory in places like South America. Even in countries like Spain and Greece interesting left alternatives are beginning to emerge to the EU agenda. Though these alternatives are emerging on the semi-periphery of the core centres of capitalism, they deserve close scrutiny and the drawing of appropriate lessons especially by the communist left.

We need to study developments in Latin America closely. The electoral victories by the left in Latin America pose important strategic and programmatic political questions for the strategy to build socialism. The left electoral victories have been driven by social movements that have united the working class; the urban and rural poor, including the peasantry; intensifying though still somewhat subdued women's struggles; and the struggle of indigenous peoples, including their struggle to reclaim their culture, identities and territories. However, Sader makes a general point about social movements in Latin America (a point the SACP has made about similar movements here in South Africa) that they have tended to dismiss "another set of values, phenomena and spaces: parties, politics, collective solutions, state planning ... and the business of state". While there are natural tendencies towards potentially healthy tensions between electoral politics and the democratic state on the one hand, and social movements on the other, the tendency towards a monolithic opposition-

ism and an anti-politics politics in social movements can result in this potentially creative tension simply becoming debilitating, and therefore playing into the hands of a neo-liberal agenda. This is why there is a continuing and sometimes debilitating tension between the social movements and the very governments they brought into power in Latin America.

This also raises the vexed question of whether social movements, without a vanguard left, anti-capitalist political and class parties, are capable of sustaining serious revolutionary advances and enabling the retention of state power and a commitment to national sovereignty by the very leftist governments they backed. It seems this question that led Venezuela, under Chavez, to build the Socialist Party in that country, as a way of building political capacity to safeguard the revolutionary advances and political gains made.

In our own South and Southern African context, we come from a relatively strong anti-colonial political tradition of struggle led by strong, political liberation movements, often backed by the trade unions, peasantry and other mass social formations. In the case of South Africa, the communist party played a crucial role in acting as the ideological vanguard of the liberation movement. After 1994, the SACP also occupied a significant space in combining political and mass power to mobilise the working class to build a different and better South Africa, as a route towards a socialist South Africa.

Perhaps the most serious threat facing our revolution is a variation of what is happening in Latin America, the driving of a wedge between the national liberation movement, on the one hand, and the trade union and mass organisations on the other. The offensive to capture and/or weaken Cosatu seems to be aimed at hammering in this wedge, especially to disrupt the strong relationship, and cause a rupture, between the trade union movement and the SACP.

The continuing economic growth and development of China also continues to pose a serious threat to the global economic hegemony of the United States, thus seriously presenting possibilities of an alternative economic centre of power. However, the degree to which China's economic trajectory opens up an anti-capitalist transformational perspective, or simply a changed centre of capitalist hegemony, remains an open question and will be determined by on-going dynamics, including within the People's Republic of China and the Communist Party of China. Either way, the rise of China presents countries like South Africa with alternative developmental possibilities and leverage.

The working class, our Party and our Alliance, have all continued to score important economic policy advances, not least in the Mangaung Conference of the ANC. These policy breakthroughs include the resolution to advance and drive a second, more radical phase of our national democratic revolution. We also have an Alliance consensus on keeping the major state-owned companies in the hands of the state, and for them to be strengthened to play a leading role in driving a second, more radical phase of transformation, especially in the economy. The Alliance also remains firmly committed and resolute on the centrality of women's emancipation as a crucial component of the national democratic revolution, despite its vulgarisation in many other instances.

In addition, government has continued to prioritise investment in infrastructure, as well as new iterations of the industrial policy action plan, and with industrialisation now adopted as the agenda of Southern African Development Community. Despite these policy breakthroughs, unemployment stubbornly continues, thus reinforcing the marginalisation and impoverishing of millions of South Africans. The challenges facing working class South Africans are also character-

ised by the continued location of women in the poorest paying jobs. Continued investment in infrastructure, while continuing to act as a cushion against further massive job losses, has not turned the tide to achiever uninterrupted growth of employment and a radical transformation of our economic trajectory, and crowding in investment from the capitalist private sector.

However, the struggle to transform our economy has been characterised by sharpening class struggles both from outside and within the state. The implementation of these policies has been heavily contested, not least through the resurgence of a cautious but determined privatisation agenda for Eskom. When there is not a direct privatisation agenda, there is often an agenda to milk the SOCs (state-owned companies) procurement programmes – current examples include exorbitant prices exacted corruptly from Eskom for coal and diesel supplies. There is also chronic asset stripping of some of these public entities. One of the worst examples of this is the capture of the SABC by MultiChoice.

The struggles to drive the second, more radical phase of our transition phase have also been weakened by the challenges facing Cosatu.

The 2008 capitalist crisis was in many ways a strong vindication of some of the major features of our financial sector campaign. That campaign needs to be revitalised in earnest and strengthened as one of the major platforms to fight against the neo-liberal financialisation of the global and domestic economies. Our campaign to drive a second, more radical phase of our transition must also be built around the intensification of the struggle for the transformation of the financial sector (and the de-financialisation of just about every other sector of the economy – not least the retail and housing sectors). Our financial sector campaign must seek to dislodge the current hegemony of the financial sector's interests when it comes to macro-economic

and other policy choices. Many national and other global struggles (for example in Greece and Spain) touch fundamentally on this issue. We should advance the struggle for the transformation of the financial sector into a global struggle to be taken up by the international communist movement, acting together with its allies.

The transformation of the financial sector and redirecting its resources towards the productive economy must be at the centre of our struggle for industrialisation and investment in infrastructure. The transformation of the financial sector must thus be central to our strategy to drive the second, more radical phase of our transition. To resuscitate our campaign does not mean returning to the past mechanistically; we also need to take it forward under the present circumstances.

Class and ideological struggles in the state and beyond

The growing confidence and arrogance of the anti-majoritarian liberal offensive is beginning to show full-blown regime-change ambitions. The agenda in this case does not present its preferred neo-liberal policies for overt public debate, but rather conceals these behind a discourse attacking corruption, maladministration and incompetence. This offensive seeks, therefore, to mobilise the masses on an allegedly better administrative alternative. The SACP was the first organisation to identify and properly characterise this anti-majoritarian liberal offensive whose aim, using mainstream media, is to discredit and delegitimise the democratic government as inherently corrupt, wasteful and indifferent to the needs of the overwhelming majority of our people. Part of this agenda has been to project DA-led governments as clean and free of corruption, used as a platform to wage a relentless campaign against the liberation movement.

However, the success of the anti-majoritarian agenda also derives from full exploitation of our own weaknesses and mistakes. For in-

stance, most of our state institutions are currently in a state of flux and serious weakness, whether it be the South African Revenue Services, the Hawks, the National Prosecuting Authority or Eskom. There are also real dangers posed by corruption in the state, some of which involves members of our own organisations. The corporate capture of the state and some of its institutions by an alliance of tendepreneurs and commercial capitalist interests, located inside and outside our movement, is a grave threat.

The character and direction of the state we are seeking to build is a subject of major class contestation in contemporary South Africa. One of its sharpest manifestations in the current period is around the character, role and the orientation of the judiciary. It is clear that sections of the judiciary have positioned themselves as part of the anti-majoritarian liberal offensive and seek to produce judicial injunctions that are aimed at discrediting the government and particularly the decisions of the executive arm of government.

The role of sections of the judiciary in seeking to enter into the space of the other arms of the state, especially parliament and the executive, is problematic and needs to be debated.

A related and important matter in the broader ideological struggle is that of the urgent necessity of meaningful transformation of the media, including the public broadcaster. It remains one of the most important arenas of struggle, both inside and outside the state, to be taken up energetically by the SACP and the working class more broadly. Progressive forces have allowed themselves to be intimidated by the anti-majoritarian liberal offensive, and by the media in defence its narrow and often racist and anti-democratic posture. At present it is the SACP that is best placed to lead this struggle for the transformation of the media as part of the broader ideological struggle and the battle of ideas.

In the last meeting of the SACP Central Committee Subcommittee on the 'Battle of Ideas' there was an extensive discussion on the state of the media in our country, including the public broadcaster. This included a strong recommendation to this Central Committee that a broad media summit on transformation be convened by the SACP. This summit must focus on, among other things:

- The necessity and urgency of the transformation of the media – changing ownership patterns, especially tackling monopolies, with Naspers as an urgent priority;
- Aggressive promotion of diversification to expand and protect genuine community media, including paying close attention to the funding of this project; and
- Reclaiming the SABC and undoing the SABC-MultiChoice deal.

We need to ensure that accelerated media transformation as mooted by government is not designed for, and captured by, a narrow BEE agenda, most of which is nothing but a front for established monopoly media interests.

Recommendations were made to challenge the Naspers monopoly of pay TV, and to intensify the struggle for independent regulation as opposed to self-regulation of private print and electronic media. Consideration should also be given to forming a broad coalition of progressive forces that stand for the transformation of the media for a democratic South Africa, and to expose the anti-majoritarian agenda of most of the media.

In doing so we also need to critique the capitalist and gendered nature of mainstream media and the narrow accumulation agenda it is advancing. In particular we need to expose the Times Media Group as the mouthpiece of the mining bosses and the semi-colonial growth path of a 'pit-to-port' economy. In particular we must expose and critique the editorial stances of Business Day and Financial Mail, particu-

larly their relentless criticism and opposition to industrialisation and the building of the manufacturing industry, ostensibly in defence of the interests of the mining industry. Large sections of South Africa's media are also part of the anti-majoritarian and neo-liberal agenda.

The struggle for South Africa's workplaces and communities

There is a close relationship between the changes and restructuring taking place in the workplace and the changing nature of our communities and the struggles taking place there. In fact the material basis for some of the attacks on foreign nationals derive from intra-working class struggles over scarce resources, as well as the impact of the neo-liberal restructuring of the work-place, both on the working class in the workplace, and on broader working class communities.

What is the political economy of South African communities today? It is important that the SACP, and the ANC, closely analyse South Africa's (residential) communities. For example the residential patterns of apartheid have not been drastically changed. We still largely have African, white, Indian and Coloured residential communities, despite minimal changes in the residential movement of the middle classes across the racial divide. For the SACP, while we need to properly understand all social classes in the various residential communities, we need to pay closer attention to the working class, especially among the Indian and Coloured residential communities.

For now let us start with the majority of our communities, the African communities in the major urban townships and rural villages. The neo-liberal restructuring of the work place has had a direct influence and major impact on the social dynamics in our townships and villages. As in the past, our townships and villages continue to be both sources of and dumping sites for wanted and unwanted labour in the major economic sites of accumulation in our country.

And these continue to be the urban-based industrial companies, the mines and agriculture. Increasingly we have now highly casualised industry (and 'regionalised' services and hospitality sectors) drawing labour from these reservoirs.

The fragmentation of the working class, due inter alia to labour brokerage, casualisation, outsourcing and retrenchments, has shaped the social landscape and dynamics in our urban townships and rural villages. Increased unemployment and the growth of the so-called 'precariat' provides the crucial link between the restructuring of the workplace and the working class and its political economy in African townships and rural villages. Women constitute an important component of the precariat – a 'class', or rather sections of the proletariat living in precarious conditions, surviving on the margins of the mainstream capitalist economy.

The offensive directed at the organised working class in general, and Cosatu in particular, has further weakened the trade union movement in the workplace, with consequent weakening of the presence and weight of the working class in our communities.

There are two principal, deeply interrelated, challenges facing the workplace today. The first is ensuring that legislation against labour brokering is realized on the ground, especially given the resistance by employers to this intervention. The second challenge is that of rebuilding Cosatu. This must include a comprehensive analysis of the challenges facing the trade union movement in general. We are currently faced the growth of regressive and opportunistic tendencies inside the trade union movement, especially Cosatu, in the wake of the neo-liberal restructuring of the workplace, the working class and the trade union movement. Some of these regressive tendencies include populism, the cult of the personality, and confusing trade union independence with an oppositionist stance to the liberation move-

ment and the government it leads. These regressive tendencies also include the identification of government as inherently the enemy of the working class. This regressive and workerist tendency is also characterised by a very narrow definition of 'civil society' as consisting of only overtly political and politicised social organisations and NGOs while abandoning other sectors of 'civil society' that play important roles in the lives of working class communities – churches, stokvels, burial societies, township and village women's groups, co-operatives, music and other entertainment activities' and cultural groups. Because the latter are seen as not overtly political, they are not regarded as part of a broadly working class "civil society", despite the fact that they play a crucial role in the daily lives of the workers and poor in our society.

The state of, and struggles in, our communities require the full time and undivided attention of the SACP and our movement as a whole. This is one terrain of struggle that perhaps currently poses a major threat to our revolution, including the potential of this site being used as a key platform to dislodge our movement from power. It is these communities that both the United Front and the EFF are targeting in their attempts to weaken the ANC and capture some of these spaces in the 2016 local government elections.

Our township and villages are home to large sections of unemployed (and semi/under-employed) youth. Our townships and villages are also home to a precariat. It is this youth and/or 'precariat' that is also the cannon fodder of the 'service delivery' protests, as well as internal struggles within our own formations for power. Guy Standing, who has proposed the concept of the precariat (in *The precariat – the new dangerous class*), says of members of this stratum: "They are floating, rudderless and potentially angry, capable of veering to the extreme right or extreme left politically and backing

populist demagoguery that plays on their fears or phobias". In Europe for instance, sections of this precariat are mobilised behind highly xenophobic activities in countries like Italy, Germany and France and support the neo-fascist extreme right. However, the same social strata can also be mobilised into progressive movements – in Greece some of the left-leaning and anti-capitalist Syrizia's support base is precisely from the marginalised and unemployed, notably youth. However, the third largest electoral party in Greece is the openly neo-fascist New Dawn, and it also mobilises among the unemployed and alienated. Some of New Dawn's leadership are currently on trial for xenophobic murders.

Perhaps one major difference between these residential areas now and under apartheid is that they have been huge beneficiaries of the democratic government's welfarist interventions, including the extension of vital basic services such as water, electricity, increased access to basic and higher education, free health care to children under five years old, and social grants for key sections that are indigent (child, old age and disability grants). These welfare measures have played a huge role in cushioning our communities from the ravages of neoliberal restructuring of both the capitalist workplace and the working class. Many of these measures have also provided huge relief to the burden on the shoulders of women in their role in looking after the basic needs of families.

There has also been huge transformation and restructuring of the township and village economies since the 1994 democratic breakthrough. The retrenchment and casualisation of the working class especially from the late 1980s led, among other things, to the emergence of a new marginalised section of the working class operating taverns and spaza shops in these areas. While these have acted as important (albeit minimal) sources of income for the informalised (and

unemployed) sections of the working class, they have simultaneously dealt a huge blow to the traditional African trading petty bourgeoisie that used to own relatively profitable formalised shops, butcheries and bottle stores in these areas. The traditional African petty bourgeoisie was later to be challenged, and perhaps dealt the fatal blow, by the increasing reach of the malls into townships and villages, and now by the increasing trading activities of foreign nationals. In some areas, particularly KZN and parts of Gauteng, these were devastated by violence.

Our rural villages are also now characterised by a significant and rapid decline in subsistence and small-scale farming, seemingly in proportion with the increase in, and rising dependence on, social grants. The radical addressing of land and agrarian reform would go some way towards resuscitating farming and other related activities in the rural villages. It is women who still play some role in subsistence farming, no matter how minimal. However, a radical but holistic land and agrarian reform programme is necessary if village economies are to be revitalised on a sustainable basis and as part of a broader transformation programme.

Rising unemployment and changing trading conditions in our townships and rural areas have seen growing distress in these areas, accompanied by an increased use of drugs and alcohol. This has also been accompanied by growing distress and disintegration of family life and other protective social structures in these areas.

However, the single biggest predators on the welfarist, social safety nets and economic activity towards sustainable livelihoods and development is the very same monopoly capitalist sector that is responsible for the marginalisation of large sections of the working class through retrenchments, casualisation and labour brokering. The townships and villages are the homes of the precariat and the unemployed.

The social protection benefits received by the working class have become new parasitic sites for monopoly capital. The financial sector continues to be the main culprit in the exploitation of the social protection measures introduced by the state to mitigate against the ravaging impact of capitalist neo-liberal restructuring. The big monopoly banks and financial institutions have become the mashonisas exploiting the beneficiaries of social grants. Elderly women, who remain the main caregivers in many poor township and rural communities, are a particular target of the mashonisas raiding the social grants system.

The social security system created by the workers and the poor on their own, stokvels and burial societies, also bank their money with capitalist banking and insurance monopolies. These funds do very little to develop the townships and villages from whence they come.

The "Know Your Neighbourhood Campaign" becomes an essential weapon in our struggles to drive a second phase of our transition, especially in our communities. It is important that the SACP develops independent contact with our communities and the working class, and that we build ANC branches committed to serving our communities rather than as extensions of tenderpreneurs.

In understanding black communities, it is also important that we revisit the other class realities in these communities. The emergence of black sections of the bourgeoisie has been characterised by narrow BEE, based on 25% shareholding, while private capitalist corporations are run by white corporate technical, professional and managerial elites, driving a narrow racialised agenda within these institutions. Being BEE compliant does not translate into black management of these private corporations. This problem cannot be attributed to narrow BEE, much as it has made its own contribution. It largely reflects the historical exclusion of the black majority from access to skills de-

velopment, especially access to vocational and professional skills, a matter that requires prioritisation in driving a second, more radical phase of our transition.

Building an SACP capable of helping sustain and strengthen other organisations and formations, inside and outside our Alliance

All these challenges point to a need for the SACP to focus its attention on organising and campaigns. This must principally involve the building of the SACP organisationally such that it is also able to strengthen the other organisations in the Alliance – its historic task in our revolution from its very inception. Our discussion on the organisational renewal of the SACP must pay particular attention to building an SACP able to strengthen other organisations, both inside and outside the Alliance.

This period requires that particular attention is paid to rebuilding the structures of the ANC from branch level, specifically on building ANC branches to serve its communities. This is perhaps the most important historic task of the SACP and the working class as a whole. This should be the anchor of our organisational renewal.

A crucial area of organising that the SACP has historically neglected is that of the organisation of women, especially working class women. Women communists have tended to generally shy away from participating in the activities of the ANC Women's League. Why? The sooner we confront this question the better. The SACP played an important role in conceptualising and building the national structures of the National Women's Movement. But these structures have not really been driven by vibrant local women's organisation.

This has taken place despite the fact that in the many campaigns that the SACP has taken up, women play a very crucial role – in the co-operatives, in subsistence farming as part of the agrarian question,

in the financial sector campaign, in school governing bodies, etc. We have not adequately used these campaigns to focus attention on the organisation of women.

The SACP also needs to pay particular attention, as has always been the case, on how we conduct ourselves in other organisations, and in government. We will have to come back to this matter in a systematic and focused manner. For example, how should communists conduct themselves in government and the legislatures?

THE NDR DEBATE

The poverty of pragmatism without boundaries

Cde Joel Netshitenzhe's 'two delinks' is based on a misunderstanding of the 1994 democratic breakthrough, writes **Cde Jeremy Cronin**

Cde Joel Netshitenzhe's (*"The 'two delinks' and the poverty of radicalism"*, (AC December 2014) engages polemically with the SACP's discussion document *Going to the root – towards a radical, second phase of the NDR*. Cde Netshitenzhe's intervention is useful for several reasons. In the first place, there is broad consensus within our movement that we are at a critical moment in our post-apartheid reality. Robust but comradely debate is one of the key requirements if we are to rise to the challenges of our time and develop effective strategic responses. We can no longer simply rely on the recitation of platitudes, or the fudging of differences for the sake of a false unity. In the second place, there are important (if somewhat random, as I will go on to argue) points of convergence between Cde Netshitenzhe's intervention and the SACP's discussion document. Where these exist, they are to be welcomed.

Thirdly, however, and most importantly, Cde Netshitenzhe's intervention exposes the underlying ideological assumptions that succeeded in being hegemonic within the ANC and ANC-led government from the mid-1990s and for the better part of a decade. For most of this period, along with former President Thabo Mbeki, Cde Nets-

hitenzhe was arguably the leading ANC ideologist. It is important to unpack what I think are the illusions and confusions of this school of thought if we are to understand why (a now belated) second radical phase of our national democratic revolution is imperative. For this reason this engagement with Cde Netshitenzhe's "Two De-links" intervention will necessarily range more widely than a simple rejoinder to that paper itself.

The school of thought exemplified in Cde Netshitenzhe's ideological assumptions still has some resonance in South Africa within our movement and beyond it. The political and economic policy orientations of this school of thought have resulted in a costly loss of progressive momentum following the historic 1994 democratic breakthrough.

Before diving directly into a critique of Cde Netshitenzhe's "Two delinks" intervention, therefore, it is important to go all the way back to the contradictory interpretations that were given to the democratic breakthrough of 1994. It was a critical moment at which previously latent divisions within the national liberation movement began to crystallise into distinct ideological tendencies.

The disputed meaning of 1994

A useful way of beginning to illustrate what these emerging tendencies were is to contrast how the respective official organs of the SACP and ANC at the time sought to characterise events. In the weeks immediately after the 1994 democratic breakthrough, symbolised at least for the SACP by millions of South Africans standing in line to vote for the first ever one-person, one-vote election in our country, the *African Communist* editorial acclaimed the breakthrough. At the same time, it advisedly displayed a cover with the slogan "A Luta Continua!" – The struggle continues.

The ANC's official publication at the time, *Mayibuye*, which was then edited by Cde Netshitenzhe, had a very different message. Rather than featuring the mass, non-racial turnout on voting day, *Mayibuye* chose as its cover a photo of a fly-past of air-force jets over Union Buildings on the occasion of the May 10, 1994 presidential inauguration of President Mandela. The headline proclaimed: "FREE AT LAST!" Inside, the journal's editorial took up the theme: "The moment has arrived. Liberation. Real change. National Democratic Revolution. Call it what you may."

Note in passing that the editorialist was not entirely sure how to characterise "THE moment" – an early symptom of the confusions we need to explore more fully below. The editorial then proceeds, with considerable but perhaps understandable hyperbole, to portray "THE moment" as the culmination of centuries of popular struggle: "It is the moment that flashed through the minds of many a hero as they succumbed to the assassin's bullet, the hangman's noose and the torturer's fatal blow…It was slow in coming. From the forbearers' welcoming embrace many centuries ago which was returned with a suffocating grip. And the modest beginnings of mass action, armed struggle and underground work. To the wrangles in the negotiating chambers and Third Force violence. And, at the apex, the attempted sabotage of the electoral process…"

In short, the text is anointing the MOMENT (and by association the newly elected ANC-led government) with the legitimacy of centuries of struggle. But then the text does a sudden U-turn, it moves from proclaiming the arrival of REAL CHANGE, the apex moment, to characterising what has happened as just another milestone on a long march. "Yet we dare not forget in the din of the cry of success [as if the editorial were not part of making the 'din']…the march has been long and difficult; but we have only reached a milestone…The real

battle, beyond pomp and ceremony and the symbolism of a new flag and anthem, has just begun."

We have in the matter of a few sentences switched from celebrating "THE moment", "REAL change", to an effective denial of these very claims. We are now merely at the beginning. Was all that happened in THE moment little more than "din", "pomp and ceremony", and the "symbolism" of a new flag and anthem?

What the editorial might have said is that the April 1994 democratic elections and the May 1994 inauguration of a new president marked moments in an important breakthrough in an on-going national democratic revolutionary struggle. But it doesn't. It veers from one extreme to the other, over-selling and then promptly under-selling the significance of the 1994 democratic breakthrough. Why?

There is a political agenda nestled within this U-turn which soon becomes evident as we proceed with the *Mayibuye* editorial: "Now, ordinary people will rejoice only at the sight of the foundation of the first of the million houses that have to be built over the next five years…Now is the time to make good the election pledge. In this regard, the words of a writer on the French Revolution [the reference is to Tocqueville] are instructive: 'Patiently endured so long as it seemed beyond redress, a grievance comes to appear intolerable once the possibility of removing it crosses men's minds.' In June, allocations from the budget will be decided upon. A modest beginning can then be made…"

We have moved from REAL CHANGE to small change, from the heroic to the bureaucratic. The quote from Tocqueville gives the game away - the newly installed political elite will now have to do everything to manage down rising popular expectations. The concern of the editorial is not to mobilise the millions who came out loyally to vote ANC to advance, deepen and defend, as their own self-emanci-

pators, the democratic breakthrough. Its concern is to put the genie of popular activism back into the bottle. If 1994 marks a juridical-political break with apartheid it must also, so the editorial implicitly argues, mark a break with a previous era of popular struggle – a luta dis-continua.

Invoking the Tocqueville quotation, the editorial now suggests that prior to 1994 popular forces in South Africa "patiently endured" their grievances, which is contradicted both by historical reality as well as the editorial's own immediately preceding claims of centuries of struggle against injustice (although note how in the paragraph quoted above liberation fighters are all portrayed only as "victims" and not also as liberators). After 1994, "ordinary people" cease to become activists and turn into spectators ("Now ordinary people will rejoice only at the SIGHT of the foundation of the first of the million houses that have to be built over the next five years…"). From now on it is a question of a delivery-state implementing its technical managerial responsibilities – in short, the text has shifted the domain of the political from a national liberation struggle combining newly won state power with popular power to an inventory of state bureaucratic tasks.

A misreading of the early 1990s becomes a misreading of the present

I have devoted some time to this 1994 *Mayibuye* editorial because it provides a window onto the fundamental political posture and assumptions that continue to inform Cde Netshitenzhe's understanding of the present conjuncture and our tasks within it. That posture is informed by a misreading of what was at stake in the negotiations period of the early 1990s, and the application of this misreading to our present situation.

We bump into evidence of this in his "Two delinks" intervention.

In this latest piece, Cde Netshitenzhe quotes from a passage in the *Communist Manifesto* that notes that throughout human history oppressor and oppressed classes "stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or **in the common ruin of the contending classes**" (the emphasis is Cde Netshitenzhe's).

Cde Netshitenzhe then proceeds: "And so, in situations where there is a debilitating stalemate and the contending forces are unable to defeat each other, it becomes critical to make a choice about pursuing a scorched earth policy or negotiating to identify common interests for mutual benefit. South Africa's political settlement of the 1990s was precisely a product of this realisation, because the regime had come to accept that it could not stop the popular march of the people." (p.48)

Let's take the passage quoted above carefully, because it goes to the heart of many things.

Was the South African political and economic conjuncture in the early 1990s a "**debilitating** stalemate" in which the contending classes faced "common ruin"? There is, of course, a partial truth in this. The rising waves of semi-insurrectionary popular struggle from the mid-1970s, through the 1980s and into the early 90s had proved to be unstoppable, but also incapable of the armed overthrow of the regime. This latter fact was the case for a variety of objective reasons – notably the imbalance of armed capacity between the popular forces and the apartheid regime, and the relatively strong white racial cohesion of the apartheid regime's police and army command structures. The strategic decision by the liberation movement to embark on negotiations for a constitutional political settlement in this context was correct.

But notice how the quote from the *Communist Manifesto,* upon which Cde Netshitenzhe is relying for ideological cover at this point, speaks of "contending CLASSES", whereas Cde Netshitenzhe speaks of "contending FORCES". The ANC-led liberation movement and the apartheid regime were certainly the main contending forces at the multi-party negotiations in the early 1990s, but they were not, in themselves, the main "contending classes" – the ANC was not "the proletariat", and the apartheid regime, conversely, was not "the bourgeoisie".

If we are to understand what was at stake in the early 1990s constitutional negotiations, then we also need to cut behind the ANC versus apartheid state line-up and understand the strategic class agendas at play – in particular, those of South African monopoly capital and its imperialist backers. As the *Going to the root* discussion document argues, monopoly capital in South Africa did not emerge organically out of local productive activity, rather it was transplanted into our country at a relatively advanced imperialist stage from the late-19th century. National monopoly capital, working closely with imperialist capital, emerged in the course of the 20th century under the protection of successive white minority regimes.

However, by the late-1980s the apartheid white minority regime had become increasingly dysfunctional for South African monopoly capital, and increasingly replaceable for imperialism. For the latter, the end of proxy-Cold War regional wars (not least those in Southern Africa) meant that the strategic advantage for imperialism of an embarrassing but useful sub-imperialist gendarme state in Pretoria was outweighed by many other considerations. For South African monopoly capital, growing international isolation with economic, financial and oil sanctions, the fiscal cost of increasing security expenditures, and the apartheid regime's economic defensive measures (tough ex-

change controls, the financial rand, etc.) hit profits seriously. Apartheid South Africa's increasing isolation also meant that it was difficult for South African monopoly capital to follow its international peers in taking the on-ramp to the globalisation freeway. Remember, it was precisely in the 1980s that national capitals in the advanced capitalist economies in particular began to globalise very aggressively to overcome stagnating growth at home and in pursuit of newly opened, low-wage economies like China.

For these reasons, both the key imperialist centres and local monopoly capital applied significant pressure on the apartheid regime to enter into negotiations with the ANC to "normalise" and "democratise" South Africa. It was a risk for monopoly capital, but a necessary risk. The strategic agenda was not to create a substantive democracy, or commit seriously to a patriotic process of reconstruction and development, still less to advance national sovereignty based on a democratic electoral mandate. Monopoly capital's strategic agenda was to lock the ANC into an elite-pacting, low-intensity democracy that would enable South African monopoly capital to rapidly trans-nationalise under the cover of a globally iconic Mandela government.

I don't belong to the school of thought that argues the negotiations and the resulting constitutional and political settlement were a "sell-out". As the SACP's *Going to the root* discussion document argues, they marked a significant breakthrough and a potential platform from which to decisively further advance, deepen and defend a national democratic revolution. But the 1994 democratic breakthrough was also a potential platform for a very different class strategic agenda, that of imperialism and South African monopoly capital. Two decades later, while it would be wrong to argue that the national democratic revolution has been defeated, or that there have not been important advances for the majority of South Africans, it is South

African monopoly capital that has been most able to advance its strategic agenda. It has been the principal beneficiary of our democratic breakthrough.

This is why Cde Netshitenzhe's implicit view is wrong that our current South African conjuncture is similar to the one that prevailed in the early 1990s – a situation, in his words: "…where there is a debilitating stalemate and the contending forces are unable to defeat each other, [and it therefore] becomes critical to make a choice about pursuing a scorched earth policy or negotiating to identify common interests for mutual benefit."

Apart from too starkly presenting alternatives as either "scorched earth" or "negotiations", this is a major misreading of our reality. In 2015, South African (or rather considerably trans-nationalised, ex-South African) monopoly capital does not regard itself as being caught in a debilitating stalemate. It is actively pursuing its profit maximising agenda through capital flight (by way of tax havens, dual listings, transfer pricing, etc.) and, at home, oligopolistic collusion, an investment strike, and the aggressive restructuring of the working class through retrenchments, casualisation, informalisation and labour brokering. Inserting its DNA into government, the ruling party and even the trade union movement – through investment arms, corruption and tenderpreneuring - is also part of the considerably successful strategic agenda of monopoly capital.

A second radical phase of the NDR

The second radical phase of the NDR (that the ANC and its alliance partners have now agreed is absolutely imperative) is, in fact, a phase that should have been embarked upon immediately from the bridgehead of the 1994 democratic breakthrough. Clearly, the editor of *Mayibuye* back in 1994 had no such intentions.

It was a moment in which South African monopoly capital was relatively off-balance, having taken the risk of losing the protective shield of white minority rule, and having not yet effectively insinuated itself to the present degree into the liberation movement and key components of the new political elite.

Of course, we must be careful not to over-state the possibilities open to the liberation movement in April 1994. Given the global and national reality of our situation both in 1994 and in 2015, a second radical phase could not be, and still cannot be, a fool-hardy "great leap forward", a "scorched earth policy", a frontal insurrectionary assault on imperialism and monopoly capital. This is the straw man that Cde Netshitenzhe and his school of thought still like to tilt at with sarcastic little barbs. A second radical phase of the NDR has to be a "war of position" (to evoke Gramsci's concept). It is a struggle across all of the trenches of the state and society for transformative revolutionary-reforms (to evoke a wide range of contemporary radical writers) – but not "reformism" (not improvements that reinforce rather than transform the systemic features of our political economy - which, in turn, lock us into our problematic path dependency).

Path dependency

Speaking of "path dependency", Cde Netshitenzhe appears to agree with the SACP's "Second Radical Phase of the NDR" discussion paper that the current "path dependency" of South Africa's political economy needs to be transformed. But nowhere in this or his other interventions is he able to provide a clear analysis of the systemic features of this path dependency. In the SACP's discussion paper it was precisely the systemic inter-linkages between a variety of challenges (from our largely untransformed socio-economic spatial realities, for instance, to our persisting patterns of racialised inequality, to our "low savings" ra-

tios, to high levels of monopoly concentration) that were underlined.

The central thesis of the SACP discussion paper is that these and other chronic symptoms of the South African reality are part of a systemic whole, directly related to South Africa's historic positioning as a semi-periphery within a global imperialist system as a primary commodity exporter based on "cheap" (racially, gendered and spatially oppressed and reproduced) labour.

This is, of course, not a new perspective. It is to be found in a formative way in the 1929 Black Republic resolutions of the Communist Part of South Africa, which were elaborated further in the 1962 SACP's programmatic perspective of colonialism of a special type. From at least 1969 and the Morogoro Conference, the ANC shared the same strategic analysis of the South African reality.

It underpinned the commitment to a NDR that was (and that had to be) simultaneously a struggle against the systemically linked internal colonialism within South Africa ("apartheid"), and against imperialist rent extraction and even the threat of imperialist military destabilisation from without. The ANC's 1969 Morogoro strategy and tactics noted that: "the major imperialist powers such as Britain, West Germany, France, US and Japan who have an enormous stake in the economy of our country constitute a formidable support for the Apartheid regime...In a situation of crisis they may pass over from support to active intervention to save the racist regime."

Before 1994 both the SACP and the ANC understood that the NDR was critically about the inter-linked tasks of democratic popular sovereignty (the people shall govern) and democratic national sovereignty (the right to national self-determination, to determine our own developmental path based on a popular democratic mandate, and as free as possible from the bullying of the IMF, the World Bank, the ratings agencies, and the imperialist core countries).

The disappearance of imperialism

It is against this background that the SACP's *Going to the root* discussion document notes with concern that: "The concept of 'imperialism' disappeared from official ANC programmatic documents in the 1990s and early 2000s. Linked to this vanishing act was the exaggerated 'exceptionalism' attributed to apartheid and the related view that apartheid was essentially all about 'racism' – which it partly was, of course, but with 'racism' becoming de-linked from any objective systemic socio-economic realities." (AC, p.13)

This passage is arguing three interrelated things:

- The concept of "imperialism" disappeared from ANC programmatic documents in the 1990s and early 2000s. (And, we should stress, we mean the concept of imperialism, not the mere demagogic use of the word. By the concept of imperialism, we mean, briefly, an understanding of how the defining feature of capitalism over the past 140 years has been the global process of combined and uneven development, of development and simultaneous under-development, characterised by the extraction of vast amounts of surplus from the periphery by an imperialist core).
- As a result, instead of understanding and locating "apartheid" within a wider family of imperialist forms of domination (colonialism, neo-colonialism, semi-colonialism, and combined and uneven development in general) it came to be treated as universally "exceptional", a global "outlier", an "anomaly" in an otherwise "normal" world. It was no longer seen as the specific juridical-political form in which South Africa's capitalist political economy was linked into the imperialist system for much of the second half of the 20th century.
- Which, in turn, resulted in apartheid tending to be reduced to racism (it certainly WAS racist), but without understanding its role

(and that of white minority rule in general) in reproducing South Africa's semi-peripheral capitalist political economy within imperialist surplus extraction.

How does Cde Netshitenzhe respond to this? Well, as if to confirm the very argument he believes he is defeating, he makes imperialism disappear once again. "Is it true", he asks rhetorically, "that there has been a 'vanishing act' in ANC programmatic documents with regard to class analysis…?" (p.43). He goes on to quote from the ANC's 2007 Strategy and Tactics document: "Our definition of Colonialism of a Special Type identifies three interrelated antagonistic contradictions: class, race and patriarchal oppression…"

But it is one thing to evoke "three interrelated antagonistic contradictions" in South Africa and another thing to understand how class, race and patriarchal oppression in South Africa locked (and in many respects still locks) our economy into a global imperialist system of surplus extraction.

This is not a semantic point. There was an influential, if implicit assumption in much of the ANC after 1990 that the collapse of the Soviet system and the end of the two-bloc, Cold War global reality somehow also meant that imperialism had disappeared. Perhaps the most egregious example of this illusion was provided by former President Thabo Mbeki who, on returning from a 2002 G8 Summit, hailed its outcome as the "birth of a more equitable system of international relations. In historical terms, it signifies the end of the epoch of colonialism and neo-colonialism." (*Sunday Times*, 30 June 2002)

In Cde Netshitenzhe's intervention the continued vanishing act of imperialism is a critical aspect of his inability to "get to the root", to provide a systemic analysis of South Africa's economy "path dependency", and therefore chart a strategic way forward.

A "broad front" social compact?

In his "Two Delinks" intervention Cde Netshitenzhe claims that the SACP's *Going to the root* discussion document "rubbishes the call for social compacting in South Africa", and he goes on to argue: "However, if sufficient attention had been paid to the arguments about a social compact in the National Development Plan…it would have become patently clear that this draws inspiration from the theory of broad fronts, the concept of developmental states, and the appreciation of strategy and tactics within the given balance of forces." (p.48)

He is wrong to say that the SACP's discussion document rubbishes the idea of social compacts in general. Our concern is with the particular version of a social compact advocated by Cde Netshitenzhe. It is the same version of a social compact elaborated upon in the final chapter of the National Development Plan – a chapter to which, one suspects, Cde Netshitenzhe, in his capacity as a national planning commissioner, made a major contribution. So let's take his advice and pay "sufficient attention…to the arguments about a social compact in the National Development Plan".

Social compacts and the NDP

The NDP, in fact, has a very garbled approach to social contracts/compacts (it uses the words interchangeably, pp.475-7). The NDP first defines social contracts in general: "a social contract…at the core is an agreement **among individual people in society or between the people and their governmen**t that outlines the rights and duties of each party while building national solidarity." (p.475 – my emphases)

The status of the conjunction "or" is unclear – are these essentially the same kind of compact, or are they two different kinds of compact? They surely are different. However, the NDP shows no hint of

an awareness of this difference. But it quickly becomes even more unclear when it begins to elaborate on the kind of social contract/compact it aspires to be. Having told us that social contracts are at core "among individuals" (Version One) and/or "between the people and government" (Version Two) – it then begins to advance itself more or less explicitly as the basis for a third version of a social contract – a stakeholder contract. This third version is what the NDP describes as "a social compact… *[in which] all stakeholders buy into a clearly articulated vision*" (p.475). But, as we turn to page 476 we discover that "ALL stakeholders" are just three stakeholders - business, labour and government.

The NDP is proposing itself as the basis for this kind of tripartite compact. As the text makes clear, it is essentially a deal between labour and business mediated by government. Labour agrees "to accept lower wage increases than their productivity gains would dictate" and "in return, business agrees that the resulting increase in profits would not be taken out of the country or consumed in the form of higher executive remuneration or luxuries, but rather reinvested in ways that generate employment as well as growth." (p.476). The role of government is to monitor compliance on the deal and to act as a mediator, and to smooth the way for a continued buy-in from labour and business, by lowering the cost of living for workers through "implementing a social wage" and by reducing the cost of doing business for business.

But the unannounced slippage between Versions One and Two, and then the further slippage between these two and a tripartite stakeholder Version Three social contract has the practical impact of disguising the effective exclusion from this proposed deal of millions of South Africans who are not "government" nor "business" or "labour". The excluded in this tripartite contract would, in the first

place, be the 37% of South Africans of working age who are unemployed, many of whom are quasi-citizens still living as subjects under customary law in former bantustans. Also effectively excluded would be a mass of middle strata. But even within the categories of "business" and "labour" who would represent the respective "stakeholder constituencies" in signing off on the social contract?

We are, of course, treated to a daily media bombardment reminding us that trade unions do not represent all of labour. This is, indeed, the case - above all because of aggressive restructuring of production and the labour market through retrenchments, casualisation, labour brokering, informalisation by one of the proposed "partners" - "business". Despite an array of progressive labour laws enacted since 1994, the levels of unionisation in the private sector have declined dramatically. In 1997, 36% of workers in the private sector were unionised. In 2013, this had dropped to 24%. (The trend has been in the opposite direction in the public sector. In 1997, 55% of workers in the public sector were unionised. By 2013 this had climbed to nearly 70%.)

And what about "business"? Is there a univocal policy package that represents "business" interests? Do all sectors of capital share the same macro-economic policy agenda? Or is what passes for the "business" macro-economic agenda, for instance, not actually the agenda of financialised, multi-national monopoly capital? The macro-economic views of South Africa's Manufacturing Circle for instance, however cautiously expressed, sometimes differ from this assumed "business" consensus - see for instance an intervention by the Manufacturing Circle's executive director, Coenraad Bezuidenhout - "Look beyond the rand for a route to economic recovery", Business Day, 26 June 2013. Nor is the Manufacturing Circle itself united – the strategic interests of some of its members, like Arcelor Mittal for instance, have little if anything to do with the patriotic development of South Af-

rica, and everything do with the interests of foreign share-holders. For others within the Manufacturing Circle, not to mention thousands of small and medium-sized manufacturing enterprises, their profit-maximising agendas are objectively (and not sentimentally) more bound to the fortunes of a South African developmental trajectory. From a progressive perspective, do we want to "unite" all of business behind a single "voice" (which given its power would inevitably be the voice of transnationalised monopoly capital necessarily pursuing the "maximising" of largely foreign "share-holder value") to secure a tripartite social compact? Or do we want to disarticulate the different and conflicting interests of different sectors and strata of capital, the better to be able to drive a patriotic, national democratic growth and development agenda?

The 1994/6 negotiated compacts and the present

At the heart of the NDP's confusion here (and it is perhaps a central confusion) is the mistaken assumption that the "social contract(s)" (to use the term provisionally) of 1994-96 can be replicated now to address our persisting socio-economic crises of unemployment, poverty and inequality. The NDP is arguably correct to observe that:

"The settlement that was produced through the negotiations in the 1990s and the Constitution…were effectively national compacts." (p.475) (Note, in passing, the wobble between the singular noun "settlement", which is the subject of the sentence, and the plural verb "were" – a symptom perhaps of the confusion as to whether Versions 1 and 2 of a social compact are the same thing, or two different things?)

The elections of 1994 might be seen as an implicit Version One compact – an overwhelming majority of individual adult South Africans, black and white, participating in a one-person one-vote election

constituted themselves as a "people", as a new non-racial "we" – regardless of how they/we actually voted. And the 1996 adoption of the Constitution through an elected Constituent Assembly (the product of 1994) might be seen as a Version Two social compact, an agreement on the rights and obligations of government and the newly constituted we-the-people South African citizens.

But we need to understand the very different character of a democratic, constitutional settlement and a strategy of action to overcome the crises of unemployment, poverty and inequality embedded in a reproduced legacy of socio-economic under-development. In the early 1990s, as we have argued above, the balance of forces in South Africa (and internationally) was propitious for fostering a very broad-based national South African consensus on a non-racial constitutional democracy. The objective conditions for replicating the SAME broad-based national consensus to address our systemic crisis of unemployment, poverty and inequality do not exist.

The compact on a constitutional democracy and a plan of action to address socio-economic injustices are not the same thing. The latter will require the construction of a different patriotic, or national democratic, bloc of forces. This was a point implicitly appreciated (or rather feared) by Frederik Van Zyl Slabbert when, writing in 1992 from a typical elite-pacting liberal perspective, he warned "one of the most daunting challenges facing [a future government] is to protect the new political space created by negotiations from being used to contest the historical imbalances that precipitated negotiation in the first place…"

But from a progressive perspective the whole point of the "new political space" was (and is) to use the democratic power of majority-rule to address the (largely socio-economic) "imbalances". Unless these "imbalances" are addressed, it is the "new political space" it-

self, our constitutional democracy that will be (and is being) eroded. It is not a question now (as some have suggested) of abandoning the constitutional social compact – but rather of constituting within that broader compact a new popular bloc, a majoritarian but pluralistic bloc of progressive, patriotic forces, including, for instance, where possible and on a tactical basis, productive capital in the manufacturing and agricultural sectors, to drive systemic social and economic transformation.

This agenda will need to oppose powerful opponents, notably the still hegemonic neo-liberal, globalised monopoly capital sector within and beyond South Africa and the related, Van Zyl Slabbert-type political agenda, seeking to reduce democratic politics (as the DA does) to "rules of the game", "good governance" and "efficiency" – but not serious transformation.

South Africa – a Nordic Tiger of the South?

In the SACP's *Going to the root* discussion document, it is argued that, whatever the historic merits of West European post-1945 social compacts might have been, by the early 1990s these compacts had long been eroded in the heartlands of social democracy by the abandonment of Keynesian demand-side macro-economics, an assault on trade unions, and the related processes of accelerated globalisation and financialisation. The SACP document further argued that these social democratic projects were basically confined to parts of the advanced capitalist world, and in the particular context of "patriotic" capitalist reconstruction and development programmes to rebuild war-torn economies. A further context is that, at the global level, capitalism was now challenged by a vastly expanded socialist bloc in Eastern Europe making important advances in terms of full employment and extensive social security. The hey-day of these social demo-

cratic projects mainly in Western Europe lasted until the mid-1970s. In South Africa in 1994 we were neither living in the North nor in the period 1945-75. We were, and are, living in a society suffering serious colonially-related structural under-development and in a very different stage of global capitalism.

Cde Netshitenzhe does not address any of these arguments at all. His response consists in simply asserting that the version of social compacting he favours does not only draw on the West European social democratic tradition but also on the East Asian developmental state experience. He writes: "In brief, social compacting is not merely a post-World War 2 European phenomenon. And in the South African case, the ANC has argued [and he quotes from an ANC Strategy and Tactics document passage that he drafted]: 'In terms of current political discourse, what [the ANC] seeks to put in place approximates , in many respects, a combination of the best elements of a developmental state and social democracy.'" (p.49)

It would be foolish to argue that there is absolutely nothing that can be learnt from these different examples. Indeed, at the time of a full flight into neo-liberalism with the Bretton Woods institutions and leading ANC politicians arguing for a down-sized, lean state, it was useful to cite the counter-examples of state-driven development in Japan, South Korea and Taiwan. However, Cde Netshitenzhe's belief that South Africa can become a hybrid, Nordic Asian Tiger of the South is misguided, and it is based on a serious misunderstanding not just of the conditions under which social democracy enjoyed its heyday after 1945 in some privileged parts of the capitalist world, but also on a serious misunderstanding of the Asian Tigers.

This is what Cde Netshitenzhe has to say about "the developmental states in Southeast Asia": "There are many negative things from the early history of such states as South Korea, Malaysia and Japan,

including, in most cases, the absence of democracy, the security imperative that was informed by anti-communism, and subordination to the dictates of the United States and other Western powers. Yet their achievements, in hindsight, stand as a monument to human achievement." (pp.48-9)

Cde Netshitenzhe presents the "many negative things from the early history" of these states as if they were more or less unfortunate, external incidentals. But they were the critical ingredients underpinning South Korea's relatively unique transition from underdevelopment to a path of capitalist development; a defeated Japan's reintegration into the dominant imperialist core (along with the US and Europe); and, on a much more limited scale, some uneven capitalist development in Malaysia. In the late 1940s and/or 1950s all three were under imperialist military occupation – Japan and South Korea were basically under US military occupation. In Malaysia British-led colonial troops waged a brutal anti-insurgency war during the so-called Malayan Emergency that lasted from 1948 to 1960. It targeted the patriotic forces under the leadership of the Malaya Communist Party that had led the armed, national liberation struggle against Japanese occupation during World War 2. The "absence of democracy" and the so-called "security imperative" were not merely momentary wobbles due to anti-communist sentiment.

Just as it is impossible to understand US imperialism's massive investments and support for Western Europe after 1945 without factoring in the vastly expanded Soviet bloc reaching westwards to the river Elbe, so it is impossible to understand Japan's recovery, and the economic advances made by South Korea and Taiwan (an Asian Tiger interestingly omitted in Cde Netshitenzhe's list) without appreciating the impact of the victory of the Chinese Communist Party in 1949. Imperialism's front-line states in Southeast Asia, and their fiercely

anti-democratic, anti-labour regimes, enjoyed investments, favourable trade agreements that were never accorded to Latin American or African societies at this time.

In Southern Africa, imperialist powers in this period were happy to let their interests be defended by Portuguese colonial regimes in Mozambique and Angola, an assortment of British colonial administrations, and the apartheid state in South Africa (and Namibia). If the Red Army's post-World War 2 liberation of countries from foreign occupation had extended to the Zambezi, or if the Chinese Revolution had happened in the Congo, there might well have been a very different second-half 20th century trajectory for South Africa. Either, an advance to socialism as in Indo-China, or a massive imperialist-driven counter-offensive that would have decimated the ANC and SACP and constructed in South Africa, for a brief period, some kind of hybrid industrialising Nordic Tiger of the South, perhaps under the dictatorship of Gatsha Buthelezi. But that, of course, is all entirely speculative.

Despite his endless evocation of the "balance of forces", Cde Netshitenzhe simply fails to understand the dominant trajectories of our epoch. For worse or, probably, for better South Africa in 2015 is not and could not become a Nordic Tiger of the South – which is why Cde Netshitenzhe's "broad frontism", amongst other things, is such a problematic aspiration.

Broad frontism - a politics without boundaries

Cde Netshitenzhe presents his social compacting vision for South Africa as something that "rhymes with the theory and praxis of broad fronts; which have been the mainstay of progressive left politics over the centuries." (p.49) It is true that progressive left forces, not least those associated with Communist Parties, have developed a range of

front formations in different historical conjunctures. The call for a "united front" strategy, for instance, was advanced by the executive committee of the Communist International in December 1921. It was a call for the "greatest possible unity of all workers' organisations in every practical action against the united capitalists." The context for this call was a slackening in the revolutionary tide in Europe. The call was designed to unite workers divided into communist and reformist (social democratic) formations.

In 1935, under the general secretary-ship of Georgi Dmitrov, the Communist International, in the context of a rising tide of fascism, moved beyond a class-on-class strategy, and called for national popular fronts – broadening the scope of fronts to include all democratic, anti-fascist forces. In China, during the period of Japanese occupation, what was called a United Front strategy was pursued, involving a troubled partnership between the Chinese Communist Party and the Kuomintang.

There are a host of other historical examples of broad front strategies from Chile to Vietnam, some successful others less so, pursued by progressive left forces. In South Africa, our shared national democratic strategy, our commitment to a broad national liberation movement, and our tripartite alliance have also all been an important contribution to the theory and practice of progressive front strategies.

But ALL of these fronts were against one or another class or social force – the bourgeoisie, imperialism, foreign military occupation, fascism, colonialism, etc. So what is Cde Netshitenzhe's broad front against? His answer, I assume, is that it is a front against poverty or unemployment or inequality. These are the new "enemies" – as if there was no class-based system, as if there were no class interests, locally and globally, that perpetuated the reproduction of these crises within our society.

Reflecting on the defeat of the 1848 revolutionary insurrection in France, Karl Marx noted that: "The republic [initially] encountered no resistance abroad or at home. This disarmed it. The task was no longer the revolutionary transformation of the world, but consisted only in adapting itself to the relations of bourgeois society." (Karl Marx, The Class Struggles in France, Collected Works, vol.10. p.58)

Bedazzled by the global acclaim for Mandela, seduced by talk of an "end of history" and a "post-ideological world", hoping, perhaps, for a flood of Marshall Aid, imperialism disappeared from some people's vocabulary. The new global phase of capitalism, what Samir Amin has called the stage of generalised monopolies, was wished away. The global acceleration of capitalism's combined and uneven development was abolished in theory. Neo-liberalism was treated as if it were an ideological choice and not a "whole set of measures that are associated necessarily with the hegemony of global finance" (to cite the Indian academic and communist, Prabhat Patnaik, "Misconceptions about neo-liberalism", MRZine, 17/5/15). This construction of an imaginary world has had a disarming impact on South African revolutionaries, similar if less dramatic than the seeming lack of resistance had upon the French revolutionaries of 1848. Here in South Africa it gave birth to a pragmatism without boundaries.

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THE NDR DEBATE

The 'radical' in the second, radical phase of the NDR

Alex Mashilo critiques Joel Netshitenzhe's critique of *Going to the Root*

Cde Joel Netshitenzhe, ANC NEC member and the Executive Director of Mapungubwe Institute for Strategic Reflection, offered a critique of SACP's discussion document, *Going to the root – towards a radical second phase of the NDR* (*The African Communist,* No 187).

His critique is important in various ways but is very difficult to understand in isolation from a number of key developments which have occurred in the NDR (National Democratic Revolution) since 1994. For the purpose of this analysis of Netshitenzhe's critique, at least two are worth underlining.

In 2007, the ANC held its 52nd National Conference in Polokwane. The outcome of the conference – the most contested in the history of the ANC post-1994 – included a substantial leadership change. The following year, President Thabo Mbeki, who was not re-elected after contesting the ANC presidency in Polokwane, was recalled. Some Ministers, premiers and government officials reacted to this by resigning. Others completely abandoned their allegiance to the ANC. The core public campaigners for a third term for Mbeki later formed a breakaway party, the Congress of the People (Cope). They fashioned themselves as the chief policy representatives of the pre-2008 gov-

ernment leadership under Cde Mbeki.

In contrast, there were disciplined cadres who remained within the general parameters of the ANC. They did not desert the movement at the senior leadership level, regardless of not being elected in Polokwane to the positions they contested. Cde Netshitenzhe, who was a candidate, was one of them. This is an important attribute of discipline, and must be upheld and further developed through various forms of constructive engagement.

Secondly, Cde Netshitenzhe is a seasoned policy intellectual. He played a pivotal role in the Mbeki presidency. He is considered as one of the key policy strategists of that period, and was appointed to the National Planning Commission.

Paradigm maintenance

There are, in the main, right-wing sections from among our population, including the political opposition, that have as part of their tactical manoeuvres against radical economic transformation argued that South Africa already has "good policies". We are, then, being called upon to act uncritically. What is lacking, we are told, is firm policy implementation. As the SACP states in its discussion document on the National Development Plan entitled 'What are we to make of the NDP?' (*The African Communist*, No 186), this argument tends to shut down the need for rigorous, evidence-based assessment of our country's post-1994 policy trajectory.

In addition, among those advancing this paradigm maintenance is a new conservative stratum both in and outside our movement that seeks to conserve the policies adopted in the post-1994 period. In particular, the policy orientation that imposed neo-liberalism from 1996 onward through the Growth, Employment and Distribution strategy (Gear).

Although differently framed, a similar argument for paradigm maintenance runs through Cde Netshitenzhe's critique of *Going to the root.* This is visible in two separately located conclusions that say the same thing. One is presented in a manner that questions the relevance of the perspective of the second, radical phase of our transition:

- "…many of these interventions are already happening. Significant elements of these started many years ago…"
- "…many of the issues have either been government policy for a decade or more, or had started being implemented even before the notion of 'radical transformation' was introduced".

Netshitenzhe continues to pursue the outdated idea of trickle-down growth. We shall return to this, but in essence, blind growth, mostly without economic transformation, has been given primacy in economic, social and political policy. This is presumably because other development priorities emanate from it.

Cde Netshitenzhe locates the post-1994 South African economic policy and performance into two, the pre- and post-2008 periods. His critique reflects allegiance to the pre-2008 dominant policy thinking – the trickle-down growth being one of its central features. We are told that "the South African economy faltered in the post-2008 period" and that this was "not merely due to the global economic crisis".

Paradigm maintenance in a war of position

Note the quantification, "merely", referring to the negative impact of the 2008 international economic crisis. On the contrary, the crisis, which erupted first in the USA around 2007 as manifested in "sub-prime" lending, became the biggest, longest, most complex and severe crisis since the Great Depression of the 1920s in the history of capitalism as the world system.

As *Going to the root* points out, the untransformed South African economy, remaining heavily reliant on raw material exports, suffered massively from plummeting global production. Demand for related minerals slowed down or took a downward spiral especially in export destinations. Mining activity, particularly platinum, suffered.

In response to the crisis, many companies across the economy restructured their operations and labour forces as production and trade plummeted and many investments were being affected by the meltdown. About a million jobs were lost in South Africa. Liquidations increased at an alarming rate. Insecurity increased among workers, as many were aggressively restructured from permanent to different forms of temporary employment. Pay and benefits were cut, deepening a trend that took root in South Africa after1994, especially under Gear – in terms of which the state was restructured in part through privatisation and outsourcing. Social inequality worsened during the crisis, and unemployment and poverty increased acutely.

After saying that "the South African economy faltered in the post-2008 period", and that this was "not merely due to the global economic crisis", Cde Netshitenzhe continues: "it had surpassed trend growth and had already started heating up, due to many serious binding constraints". Unfortunately, he does not specify and he does not detail the constitutive principles of the apparently "surpassed" highest economic growth point. Nor does he quantitatively define where growth could have otherwise reached its ceiling or explain anything about the point from which the economy ostensibly "started heating up". He does not present articulate the factors behind this "heating up".

Various commentators advocate status quo policies whose development has nothing to do with advancing the radical second phase of our transition. They then tell us that speedier implementation can be characterised as radical in itself. Faster implementation of treadmill

policy continuities, which do not go to the root of the problem we seek to solve, and the other problems that it has created, cannot be characterised as radical.

Among the contentious policies which Cde Netshitenzhe continues to push, as if they have not been implemented, are dual labour market policies. The youth wage subsidy is a typical example. In addition, labour brokers, casualisation and perpetual temporary employment relationships replacing permanent employment are among the strategies that capital has adopted to reduce the "cost" of both new labour market entrants and labour power in general.

The second, radical phase of our transition requires clarity concerning continuities and discontinuities. There must certainly be discontinuities. The policies that either contributed to, or failed to reverse, worsening inequality, a declining workers' share of national income and the neglected structural transformation of the colonial features of our economy must be discontinued.

Cutting the stems, felling the tree, going to the root

Reading between the lines, it is necessary to respond to another aspect of Cde Netshitenzhe's "merely" in his reference "to the global economic crisis" and the problem of South Africa's economy. *Going to the root* does not suggest that the international economic crisis was the only factor that had an adverse impact on our economy.

As *Going to the root* points out, our economic problems manifest, although by no means exclusively, in the crisis levels of social inequality, unemployment and poverty. As it states, these problems persisted "even during periods of relatively strong domestic growth in the late 1990s and early 2000s". *Going to the root* identifies the untransformed colonially constructed structural, deep-rooted and systemic features of our country's economy as the core of our economic problem. This

problem must be uprooted as one of the strategic tasks of the second, radical phase of our democratic transition.

As *Going to the root* states, one of our policy weaknesses post-1994 is that "emphasis on redistribution has tended to neglect the critical task of transforming the systemic features of South Africa's productive economy". In other words: "There has been socio-economic redistribution but insufficient structural transformation, particularly of the systemic features of our productive economy".

Going to the root states that redistribution "must continue to be a key pillar of our NDR" in the second, radical phase of our democratic transition. But Cde Netshitenzhe misreads this by suggesting that it is "decrying the so-called top-down nature of the social wage", referring to redistribution. Had it not been for this misreading, he would have seen that what *Going to the root* criticises is that the "redistributive effort has been almost entirely conceptualised as a top-down state 'delivery' process".

Rather, what must happen in the second, radical phase of the NDR, is that the people individually and in their communities, must not be reduced to passive recipients of "top-down state 'delivery'". They must be socially mobilised and involved to participate in the production and delivery of public goods and services. This must be included in the task of imbuing the spirit of defending the advances made. Thus the people must reap the economic benefits of delivery which have largely been monopolised to a few in the form of tenders. The current regime of tenderisation of the state-society relationship must therefore be rolled back.

What about selective identification of facts?

Cde Netshitenzhe writes: "Strictly-speaking, South Africa experienced high rates of economic growth between 2003 and 2008, and the un-

employment rate was reduced from 31% to 23%. Between 2002 and 2008, youth unemployment (25 to 34 year-olds) was reduced from 34% to 26%. This is in spite of the fact that more people were entering the labour market or defining themselves as 'looking for work'".

This 2002-2003 to 2008 period is not contentious, while the significance of the assertion: "in spite of the fact that more people were entering the labour market or defining themselves as 'looking for work'" is not clear. But we need not think that Cde Netshitenzhe intended to make the emphasis to highlight fictitious economic performance or a phenomenon that should otherwise not be considered when unemployment is analysed and interventions are considered to reduce it.

There will always be new labour market entrants looking for work every time learners complete schooling or students graduate or complete certificates. We all know that even those who did not attend or who drop out of school, college or university look for work and they are not excluded when the unemployment rate is calculated.

The problem which Cde Netshitenzhe seems to dismiss is nevertheless highlighted by the very figures he presents. All of the above figures are a reflection of crisis-level unemployment. This despite the fact that they provide a narrow definition of unemployment. It is true that "selective identification of facts can result in the positing of wrong solutions" as Cde Netshitenzhe states. However, he is incorrect in suggesting that *Going to the root* does so.

For example, the more accurate calculation of unemployment includes workers who have given up looking for a job because they could not find one. It is also better highlighted on a year-on-year basis, especially in the absence of a comparable period for statistical averaging (most comparative scholarly work compares apples with apples, not with bananas). For instance, when the narrowly defined unemployment rate was 26,2% in 2004, the total unemployment

rate, including discouraged work seekers, was 41,8%. An average that does not reveal all facts such as the true extent of unemployment risks portraying nothing in reality.

Does anyone remember the story of the Titanic? What about the boats ferrying the working class in South Africa?

The Titanic capsized in 1912 and more than 1 500 people perished.

Not only do the design, strength of materials and structures of ships, boats and vessels matter but also the totality of the conditions in which they navigate or sail.

But Cde Netshitenzhe suggests the one-size-fits-all liberal idea that growth is a rising tide that lifts all boats. However, faced with reality as presented in *Going to the root* he then admits "inequality in the period of high growth worsened". He could have simply recognised that, important as it may be, growth does not automatically reduce inequality or solve all other economic and social problems.

That inequality worsened during the so-called high growth period means there are boats that capsized. The workers and the poor, including those who were retrenched or outsourced as capital restructured to maximise profit or when there was state privatisation, are the ones mostly affected.

Strategic reflection should lead one to conclude that, from the experience of that period, growth as a form of economic upgrading can occur simultaneously with growing inequality and social downgrading. This contradictory relationship is itself embedded in, and is the direct outcome of, inequality. In both essence and character this is class inequality. In the context of South Africa, it remains mainly racialised and gendered as part of the persisting legacy of colonial oppression and apartheid which were erected on the foundations of capitalist exploitation.

Cde Netshitenzhe writes that "in the context of a National Democratic Society… inequality can be reduced but not totally obliterated". To be precise, the concept "National Democratic Society" is here approximated to capitalism. The problem is not the vision of a National Democratic Society, but capitalism.

To end inequality, capitalist exploitation must be uprooted. The second, radical phase of our transition must however radically reduce inequality and lay the indispensable basis for the advance to socialism, through attaining the goals of the Freedom Charter. It is under socialism that economic exploitation will systematically be ended together with its unequal social relations.

It is also important to note that post-1994, class inequality developed and widened among the historically oppressed as a few, comprising the elite that enjoys both political and business connections, has moved up through the class and social strata, while the majority has remained at the bottom. Our struggle was never about enriching a few individuals. Therefore not only the social inequality between the diverse races constituting our society must be radically reduced, but also inequalities within them, as part of the strategic tasks of the second, radical phase of our transition.

Inextricably related to all of these issues is the myth of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) - as dealt with properly in *Going to the root*.

The so-called feel-good happiness index

On *Going to the root*'s critique of the orthodox or fundamentalist treatment of economic growth as measured in terms of GDP, Cde Netshitenzhe writes: "The SACP is perhaps right to be impressed that former centre-right French President Nicolas Sarkozy lifted the profile of this debate. However, if this degenerates into reducing matters to do with the material wellbeing of the poor and the scandalous wid-

ening income and wealth gap, to some feel-good 'happiness index', it can in fact be retrogressive."

Rather than being impressed with the centre-right Sarkozy, the SACP's *Going to the root* simply shows that it is no longer only the left, that questions the blind pursuit of GDP, and particularly the way it has been made an overriding policy objective in terms of its trickle-down logic. Even on the right internationally there are those who started questioning the fundamentalist approach to GDP. Sarkozy was used as an example. Therefore the idea that *Going to the root* should have cited Nepad instead of the Sarkozy's example is irrelevant to the substance of the point made.

Secondly, it is not a "feel-good happiness index" to develop measurable targets on systemic and structural transformation of the colonial features of our economy and access to ownership and control by our people – in particular, on a broad-based empowerment basis encompassing socialised or collective forms of ownership and control as well as building a vibrant and effective public sector. These are serious tasks about serious economic goals, which were neglected in favour of GDP fundamentalism which dominated much of policy thinking in the first phase of our transition in government.

The way Cde Netshitenzhe chose to go to the extreme on this question gives one the impression that there was in fact a revisionist deviation from our movement's shared goals of economic transformation and the revolutionary essence of the NDR on the question – as entailed in the Freedom Charter and further elaborated in the ANC's Strategy and Tactics emerging from the 1969 Morogoro Conference.

Indices such as life expectancy, health and education are not a "feel-good happiness index". We must set targets in these and other human development indices and strive to achieve improvements.

But also, how does the myth of GDP help us to measure the losses

that occur, for example, in terms of resources and ecological and environmental problems from the way our minerals are extracted? Yes, there is GDP growth generated. But are there no inversely proportional permanent or other losses which must be measured and acted upon? These questions cannot simplistically be dismissed as advocacy for some "feel-good happiness index".

The so-called "mantra… of abstraction": We are told unemployment causes inequality and poverty.

Rather than the apologist justification of worsening inequality during the "high growth" period offered by Cde Netshitenzhe – "the rich were able better to take advantage of it" (i.e. growth) – it is clear that in capitalist production the capitalist class dominates economic ownership and control. The capitalists use this power to appropriate wealth, while they regard income paid to workers as a "cost". The capitalists constantly seek to reduce this so-called cost and divert any resultant "savings" to profit. This has been one of the major drivers of inequality and the reduction in workers' share of national income as shown in *Going to the root*, all underpinned by a deepening rate of exploitation through restructuring, including retrenchments – which increases unemployment and thus the number of people who have no income.

In the absence of decisive state intervention to reduce the negative impact on workers, the accumulation of wealth on a capitalist private basis worsens inequality. Workers are engaging in workplace and political struggles against the problem, and this will have to intensify in the second, radical phase of our transition.

Cde Netshitenzhe asserts that "in policy discourse in the recent period, the notions of 'poverty, inequality and unemployment' have been used as a mantra as if they belong at the same level of abstrac-

tion. What seems not to be appreciated is that … unemployment is one of the causes of poverty and inequality, with the latter two being effects or outcomes".

In the first instance, *Going to the root* does not create such an abstract level. Secondly, the ideological claim asserted by Cde Netshitenzhe is both ahistorical and removed from reality.

The African people did not depend on being employed by someone else to make a living. They were dispossessed by violent and legislative means, leading to and following the formation of the modern South African state. They were left with no means of production of their own but their capacity to work. They were thus proletarianised. Not only were they made unequal, but they were forced to the bottom rungs of inequality on class, race and gender bases.

Those who still possessed something they could use to make a living were coerced through a series of violent and "non-violent" means, forcing them into the proletariat. Among these means were a variety of tax regimes and forced labour. The inequality created and maintained to support capitalist exploitation forced people to depend on being employed by others in return for money income in the form of wages.

As Karl Marx and Frederick Engels state in the Communist Manifesto, the working class "live only so long as they find work, and … find work only so long as their labour increases capital". In capitalist production, capital is accumulated by those who are at the top of the hierarchal pyramid of inequality and enjoy the lion's share of production, the capitalists. When this happens it is not because there was some rising tide that lifted all boats which, as the rich, they took advantage of.

In addition, as regards unemployment, Marx shows through scientific evidence in *Capital* (Vol.1) that the development of capital-

ism reaches a point where capitalists reduce workers. This is done through constantly pursuing new methods of work and increasing the employment of new production technology revolutionising the technical conditions of production in the face of competition.

As Marx states, production technology under capitalism is not employed to lighten the worker's toil. As with new work methods and reorganisation of production, it is adopted in the interests of profit maximisation based on strategies centred on producing more output with fewer workers and at less cost. The speed with which the capitalists adopt and implement these strategies does not involve any democracy.[1] It is faster than democratic policy-making involving consultation and negotiation by the government with social actors, including, the very capitalists and their policy gurus or intellectuals who resist radical economic transformation.

As Marx shows in Capital, unemployment is a necessary condition, lever and product of the accumulation of wealth on a capitalist basis. Systemic and cyclical crises of the capitalist system, for example the 2008 international economic crisis, acutely increase unemployment, poverty and inequality.

It is in terms of this inequality that even wars are fought and the dominant powers impose their will. It is in the same way, but by no means exclusively, that "policy gurus" from among the dominated are created to advocate the ideas of the dominant.

This is why it has to be emphasised, that to reduce inequality, unemployment and poverty, it is important for a democratic developmental state to intervene in the economy through both economic and social policies that are radical, with the plight of the workers and the poor taken seriously. In our context, as *Going to the root* states, those policies must challenge both internal and external combined and uneven development.

Seamless selective identification of facts coupled with papering over the cracks

The failure of the trickle-down growth model Cde Netshitenzhe continues to push was recognised by the mid-2000s. This was reflected in the notion, "Shared", adopted in the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative of South Africa" (AsgiSA) – notwithstanding its own weaknesses or failures. Had he not been selective, Cde Netshitenzhe would have underlined the "shift" to support his argument (to which we shall return) that "Significant elements" of those interventions "agreed upon" "are already happening" or "started many years ago". The problem is, such an acknowledgement would have negated his central economic policy proposition which rests on the idea that growth trickles down in other economic and social policy imperatives.

The New Growth Path (NGP) – post-2008 – is another policy intervention that more strongly reflected the "shift" highlighted above. Despite its weaknesses and inconsistencies, which perhaps highlight that it was contested by the advocates of the failed trickle-down growth model that was later reasserted in the NDP, the NGP placed emphasis on employment creation and decent work. This was seen as essential in driving a qualitatively different growth path, rather than jobless growth.

The radical, second phase of our transition cannot be driven through inconsistencies and contradictory policies. Let us recall that the ANC in Mangaung reaffirmed the NGP, a fact not referred to by Cde Netshitenzhe. Related to this, the NDP was unveiled before the concept of the second, radical phase of our transition was adopted. It therefore goes without saying that one of the first objectives of the second, radical phase of our transition is to radicalise it.

But also, Cde Netshitenzhe should know that the SACP and Cosatu

raised reservations about the NDP, and in particular its economic policy thrust in Chapter 3. How then does he expect consensus on his proposition: "Working with the business community and the trade union movement to ensure that each sector and each enterprise develops its vision for 2030 in line with the NDP"?

At its 2014 summit, the Alliance agreed that the NDP must be addressed with regards to the genuine concerns raised by the SACP and Cosatu. Unless there is consensus and consultation to give effect to the perspective that the NDP is not cast in stone, Cde Netshitenzhe's position becomes one of mere faith.

Class struggle and social compacting

Cde Netshitenzhe has left realities behind in the way he presents the idea of social compacts. This idea must not be treated in isolation from our experiences of two decades of South Africa's constitution. Two decades have passed without the envisaged land restoration and redistribution, for instance. Following the 2014 general elections, the state had to intervene by reopening a new time frame for land claims and establishing an Office of the Valuer-General.

Also, recently there were social accords (which are a form of social compact) agreed in terms of the NGP. They had their limitations, including that they lacked enforcement, and were minimal because capital is not committed to offer anything, preferring to defend and advance its accumulation agenda. But although in most cases the accords lack the decisiveness that is required, especially in terms of the private sector (e.g. the Youth Employment Accord), it would have been useful to unpack how far things have gone since they were signed as an example of social compacting.

Further, the way Cde Netshitenzhe presents this idea implies that by critiquing it, *Going to the root* advocates for the pursuit of "a

scorched earth policy". Conversely, it is critical to reaffirm the centrality of democratic majority rule, and use that power decisively. Simply giving up the revolution or aligning it to the dictates of hostile market forces and their policy notions as if democratic majority rule is completely powerless is a typical manifestation of "a scorched earth policy" that can happen to a revolution.

As regards the interpretation of "South Africa's political settlement of the 1990s" as an example to support the idea of social compacting, something is being inverted. Nationally, it was the consistent struggle conducted over many years that tilted the balance of forces and compelled the apartheid regime to the table. It is the continuation of the struggle during the negotiations that further supported work to reach that settlement – in which not everything was settled. Which is why we still have the problems we are discussing to this day. In the trade union movement it is said that what you cannot win in the streets you cannot win in negotiations, that is, if you like, in a social compact. Therefore more focus must be devoted on developing strategic mass power and state capacity to discipline social forces such as those sections of capital which do not care about the interests of the people and bring them in line with our national development goals rather than subordinate the NDR to their whims.

Delinking – *Going to the root*'s 'advocacy for secession'

By making the allegation that *Going to the Root* advocates for secession, Cde Netshitenzhe is being extreme.

South Africa was colonially inserted in the world capitalist system in the interests of imperialism at the expense of our people, resources and wealth. It was underdeveloped while its resources and labour were exploited to develop imperialist economies in Western Europe, North America and Japan. Internally, as with its external dimension,

this uneven and combined development was engineered through colonial conquests, oppression and apartheid capitalist relations of exploitation. This in the interests of the oppressors – as defined in terms of the concept of Colonialism of a Special Type – at the expense of the overwhelming majority of our people.

The strategic radical task put forward in *Going to the root* in terms of the perspective of relative delinking is as follows. We must strive both organisationally and through state policy to eliminate both the exploitative imperialist relationship and internal combined and uneven development. In his 1985 intervention, *Delinking: Towards a Polycentric World,* the renowned African revolutionary scholar Samir Amin dealt with distortions, some of them deliberate, on the concept of delinking:

"We have in the past supported and continue to support the thesis according to which the relative term 'under-development' is the obverse of 'development', that is, the one and the other are two sides of the – naturally unequal – expansion of capital. Development of the countries on the periphery of the world capitalist system must therefore come through an essential 'rupture' with that system, a 'delinking' or refusal to subject the national development strategy to the imperatives of 'worldwide expansion'. But the meaning we give to the concept of 'delinking' is in no way synonymous with autarky. The meaning is as follows: pursuit of a system of rational criteria for economic options founded on a law of value on a national basis with popular relevance, independent of such criteria of economic rationality as flow from the dominance of the capitalist law of value operating on a world scale" (p.62).

Contrary to what Cde Netshitenzhe accuses *Going to the root* of, the definition of delinking, to borrow from Amin, "has nothing to do with exclusion or autarkic withdrawal. It is a matter of subjecting

the mutual relations between the various nations and regions of the whole of the planet to the varying imperatives of their own internal development and not the reverse. That is, a readiness to adjust to the worldwide expansion of capitalism[2]. It is a plea in favour of 'reciprocal adjustment' (instead of unilateral adjustment, of the weakest to the strongest)" (p. xii).

Colonial dependency

Cde Netshitenzhe argues that: "In the first instance, elements of the strong dependency on the North derive from the financial openness of our economy, which includes reliance on capital flows, because of our low savings rate".

Firstly, this argument is ahistorical. Colonial dependency on capital in our land was constructed through force or the implicit threat of force. The savings rate cannot be addressed in isolation from confronting the rate of exploitation of our country by imperialism and the workers[3] in capitalist production. In addition, strategies such as the evasion of more progressive or graduated tax on the rich (the capitalists) who own and control about 70% of our economy, must be rolled back.

Secondly, Cde Netshitenzhe's argument is not new. What happened when it formed one of the central pillars of economic policy under Gear and under the conditions summarised above?

Reduction in spending without a proper balance of priorities[4] led to the neglect of an under-resourced public healthcare system. HIV-Aids combined with Aids denialism, and other preventable, treatable or even curable diseases were allowed to kill several hundred thousand people and reduce overall life expectancy. Our social cluster services suffered massive deterioration due to a variety of consequences. Strategies not to invest in new electricity generation capacity and refurbish

aging power stations negatively affecting Eskom cannot be viewed in isolated from the results of that approach. Yet we are being called upon to repeat the history of the same policy emphasis and reliance on it and on the private sector.

Claiming easy victories

Cde Netshitenzhe's periodisation of economic policy performance between the pre- and post-2008 periods, underpinned by an argument that many of the policies or interventions that can work for the second, radical phase of our transition, were adopted by the government long ago, that is in the pre-2008 period. This argument ignores the struggles fought by the working class.

The working class waged significant struggles in response to the imposition of Gear. Interrelated liberalisation measures affected currency, finance and capital markets, investment, trade, and, as captured in *Going to the root*, also production.

Under Gear, the basis for production development was curtailed, if not destroyed, in different sectors. Without building any industry or industrial capacity, inevitably imports surges followed, coupled with de-industrialisation due to outstripped protection – the so-called openness. In certain instances protection measures were zero-rated or reduced far below the World Trade Organisation's rates. This is one of the reasons why today we are talking about re-industrialisation in the second, radical phase of our transition as one of our strategic tasks.

In contrast, and notably, manufacturing in the automotive industry survived due to relative protection that was maintained. Although gradually reduced, it was simultaneously complemented by tax rebates and incentive schemes. Under the Motor Industry Development Programme (MIDP) and now the Automotive Production Development Programme (APDP) and the Automotive Incentive Scheme

(AIS), automotive assembly and components production were maintained. Further, the industry adopted export programmes.

The approach counteracted the negative consequences in those manufacturing sectors that responded to de-industrialisation policies by either shutting down or declining drastically. This includes footwear, textile, clothing, electronics, telecommunications and white goods such as refrigerators, stoves and other household appliances.

The massive housing programme which saw 3,5-million new houses benefitting over 16,5-million people by 2014 was not strategically leveraged from a policy point of view to supply household appliances. Neither was the advent of new information and communication technology (ICT) – in terms of which fixed telephone lines were not connected to those new houses, and millions more to existing houses, allowing mobile telephone networks to develop the local ICT manufacturing and applications development industry. Similarly, economic policy in general did not pursue the use of our country's massive mineral endowments. Research and development to localise production and expand productive work to absorb millions of the unemployed were not prioritised.

Rather than a gift from policy makers, the policies which saved manufacturing, the MIDP and APDP, for instance, were the result of consistent campaigning by the working class movement. The SACP and Cosatu strongly pushed for industrial policy development despite mounting opposition against the campaign.

Radical organisational transformation

Every revolution worth its name seeks to replace and old order or existing social relations which constitute the problem (and result in other problems) and to create new social relations. Rather than a dictate of the so-called "sixth sense" which apparently occurs at some

"moments in the evolution of movements", as Cde Netshitenzhe argues, this necessity for social change is the fundamental task of a revolution. In order to give effect to the revolution and build new social relations, the historical mission of every revolutionary movement is not to repeat, but to replace old strategies and methods of work by which old order social relations were forged. This is the context in which the perspective of the second, more radical phase of our democratic transition must be understood.

When Cde Rob Davies, SACP Central Committee member and Minister of Trade and Industry, used a dictionary entry to explain what being radical means he was criticised by one infantile opposition member masquerading as the left in Parliament. Cde Netshitenzhe does the same, but differently, if not subtly. He writes that "'Proceeding from the root' as The Chambers Dictionary defines 'radical' should include…" We shall return to the balance of this line, for now let us deal with this present segment.

"To be radical is to grasp the root of the matter", wrote Karl Marx in 1844 in his *Abstract from the Introduction to Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Righ*t. To be radical, thus, is to proceed from having grasped the matter at the root. What Marx wrote 171 years ago is a dictionary entry. Must we abandon what Marx said more than a century ago simply because it is a dictionary entry – must we avoid making reference to that entry? No way!

Let us return to the balance of Cde Netshitenzhe's sentence, that is the need to "include a radical transformation of the ANC and the Tripartite Alliance, to cleanse them of the factionalism, social distance, patronage politics, corruption, money politics and other ills that undermine them as forces of change, and which they in turn transfer to the state, thus rendering it less capable and less developmental". This is absolutely necessary as one of the radical objectives in the second,

radical phase of our transition.

However, Cde Netshitenzhe forgot to add that all of the abovementioned and other forms of ill-discipline, including factionalism, express themselves in more ways and spheres than only within the organisational structures or formations of our movement and the state. Factionalism, for instance, is to be found among those who continue to advocate the views they held before conferences and congresses, as if these decision-making bodies did not arrive at contrary findings, including on leadership. One of those manifestations is the establishment of NGOs or such other institutions dedicated, if you analysed them properly, to sustaining pre-conference or congress views. An analysis of the cadre who is recruited in these new arrangements clearly reveals there is a criterion that prefers those who supported the same faction before the respective conference or congress.

To deal with these ills requires a comprehensive approach focusing on the rest of our society with the movement, of course, placed at the centre of action, rather than a selective approach. In particular, we must strengthen and improve overall conduct, including political, ideological, organisational and personal discipline, and build unity both in thinking and action as reflected in conference and congress outcomes. We must strengthen cadreship development, selection, deployment, monitoring and evaluation, and deal with violations without fear or favour.

Endnotes

1. This is the typical example of what Karl Marx referred to as the dictatorship of the bourgeois.
2. That is, in terms of our subject matter currently being treated, in essence imperialism.
3. At an individual level, many workers in South Africa are paid peanut wages and

are left with nothing to save, and are even struggling to meet their basic material and cultural needs. The government intervenes by means of social wage strategies such as RDP houses, National Student Financial Aid Scheme, no-fee schools and school feeding schemes, etc.

4. This mainly affected black people, mainly low wage earners, the unemployment and poor.

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THE NDR DEBATE

Unstrategic & untactical declarations in the name of radicalism

Cdes Alex Mashilo and **Donald Mothoa** take issue with Cde David Masondo's critique of *Going to the root*

The critique by Cde David Masondo, our former National YCL Chairperson, of the SACP discussion document, *Going to the root: a radical second phase of the NDR – its context, content, and our strategic tasks* (AC, 1st Quarter 2015, No 188) was interesting.

But we take the view that *Going to the root* correctly addresses most of the key issues, and that Cde Masondo's criticisms are thus not sound. An example of this is his understanding of the productive sector, the causes of the capitalist crisis, especially the latest international crisis. The SACP has covered these issues many times. For reasons of brevity, we are not responding to issues about which we believe Cde Masondo is superficial – for example, the character of the post-1994 and 2009 Alliance leadership. It is to be noted that, post-2009, Cde Masondo served in the Limpopo provincial government as Finance MEC and that at the end of his term five provincial departments, including Finance, were brought under national administration and the provincial Cabinet was dissolved. This says a lot about the character of the leadership that was in charge.

Our response covers the following issues – equating nationalisa-

tion to radicalism and socialism; the idea that traditional leaders are a key aspect of the colonial state; the national question; and the periodisation of the first and second radical phases of the NDR.

Engels notes: "…a kind of spurious Socialism has arisen, degenerating, now and again, into something of flunkyism, that without more ado declares all State-ownership, even of the Bismarkian sort, to be socialistic. Certainly, if the taking over by the State of the tobacco industry is socialistic, then Napoleon and Metternich must be numbered among the founders of Socialism.

"If the Belgian State, for quite ordinary political and financial reasons, itself constructed its chief railway lines; if Bismarck, not under any economic compulsion, took over for the State the chief Prussian lines, simply to be the better able to have them in hand in case of war, to bring up the railway employees as voting cattle for the Government, and especially to create for himself a new source of income independent of parliamentary votes – this was, in no sense, a socialistic measure, directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously. Otherwise, the (British) Royal Maritime Company, Royal porcelain manufacture, and even the regimental tailor of the army would also be socialistic institutions, or even, as was seriously proposed by a sly dog in Frederick William III's reign, the taking over by the State of the brothels." (Frederick Engels, *Socialism, Scientific and Utopian;* 1880)

This essentially captures the SACP's response to calls for spurious nationalisation which emerged during the latest global capitalist system crisis.

Firstly, those calls neglected the class character of the state and its implications for the social relations of production, in particular regarding ownership. Related to it, control not only over the means of production, but also wealth. And, secondly, they neglected the class character of the productive forces, the power relations that underpin

them, and the need to transform these away from capitalist dictates towards the realisation of socialisation.

As we have seen in many cases elsewhere during the crisis, state ownership can actually be used as a strategy to deepen capitalist ownership and social relations of production[1].

Spurious state ownership has many pitfalls. This includes no transformation of capitalist production organisation, as well as corrupt relations between some elements in the private and the public sectors based on procurement. Judged by their character, some elements who made the calls for spurious nationalisation might as well have been looking forward to benefit financially.

Guided by the need to combat all destructive and dangerous capitalist factors, the SACP's response to calls for spurious nationalisation placed the essence of the class agenda of its proponents at the centre stage. The Party questioned whose class interests were such calls for spurious state ownership destined to serve? It also questioned the suspicious, unprincipled and even corrupt character of some of its proponents. Evading the question, several of them resorted to baseless factional allegations against the Party. They accused it of not supporting nationalisation. They ignored its principled policy stances on the question, even when it constantly reaffirmed them.

Cde Masondo's criticism of *Going to the root*, especially on the issue of "nationalisation" is reminiscent of these arguments. It is worrying is that Cde Masondo neglected important policy statements by the Party.

Our goal is socialisation of the means of production and wealth

The second radical phase of the NDR has critical tasks that must be elaborated. Targets covering comprehensive capacity building, funding, legislation and policy must be set to achieve this strategic objec-

tive. These are necessary on both long-range national planning and five-year rolling plans of transformation and local economic development. The work must continue and be followed up by clear targets on expropriation on which legislative steps are already being taken. Constitutional amendments cannot be ruled out if the Constitution holds back transformation. But this requires sufficient political work, on the ground and in all key sites of power.

The SACP still holds to its perspectives on developing and diversifying the co-operative and public sectors to become effective, vibrant and predominant. During the launch of *Going to the root* in October 2014 the SACP reiterated its positions on strategic nationalisation.

Nationalisation, for the SACP, is not an end in itself. It neither necessarily constitutes radicalism, nor is it inherently progressive. As opposed to adventurism and the spurious nationalisation towards which some forces have tried to drive our movement, the SACP's concept of strategic nationalisation:

- Is characterised by working class and not capitalist interests;
- Takes into account the class configuration of production, the class nature and character of the state, and the connection between the two;
- Is mindful of unintended consequences and the need to avoid or minimise space for them; and
- Recognises the importance of building sufficient capacity and resilience to overcome a counterrevolutionary backlash from hostile forces.

As a means to an end, strategic nationalisation is well calculated. It takes into consideration strategic sectors, resources and assets, as well as time and space. It must, however, be prepared for thoroughly, and buttressed by consistent struggles to tilt the balance of forces. The goal is socialisation. As captured by Karl Marx[2]: "Let us finally

imagine, for a change, an association of free men, working with the means of production held in common, and expending their many different forms of labour-power in full self-awareness as one single social labour force."

Neglecting existing answers does not assist

A number of Cde Masondo's criticisms have been answered by the SACP. To ignore the answers and blame the Party for failing to answer does not assist.

In its statement[3] following the State of the Nation Address, the SACP stated that land reform measures such as the "50:50 policy framework which proposes relative rights for people who live and work on farms; a ceiling on land ownership…; the restriction of land ownership by foreign nationals who will not be allowed to own land in South Africa but will be eligible for long term leases; and an end to reliance on the so-called 'willing-buyer, willing-seller' model" are important and must be pursued". Specifically important for the present discussion the Party also stated: "land (must be) recognised as a natural resource that no one can create, and that therefore the land of South Africa is the common heritage of all. This in line with the Freedom Charter's principles that 'South Africa belongs to all who live in it' and that land shall be re-divided among those who work it to banish famine and land hunger".

Cde Masondo neglected all of this in his state land ownership nationalisation model which would mean that land will be "leased to different economic agents (worker co-operatives, village assemblies, *private sector,* etc.)". We emphasise the private sector in this quote to highlight the inconsistency. Compare this statement to his assertion (correct in our view): "*Going to the Root* requires, among other things, fundamentally transforming entrenched property relations".

The model of state ownership and administration Cde Masondo asserts as radical is nothing new. It has already been implemented. The Minerals and Petroleum Resources Development Act (MPRDA) of 2002 recognised "the internationally accepted right of the State to exercise sovereignty over all the mineral and petroleum resources" and gave "effect to the principle of the State's custodianship of the nation's mineral and petroleum resources" in Sections 2 (a) and (b).

Section 3 of the MPRDA states: (1) "Mineral and petroleum resources are the common heritage of all the people of South Africa and the State is the custodian thereof for the benefit of all South Africans. (2) As the custodian of the nation's mineral and petroleum resources, the State… may (a) grant, issue, refuse, control, administer and manage any reconnaissance permission, prospecting right, permission to remove, mining right, mining permit, retention permit, technical cooperation permit, reconnaissance permit, exploration right and production right".

As Party cadres, we are certain the SACP is aware about what this means, 13 years later and under unchanged capitalist social relations of production. Cde Masondo's nationalisation model will benefit capitalists most. Cde Masondo never provided any substance on how to alter the class character of capitalist productive forces and social relations of production vis-à-vis state ownership.

Going to the root deals with the issue in terms of strategic minerals.

Traditional Authority

Cde Masondo alleges that *Going to the root* "fails to show huge continuities with the key aspects of the colonial state – the traditional authority – in the post-apartheid dispensation". But traditional authorities pre-date the colonial state and do not constitute its "key aspects".

This despite the fact that colonialism caused divisions and co-opted some elements of traditional authorities in what was a divide-and-rule strategy.

Many of the early anti-colonisation struggles were fought under the leadership of traditional authorities. This reality cannot simplistically be wiped out of our history. Nor can the fact that there are traditional leaders who co-founded the ANC and continued their participation in the movement and the struggle against colonialism until the last of the successive colonial regimes, apartheid, was dislodged in 1994. They, in fact, have led the ANC at all levels, including the Presidency, and have played key roles in other Alliance partners.

The history of ANC President Chief Albert Luthuli and many others working with SACP leaders such as Cde Moses Kotane cannot simply be wiped out of the history of our struggle. Neither can we behave as if there are no useful lessons for us from that rich history. There are traditional leaders whose family members joined the ranks of Umkhonto weSizwe and of the SACP.

An abstract approach on traditional leadership in South Africa based on European feudalism is unstrategic, untactical and dangerous. This does not mean that we do not acknowledge the weaknesses and structural faults of the institution of traditional leadership.

In 1913 the colonisers in South Africa passed the Native Land Act which prohibited Africans from buying land in 93% of their own country.

Fifty Fighting Years[4] (1921-1971), a history of the SACP, also covers the colonial wars of conquest and dispossession and the resistance struggles. Unfortunately, Cde Masondo neglected this entire history and its impact on land ownership and distribution.

Land in South Africa still reflects the outcomes of the colonial patterns of dispossession and distribution. Land used mainly by whites

on a capitalist basis remains a defining feature of inequality. To ignore this as one of the key aspects of colonialism can lead to misidentifications of what our current challenges are.

To make matters worse, Cde Masondo lumps all land belonging to black people under traditional authorities. There is communally owned land that is not controlled by traditional authorities. There are also traditional authorities who recognise that the land in their areas of jurisdiction is not their personal property but belongs to the people.

The best way to handle the issue of traditional leadership and land remains that of deepening democracy in all spheres of society.

The national question

Another weakness in Cde Masondo's treatment of the issues is that he almost reduces the national question to the challenges posed by traditional authorities. The national question is broader than that narrow conception.

Our liberation Alliance has long shared a perspective that the answer to the national question is the NDR. As the SACP has also pointed out in terms of the dialectical interrelationship between the NDR and socialism, the national question will not be fully answered unless the NDR lays the basis for an advance to socialism.

Our liberation Alliance's approach to build broad unity remains relevant. We must continue to deepen engagements with all the social forces coming together in this broad unity. This, not only on the National (N) but also on both the Democratic (D) and Revolutionary (R) strategic tasks of the NDR. The SACP, supported by Cosatu, has a distinct organisational leadership role to play in this struggle to advance the dialectical interrelationship between the NDR and socialism. Any "purist proletarian" approach will be self-defeating.

Our strategic tasks in this phase of transition

What the perspective of the second radical phase of the NDR seeks to implement is, in the words of *Going to the root*, our strategic tasks in this phase of struggle. Firstly, this includes a critical reflection on what could not be achieved during the negotiations in the 1990s. A shared perspective within our Liberation Alliance is that the negotiated settlement did not terminate our struggle. Secondly, the process includes a critical reflection on what could have been done differently in the first two decades of the NDR in which the ANC was successively elected to government.

It is in this context that we now look at what Cde Masondo says about all this.

Cde Masondo accuses *Going to the root* of "labelling… the 1990s as the 'first phase' of the NDR". He states that this "is questionable". He goes on to say: "It is as if the NDR only started in the 1990s". *Going to the root* does not suggest this at all.

Since the formation of the ANC and the SACP until 1994 our struggle has focused on the overthrow of the oppressive colonial regime. The levers of state power that we won in 1994 were not in our hands. Their use was therefore not one of the pillars of our struggle. Our struggle was about transforming them to advance, deepen and defend the NDR towards its completion and setting the basis for socialism. The 1990s heralded this new phase of struggle through the negotiations and the elections, leading to the adoption of the new Constitution. This marked the first phase of the NDR characterised by our movement's democratic breakthrough, ascending to those levers of state power.

Before then, governance was not included in our key pillars of

struggle, which were mass political struggle; waging underground struggles, mass resistance, the armed struggle, and international solidarity. These pillars expressed concrete forms of our methods and strategies of struggle. Each one of them was adopted under a specific set of corresponding concrete conditions.

Post-1990s, mass and international struggles remain as relevant as ever. In the international terrain, as *Going to the root* states, the anti-imperialist struggle has to be intensified. This along with building international relations, co-operations and regional integration to foster alternative development strategies.

Endnotes

1. See, for example, YCLSA 3rd National Congress discussion document entitled 'Transformation of Property Relations in South Africa' (2010) http://www.ycl.org.za/docs/congress/2010/property_relations.pdf
2. (1867/1887); Capital: A Critique of Political Economy
3. 13 February 2015
4. Fifty Fighting Years, Lerumo A. Lerumo is the pseudonym of the late SACP leader Michael Harmel

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THE TRADE UNIONS

Meeting the challenges facing the trade union movement

This Draft Paper will be discussed at the SACP Special National Congress in July

This paper was first presented at the Augmented Central Committee in 2014. It was further enriched in line with the outcome of the deliberations. Through this passage it was finalised by the time of the 12th Plenary Session of the Central Committee, held from 29-31 May 2015. Following this Central Committee, the discussion document is now organised into two sections.

The first section presents a synopsis of the historical relationship between the Communist Party and the development of the progressive trade union movement in our country. It reflects, in the form of a summary, on the Party's unmatched efforts in building the progressive trade union movement.

The second section examines the contemporary challenges facing this task. In the ultimate analysis, this section, as must the outcome of the discussion, is concerned with the answer to the popular historical question posed by Vladimir Lenin: 'What is to be done?'

Historical synopsis: The SACP and the progressive trade union movement in our country

1. The history of the Communist Party in South Africa is deeply interlinked with the building and growth of progressive trade un-

ions. The nucleus of the future Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA), the International Socialist League (ISL), was founded in 1915, this year being its centenary. Many of its leading members were trade unionists, among them Bill Andrews who went on to become the CPSA's first general secretary in 1921.

2. Hardly a year after the formation of the CPSA, a major armed uprising by white workers broke out – the 1922 Rand Revolt. The strike had both a militant working class and a racist dimension. It was directed against the Chamber of Mines' attempt to re-classify some work categories to displace skilled white workers with lower-paid black miners. The CPSA sought to unite black and white workers in a common class stand against mining monopoly capital. However, the majority of white workers saw both the mining companies and the black workers as their enemies. Communist activists risked their lives in seeking to dissuade armed white worker commandos from raiding hostels and attacking black workers as "scabs". However, the Communist Party's principled stand failed to take root, and was marginalised by the tide of events. It is important to repeat these facts, since there is still a propaganda lie by both right wing and ultra-left anti-communist detractors that the Party supported white workers against black workers.
3. In the immediate aftermath of the 1922 strike, the Communist Party drew the correct conclusion that it needed to focus its energies more on the organisation of black workers into the trade union movement as the leading motive force for progressive trade unionism in our country. This strategic orientation was further validated by the National Party-Labour Party Pact Government's promulgation of the profoundly racist Industrial Conciliation Act of 1924. This legislation, amongst other things,

accorded recognition only to white workers as "employees". Thus they were the only ones entitled to form and join trade unions and to access certain trades and occupations, especially artisan trades. Black workers were denied recognition as 'employees'. They were therefore barred from forming and joining trade unions.

4. From this period onwards the Communist Party paid increasing attention to the organisation of black workers. Of course, at this stage the majority of black workers were rural migrants or first generation (to be) urbanised and their working class consciousness was still uneven.
5. One of the earliest efforts of the Party in organising black workers was its active support in building the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (ICU). The ICU was formed in 1920 out of a dock workers' strike in Cape Town, and was led by Clements Kadalie. It grew rapidly in size, and was both more and less than a union, something akin to a populist movement of the exploited and nationally oppressed. It mobilised in both urban and rural areas. Communist activists, including Jimmy La Guma, Johnny Gomas and EJ Khaile were in the leadership of the organisation. However, under the influence of liberal forces, Kadalie insisted that they had to renounce their membership of the Communist Party. All three refused. In 1927 they were expelled from the ICU. Not long after the expulsion of communists the ICU declined, dwindled and had virtually disappeared by 1930.
6. Despite the many internal challenges and factionalist squabbles within the CPSA in the 1930s, communist cadres played a leading role in the formation of dozens of progressive trade unions in this decade. Ray Alexander organised a number of unions in the Western Cape. With growing industrialisation and urbani-

sation, black workers were increasingly developing a proletarian class-consciousness. The first major federation of black unions was the Council of Non-European Trade Unions (CNETU), formed in 1941 at a conference presided over by Moses Kotane. Gana Makabeni was elected president and Daniel Tloome the vice-president.

7. During the years of World War II (1939-1945) there was a further burst of industrialisation in South Africa to respond to the war needs, and with large numbers of white workers serving in the army, there was a major wave of black urbanisation and proletarianisation. The 1940s can be regarded as a critical decade of Communist Party mass mobilising and organisational work in trade unions. A number of direct predecessors of today's Cosatu affiliates were launched in this period. Among them the Food and Canning Workers' Union under the leadership of Ray Alexander and the great African Mine Workers' Union (AMWU) under the leadership of JB Marks.
8. It was AMWU that led one of the most decisive strike actions in 20th century South Africa. This was the 1946 mineworkers' strike in which some 76 000 mine workers left the mines, or refused to go underground. Although brutally repressed, the strike action had a major radicalising impact on the ANC and Youth League, thus laying a strong foundation for the mass campaigns of the Congress Movement in the 1950s. The Communist Party's supportive role in the strike, and prominent leadership of communists in it, resulted in increased repression directed against the Party – eventually leading to its banning in 1950 under the Suppression of Communism Act.
9. Despite the suppression of the CPSA, communists continued their work in the trade union movement. The Suppression of

Communism Act enabled the apartheid regime to prevent communists and communist sympathisers from serving as officials in the trade union movement. By 1955 some 56 officials had been driven out of office. This purging of communists resulted in the significant weakening of the South African Trades and Labour Council (SATLC), which served as a non-racial trade union umbrella. Under pressure from the regime, some unions left the SATLC to form the Trade Union Council of South Africa (Tucsa) that excluded Africans or unions with African membership. Those unions that refused joined up with the Non-European Trade Union Council and in 1954 they jointly launched the South African Congress of Trade Unions (Sactu).

10. Many communists and ANC militants played a leading role in Sactu in this period, including Moses Mabhida, Billy Nair, Liz Abrahams, Vuyisile Mini, and many more. After the effective exile of Sactu in the 1960s, it served as the trade union wing of the liberation movement internationally.
11. Sactu members emerging from jail in the early 1970s participated in the rebuilding of progressive trade unions in the wake of the 1973 Durban strikes inside the country. These worker struggles further created a fertile ground for the student and youth uprisings in 1976, thus laying a strong foundation for the worker/student alliances that spearheaded the semi-insurrectionary struggles of the 1980s that finally broke the back of the apartheid regime.
12. Under pressure from the rising tide of worker struggles, and following the Wiehahn Commission, the apartheid regime in 1979 officially recognised the right of African workers to form trade unions. However, both the SACP and Sactu at the time failed to exploit this opening. This tactical failure created space for what

was later called a "workerist" tendency, partially emerging from a radicalised white student movement. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the "workerists" exploited the new organisational space that had been opened, and helped to build strong traditions of work-place organisation. However, much of this current was anti-SACP and unsympathetic to the ANC, arguing that over-politicising shop-floor organisation would expose the emerging union movement to persecution and destabilisation. It also argued that unions needed to be insulated from the "populist" politics of a national liberation movement like the ANC. This ideological current was dominant, although not unchallenged, within the important Federation of South African Trade Unions (Fosatu) launched in 1979.

13. Failure to support the registration of mainly black progressive trade unions after Wiehahn was a mistake that nearly cost the liberation movement dearly. However, the rising tide of community struggle in townships and rural villages in the 1980s increasingly made the "workerist" attempt to quarantine the active working class within factory floor struggles redundant. In 1985 Fosatu affiliates and a range of other militant unions came together on a Freedom Charter platform, to launch a new and larger federation – the Congress of South African Trade Unions – Cosatu. SACP cadres in the underground, in the trade union movement, and in United Democratic Front (UDF) structures after the latter's formation in 1983, played an important role in the building of Cosatu.
14. Attempts by today's Numsa leadership clique who try to belittle or redefine the SACP as an "outsider" to Cosatu are wholly mistaken. So is the attempt to try and position the SACP as a destroyer rather than a builder of Cosatu.

15. The history of the SACP is indistinguishable from the history of the organisation, building and growth of the progressive non-racial trade union movement in South Africa, especially over the last century since the founding of the ISL in 1915.
16. Over this period the SACP itself has taught but also learnt from the many heroic trade union struggles in our country. In fact no other political party or organisation in our country can claim to have built the trade union movement more than the SACP has done. This experience has also taught us that much as in a country like South Africa the trade union movement is a leading layer and stratum of the working class at an elementary level, it is not necessarily synonymous with the working class. Much as we need to always build a close relationship between our Party and the trade union movement, the two formations are not the same.
17. They have very distinct, albeit important complementary, roles in the national democratic revolution as our most direct route towards a transition to socialism. The trade unions must organise all workers in the various workplaces irrespective of political affiliation of the workers. But, working together with the SACP, progressive trade unions must deliberately seek to educate and influence members to grasp the broader political context within which trade union struggles are taking place. The SACP needs to recruit and develop more advanced cadres, from both inside and outside the ranks of the trade union movement into its ranks. The SACP understands that the working class it seeks to organise politically is broader than just the formally employed and organised workers in the trade union movement.
18. It is also, at this time of immense challenges facing Cosatu, that the SACP needs to pay particular attention to the trade union

movement in the best traditions of the ISL and CPSA, and later the SACP itself, over the last 100 years. We need to defend and nurture the unity of Cosatu as one of the most important communist tasks in the current period.

19. Let us examine the terrain in which this work has to be carried out.

Section 2: Meeting the challenges facing the trade union movement

20. The current challenges confronting Cosatu, and the broader trade union movement require a much broader and deeper analysis than is common in most of the public debate. While acknowledging and dealing with specific issues, it is important that we do not reduce these challenges to little more than a clash of differing factions, personalities, audit reports and scandals within the union movement. These immediate issues must certainly be dealt with, both decisively and in a mature and principled manner that helps to re-build the unity of the working class in general and of Cosatu in particular.
21. However, our collective response will not be effective or strategically sustainable unless we also appreciate the complex underlying factors that have led to the current difficulties and turmoil. This SACP discussion document is issued with the intention of provoking a deeper collective discussion amongst all progressive forces, and particularly amongst those active in the trade union movement.
22. In response to its internal challenges, Cosatu has correctly advanced the slogan "Back to Basics" – underlining the importance of a re-dedication to active service to members on the shop-floor; and internal worker democracy within our unions, including the answerability of full-time officials to the member-

ship. These are basic principles that helped to build and sustain progressive trade unionism in the bleak years of apartheid. There are also many voices within and beyond Cosatu calling for a revival of the UDF/MDM era of union-community social movement cooperation and mobilisation. In principle this, too, is a correct concern.

23. In this time of union turmoil and challenge it is very important to recover key lessons and traditions like these from the past. But it is also important to remember that the past IS the past. We are operating on a shifting terrain of class struggle, the working class and its allies are not playing a solo, our class adversaries are active players and they seek constantly to change the terrain to their own advantage.
24. Changed realities also call for critical reflection and innovation. The last century is littered with examples of progressive trade unions (and worker parties - both social democratic and communist) achieving major organisational, social and political gains and then stagnating by clinging to "tried and tested" approaches, failing to adjust strategically, tactically and organisationally to new realities. Or, alternatively, adjusting to new realities in ways that were unprincipled and that led to a loss of momentum and support.
25. Charting a way forward for the progressive union movement in SA requires, therefore, that we ask hard questions about what remains valid from the struggle experience of, say, the 1980s and what has changed for better or worse in the current reality?
26. In the first place, we need to grasp the massive, neoliberal-driven global restructuring of the working class, under-way since at least the 1980s, and how this has impacted on SA post-1994. The South African story, with its own specifics of course, is part

of a wider global picture.

The capitalist-led global offensive against the working class and its organised formations – a brief history

27. Through much of the first half of the 20th century, the major mass labour movements in the advanced capitalist countries were typically rooted in a male, blue-collar, industrial working class. World War II began to have an impact on the composition and character of the active industrial working class. In some developed capitalist economies (notably UK and US) there was a massive wartime entry of women into the industrial working class.
28. With the end of World War II the objective reality within many war-torn European societies created the conditions for inter-class, national reconstruction and development social pacts. In West Germany, France, Italy, the UK, amongst others, national bourgeoisies supported explicit or implicit social pacts with their respective trade union movements and governments in a shared commitment:
    - To rebuild ruined economic infrastructure
    - To training and skilling – bearing in mind the war-time loss of manpower
    - To provide major social wage interventions – public housing, public transport, national health services, etc. in exchange for productivity advances by the working class
29. The capitalist welfare state in many advanced capitalist countries was further facilitated by major Marshall Aid-type investment by the US into Western Europe and Japan, which was in turn motivated by
    - The US's post-war economy's need for markets; and

- The need for a capitalist response to the new reality of an extensive socialist bloc of countries. Capitalists needed to attempt to demonstrate that social gains (like full employment and an extensive social security net) could be made under capitalism

After 1945 the feminisation of the working class also expanded significantly in many advanced capitalist societies. The significant entry of women as workers was both a push and pull factor in the development of post-1945 welfare states – capital's need to reproduce and expand the working class now required shifting many reproductive functions out of unpaid household work by women into publicly provided welfare services. The widespread expansion of a welfare state in much of the developed capitalist world also saw a significant expansion of public sector employment and of services, in which women workers were often in the majority.

30. In South Africa, World War II saw not just the increasing feminisation – but critically the massive Africanisation and urbanisation of a semi-skilled, factory-based, industrial working class. Apart from the continued expansion of the white welfare state, the South African counterpart in this period to the post-WW2 welfare state was the apartheid-era racially discriminatory, but nonetheless mass roll-out of primary and secondary Bantu education schools, a significant township housing program. There was nothing philanthropic about this – it was a strategic move to preserve CST racial capital by reproducing cheap Black labour, but now as increasingly semi-skilled factory operatives and as daily migrants from peri-urban townships. In short, these need to be understood as apartheid-era industrial policy and labour

market interventions.

31. Increasingly after 1945, in the developed capitalist economies, the profile of the working class was beginning to change from a relatively exclusive, largely male-dominated, blue-collar, industrial working class concentrated in classical industries like mining, ship-building, railways and large factories organised on Taylorist assembly-line principles. While these critical strata of the proletariat typically remained central within the advanced capitalist economies for another 30 years or so, their pre-eminent position within the proletariat was increasingly challenged by what, in the bourgeois media, was portrayed as the emergence of a "new", "more individualistic and consumerist", "middle class" in the burgeoning professional and services sectors.
32. In fact, these were overwhelmingly and objectively (but often not subjectively - in terms of their class consciousness and sense of class solidarity) also part of an increasingly stratified working class. Many trade union and left parties (social democratic and communist) failed to adequately respond to the new challenges presented by the changing composition of the working class – a failure that was exploited fully by the neo-liberal onslaught.
33. The end of the "Golden Epoch" (1945-1973) of capitalism – globalisation and the neo-liberal assault on the working class
34. The first "oil shock" of 1973 exposed the deepening structural problems that had been gathering in the welfarist states of the developed capitalist centre. The post-war boom, based on explicit (or implicit) tripartite social contracts, began to encounter serious structural problems. Economic stagnation accompanied by growing inflation – stagflation – was a major symptom of this deepening crisis for sustained capitalist profitability.
35. The 1970s crisis of profitability in the advanced capitalist coun-

tries was the critical factor in driving the next major wave of imperialist global expansion, roughly from the 1980s in to the present – what has come to be called "globalisation". Globalisation has had a profound impact on the character of the working class.

Globalisation and the world-wide restructuring of the working class

36. Before the onset of the late 20th century wave of globalisation, labour markets that were open to transnational, private corporate investment had about 1 billion workers and work seekers. By 2000, the labour force in these countries had risen to 1,5-billion. Meanwhile, China's liberal reforms from the late-1970s, and the collapse of the former Soviet bloc countries at the end of the 1980s, added a further 1,5 billion according to Guy Standing (*The Precariat – the New Dangerous Class*). As a result, "the labour supply in the globalising economies trebled. The newcomers came with little capital and with very low wages, altering the world's capital-labour ratio and weakening the bargaining position of workers."
37. The weakened bargaining position affected workers in the advanced capitalist countries themselves. Reagan and Thatcher launched vicious attacks against the union movements in their respective societies from which the unions have never fully recovered to this day. The neo-liberal "flexible labour market" lobby intensified, with realistic threats of disinvestment and relocation to low-wage economies if worker rights were not rolled back.

South African monopoly capital – a delayed starter in the globalisation process

38. For a variety of reasons, South Africa was at first partially insulated from these global developments. Through the 1980s, South Africa's not insignificant monopoly capitalist sector could not easily follow its international peer group on the globalisation freeway in pursuit of high profits in low wage economies. Anti-apartheid economic and financial sanctions, as well as apartheid state defensive measures (the financial rand and related stringent exchange control measures, for instance) made taking the on-ramp to trans-nationalisation a very difficult proposition for our local monopoly sector. Moreover, the rising, semi-insurrectionary struggles against apartheid, and the complicity of monopoly capital in the apartheid system, added to local trade union strength. Increasingly, work-place, community and wider political struggles reinforced each other and further contributed to South African monopoly capital finding itself relatively off-balance.
39. With its surplus bottled up within the country, South African mining and finance capital tended to conglomerate into multi-sectoral operations – diversifying into sectors like agro-processing, chemicals, paper, forestry and retail. At the same time, manufacturing corporates diversified into mining – like Barlow Rand, a sprawling conglomerate in the 1980s that became one of the largest corporations in the world in terms of the number of its employees (the majority within SA). With external investments and foreign markets restricted, South African monopoly capital, ironically in the midst of apartheid, had an objective interest in local industrialisation, in expanding the local market – and therefore, in even reaching a class compromise with the

expanding industrial working class organised in the emerging trade union movement.

40. These specific realities within the South African conjuncture of the 1980s and early 1990s unfortunately also led to what we might describe as workerist, corporatist and social accord illusions within the labour and broader progressive movement. As we will go on to show, the conjunctural realities that gave rise to these illusions were to be actively eroded in SA after the democratic breakthrough of 1994 – but workerist, corporatist and social accord illusions have often persisted into the present.

Is a social democratic-type social accord a viable option in contemporary SA?

We have spent some time sketching out both:

- The temporary historical conditions under which the classical social democratic, Keynesian-inspired, welfare state systems developed after 1945 in war-torn societies in many developed economies of the North – noting how, since the mid-1970s, capital has led a massive assault on the national welfare state, tearing up the social contract class compromise in the process; and
- The temporary and specific historical conditions in SA in the 1980s in which, paradoxically, (despite the presence of a repressive white minority apartheid state) the emerging progressive trade union movement in the private sector was able to make significant gains – symbolised by, amongst other things, the launch of Cosatu in 1985. Of course, these gains would not have been made without a revolutionary working class struggle – but some of the objective conditions confronting SA monopoly capital created leverage for the working class in which advanc-

es could be made. **To what extent is the same leverage still present?**

We have rehearsed these points here because ever since the early 1990s many illusions have proliferated about the possibilities and actualities of the post-apartheid SA. The very title of the ANC's 1994 election manifesto – The Reconstruction and Development Programme (the RDP), borrowed its name from the World Bank's original title (the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development) – when it was mandated to fund the recovery of war-torn European capitalist societies – to prevent them falling under the sway of powerful left movements that had led the anti-fascist resistance in many parts of western Europe. The 1996 class project developed a paper on the State in SA that advocated a "Golden Triangle" between capital, labour and the state. A very similar programmatic perspective is offered in the final chapter of the National Development Plan, which calls for an over-arching tripartite deal in which labour commits to wage restraint and improving productivity and capital, in return, commits to investing the increased surplus within the country in job creation.

Are these perspectives realistic in contemporary SA? Do they grasp the reality of the global capitalist economy and of SA's economy in 2015?

41. Who has been the principal beneficiary of the post-1994 democratic breakthrough – SA monopoly capital or the organised working class?
42. The 1994 breakthrough certainly brought a series of real gains for the trade union movement – not least a range of progressive labour laws (including the Basic Conditions of Employment and the Labour Relations acts). However, with the lifting of

apartheid-era economic sanctions, complemented by excessive and ill-judged ANC-led government liberalisation from the mid-1990s, South Africa's monopoly capital sector was now able to happily take the globalisation freeway. This has seen massive disinvestment, foreign stock exchange listings, transfer pricing, tax evasion, de-industrialisation and formal sector job losses. At the very moment that South Africa's progressive trade union movement began to reap the labour market legislation fruits of its revolutionary, decades-long struggle, these gains were being actively eroded in practice.

43. As has often been remarked, both the South African government and the labour movement, now increasingly confront all of the private sector giants of our economy (the likes of SA Breweries – now SAB Miller – Sasol, De Beers, Investec, Anglo, Old Mutual, etc.) as if they were foreign investors.

SA monopoly capital and the strategy of undercutting post-1994 labour gains

44. SA monopoly capital has not only relied on trans-nationalisation and capital flight to alter the class balance of forces within South Africa. Production processes and the labour market have also been actively re-shaped within the national economy in ways that have eroded union power in the private sector. In carrying forward this anti-worker agenda, SA monopoly capital has relied heavily on the neo-liberal repertoire of retrenchments, casualisation and informalisation as drivers for the active segmentation of the labour market.
45. Aggregate private sector employment growth since 1994 has been largely confined to non-industrial sectors like financial and business services, and wholesale and retail. What is more, in the

"financial sector", for instance, overwhelmingly the numbers of jobs created are, in fact, not clerical jobs, but poorly paid and insecure security services (Bhorat, FM, 27 June 2013). All of these sectors have been heavily characterised by casualisation and the use of labour brokers.

46. In November 2010 labour-brokered workers were estimated to represent 6,8% of total employment, or 23,2% of workers classified as temporary. In 2013 Adcorp (the largest labour brokering company in SA) boasted that the industry had a R44-billion turnover, and that from 2000 to 2012 while the number of permanent jobs declined by 1,9-million, the number of temporary jobs increased by 2,6-million.

Migration and the further segmentation of the working class

The 19th and early 20th centuries saw major waves of migration of "surplus" reserve labour from industrialising European countries to the "New World" and to colonies like SA. In the current era of imperialist expansion the flow of migration has reversed on a massive scale. Punishing structural adjustment programmes imposed on third world societies, and the ongoing accelerated penetration of transnational agri-business into peasant economies in the South have produced massive floods of migration from the countryside to informal settlements in teeming Third World cities, and from the Third World into the advanced economies. Annually, more than 1-billion people are now crossing national borders and the number is growing.

Today, the most militarised international border in the world is not between North and South Korea, but between the US and Mexico. It is designed to keep desperate (but "illegal") work-seekers out. However, as Saskia Sassen and others have eloquently

demonstrated, there is a deep hypocrisy in this. Tens of millions of desperate, "illegal" work seekers nonetheless still find their way into the US and Europe. As Sassen writes: "what looks like failure from the perspective of controlling entry is actually delivering results that particular sectors inside the US want from immigrants." Key sectors of the US economy (like agriculture, retail and hospitality services) require large numbers of low-paid workers. Their "illegal" status means they are prepared to accept low wages and precarious working conditions. While a highly weaponised border sustains the charade of illegality, "US governments, regardless of political party, have repeatedly shown a strong reluctance to allocate funds and create jobs to inspect work-places" (Sassen).

The situation in the EU is similar. In this case it is the Mediterranean that acts as a dangerous hurdle for illegal immigration as hundreds of deaths by drowning in the past months have tragically underlined. Since the 1970s major European countries have had immigration policies partly to control but also to actively encourage immigration. European demographic trends mean that there are ageing populations, this, coupled with relatively high education and training standards and relatively comprehensive if challenged welfare systems, has meant that there has been a growing shortage of labour prepared to do unskilled, manual, so-called "dirty" work.

Although our own South African social and regional realities are somewhat different, millions of "illegals", desperate work-seekers from throughout the continent, displaced by imperialist-driven structural adjustment programmes, climate change, and civil wars, have poured into post-apartheid South Africa. Many hundreds of thousands are super-exploited, non-unionised workers in agriculture, mining, security and hospitality services, as well as in

the informal sector. This, too, has impacted on the relative bargaining strength of the South African labour movement.

Moreover, in the South African case, our overall (although not the White South African) demographic profile is quite different from the ageing population profile of most advanced capitalist economies. This means that the competition between nationals and foreign national migrants for less-skilled and informal sector jobs is liable to be much more intense, and the perception (and often the reality) that management in sectors like agriculture, security and hospitality is actively displacing employment opportunities for South Africans through hiring foreign nationals (legal or otherwise) is much greater. Of course, the "paper-less" are much more vulnerable to being subject to illegal exploitation.

The intensified segmentation of the South African working class since 1994

47. A wide range of processes, then, has actively re-shaped and segmented the South African proletariat since 1994. Stats SA's "Quarterly Labour Force Survey, Quarter 4, 2014" gives some indication of the impact of this massive restructuring of the South African proletariat:

Total labour force	20,2-million
Formal sector (non-agricultural)	10,9-million
Informal sector (non-agricultural)	2,4-million
Agricultural	0,7-million
Private Household	1,2-million
Unemployed	4,9-million
Discouraged job-seekers	2,4-million

Note how the Stats SA data excludes "discouraged job-seekers" (i.e. those who did not take active steps during the previous 4 weeks to find employment) from its total "labour force" figure[1].

48. Of those in both formal and informal employment, Stats SA records the following:

Unspecified	Permanent Contract	Temporary
2.9-million	8,3-million	2,0-million

49. Many commentators believe that Stats SA's figures for the unemployed (including the "discouraged") are under-estimates, and the same applies to its figure for those in the "informal" sector.
50. Furthermore, these general statistics – encompassing those employed in both the private and public sectors – fail to give an adequate picture of the impact of monopoly capital's radical restructuring of workers in the private sector.
51. Historically, the main segmentation of the South African working class was on socially engineered racial grounds. While racial segmentation persists, increasingly a range of other divisions have been driven in the private sector – notably, between a relatively diminishing core of permanent, formal sector workers and a growing pool of casualised, temporary workers, and an expanding mass of the unemployed and the informally employed. All of these serve to challenge the possibilities for building working class unity and organisation.

The differential impact on private and public sector workers

52. While right-sizing and public sector restructuring in the mid-1990s – and notably in municipalities – had a negative impact on public sector workers, in general terms public sector workers have been the major beneficiaries within the working class of the post-apartheid reality.
53. Percentage unionisation (source Bhorat 2014)

Year	Private Sector	Public Sector
1997	35,6% (1,81-m)	55,2% (0,8m)
2013	24,4%	69,2% (1,4m)

54. There has been a significant drop in the percentage of unionised workers in the private sector (although actual numbers have increased marginally) – while there has been a very significant increase in the percentage and numbers of unionised workers in the public sector.
55. At Cosatu's 2012 National Congress public servants comprised 39% of membership of the federation (in contrast to 7% in 1991). This public sector percentage will have since increased with the expulsion of Numsa and the continued loss of membership in many private sector affiliates.
56. The downward trend in union density in the private sector has been driven sectorally by declining membership numbers in manufacturing, construction, finance and agriculture. However, **mining** (historically the highest unionised sector of SA's economy) continued to show growth: moving from 71% unionisation in 1997 to 80% in 2013. The mining sector reality may well be part of an explanation for the inclination for non-NUM unions like Numsa to seek to cannibalise membership in this sector in

the face of challenges in much of their own historic manufacturing sectors.

The anti-trade union propaganda offensive in SA

57. The combined impact of the many factors noted above – as well as internal turmoil and subjective errors within the union movement (which we will consider later) - is also reflected in other data:
58. According to HSRC research, in 2011, more than two-fifths of South Africans (42%) said they trusted trade unions. By 2013, this had fallen to 26%, with 42% of the survey saying they distrusted trade unions with the remainder choosing to be neutral. The 2013 level of trust in trade unions placed them were behind the trust levels for churches (76%), the SABC (69%), national government (38%), traditional leaders (42%), and even local government (29%).
59. However, this drop in public trust in trade unions should, of course, be understood substantially (although not entirely) as a neo-liberal manufactured hatred of trade unions. The 2013 dramatic drop in trust in unions in the HSRC poll should be partly situated in the context of the 2012 Marikana tragedy – in regard to which the mainstream commercial media went out of its way to portray events as if they were simply reducible to "inter-union" rivalry (a 2012 version of the early 1990s "black on black" violence racist propaganda).
60. This anti-labour ideological campaign is backed by the anti-majoritarian liberal think-tanks (see for instance John Kane-Berman, "Opportunity knocks with crumbling of reactionary Cosatu", Business Day, 17 November 2014). The DA is also active in this space – blaming unions (and Cosatu) in particular for the

unemployment crisis, and developing a right-wing conservative discourse that blames "Big Government and Big Unions" for all social ills – (with barely a mention of Big Capital, of course).

61. We should not, of course, be surprised that there is a powerful anti-union and anti-labour propaganda campaign. However, the fact that there is such a campaign means that we need to develop a much more effective counter-ideological campaign. This, too, must be part of re-building the trade union movement in SA.
62. Among the key proactive counter-measures that need to be taken by unions to meet the challenge of this propaganda offensive are:

    • Cleaning up their own act – dealing decisively with cases of corruption, and the excessive life-style social distance between leadership and mass base – particularly when the latter takes on an ostentatious form;

    • Ensuring that public sector unions and their members prioritise service to the public. Insensitivity to working class communities in front-line Government offices, and in the case of public sector, industrial action that impacts on learners, or hospital patients, plays directly into the hands of the anti-union propaganda offensive.

    • The use of violence against other workers during strike action – or the sabotage of public facilities (for example burning trains) must be dealt with decisively.

    • Above all, the better-organised sectors of the working class must ensure that they do not widen the segmentation of the proletariat by narrowly focusing only on their own issues.
63. It would be wrong to think of our trade unions, and of Cosatu in particular, as if they were simply passive victims over the past two decades of a global and monopoly capital-driven offensive.

64. There are two sets of reasons for saying this, positive and negative.

64.1. Positively – Cosatu has been an active opponent of neo-liberalism since 1994

Over the past 20 years Cosatu, typically in alliance with the SACP, has fought many important battles, some of them rear-guard actions in the face of local neo-liberal inspired interventions. The Cosatu-SACP left-wing axis, for instance, was absolutely critical in the provisional defeat of the major privatisation strategy unleashed by the ANC-led government in the early 2000s. Likewise, trade union pressure on the ANC government led to early state-led industrial policy initiatives, which have now been consolidated into the centre-piece of governments' progress, inclusive-growth strategies. An early leader in this process and the major beneficiary to date of these policies has been Numsa and it historical worker base in the auto and auto components sector. It is ironic, therefore, that it is precisely Numsa leadership (now expelled from Cosatu) that has led the anti-state, regime-change opposition within the federation.

64.2.1. Negatively – there have also been internal union weaknesses and subjective errors

64.2.2. If external factors have played a major role in creating the context for the turmoil and splits within Cosatu, there are, of course, important internal factors as well. Critical among these is what Sakhela Buhlungu has described as the "paradox of victory". The victories of the trade union movement, born out of its central role in the anti-apartheid struggle, have seen significant institutional advances with real dangers of bureaucratisation. In many cases there has been a growing distance between an office-bound leadership and the factory-floor membership.

64.2.3. Cosatu affiliates have themselves not been immune to the dangers of the "sins of incumbency", attributed frequently to the ANC as a ruling party. Faced with the restructuring of the working class, unions predominantly active in the private industrial sectors have increasingly become focused on (or defensively confined to) the more formal and better paid worker strata – a challenge confronting both the two major rivals in the recent past (NUM and Numsa).

64.2.4. Public sector workers (with the exception of municipal workers) have, generally, not been buffeted by the global neo-liberal restructuring of the working class to the same extent as those in the private sector. Membership of these unions has grown significantly post-1994. However, in several public sector unions there are cases of confusion between union functions and public sector managerial responsibilities. In these cases there are dangers of union leadership positions being abused to advance personal careers within the public service, rather than the active servicing of grass-roots members.

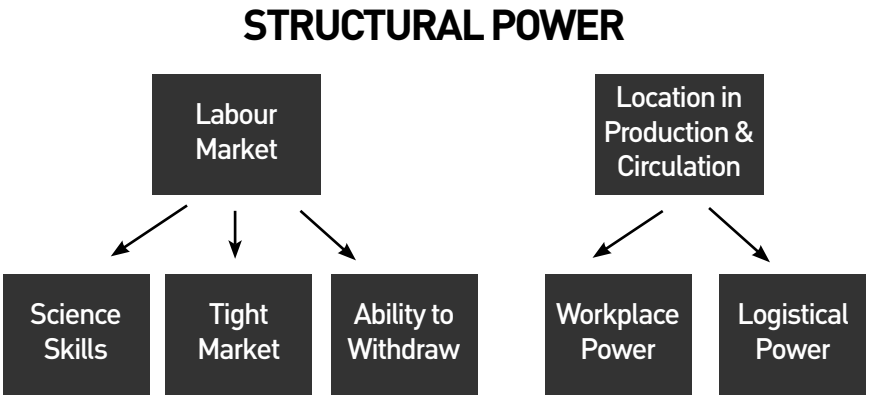
64.2.5. An even graver danger for worker solidarity is the phenomenon of "business unionism". In the recent past the SACP has increasingly spoken out about this problem. The major unions all have nominal control over multi-billion rand retirement funds. These, in turn, have been leveraged to set up union investment arms. In principle, if subjected to democratic worker control and guided by clear strategic objectives, these investment arms have the potential to be a critical pillar of a solidarity economy – investing, for instance, in desperately needed social wage assets like affordable public transport or public housing. Sadly, in practice, they have often become entry-points through which the capitalist class has inserted its

DNA into the head-offices of many unions. Much of the recent turmoil within Cosatu affiliates is to be located in competing factions seeking to control these resources.

Mounting a counter-offensive

The labour movement does not have to be, and must not be, a simple victim of the global offensive of capital against labour. To develop effective strategies it is important to unpack the range of offensive and defensive options potentially available to labour. Conventionally, it is labour's presence at the point of production that has been understood to be it key strategic weapon in the struggle against capital. This remains a key consideration, but it is not the only potential class struggle point of leverage for labour. It is useful to distinguish two major domains of potential labour power leverage – what some writers have described as:

- Labour's structural power; and
- Labour's associational power.



65. As the diagram on the previous page seeks to illustrate, labour's potential/actual sources of structural power can be divided into its potential leverage:
    - in the labour market, and
    - in its location within capitalist production and circulation.

66. In the labour market, labour can exert power over capital through:

66.1. The possession of scarce skills. Still today, as a legacy of the colour bar labour market legislation of the past, a union like Solidarity wields a degree of power on the basis of relatively scarce skills in critical areas like aircraft technicians, air traffic controllers, etc. Generally speaking, as these examples illustrate, the control over scarce skills is unlikely to open up into a progressive agenda. This is now also a danger within the main-stream labour movement – how do the major unions achieve an effective balance between what is often their core membership (formal, skilled and semi-skilled workers) and other sectors (rock-drill operators in mining, or foundry workers and scrap metal workers in the metal sector, for example).

66.2. Given our extraordinarily high levels of unemployment, workers in SA do not generally have the leverage of a tight labour market. However, the variety of government job creation initiatives (re-industrialisation, beneficiation, localisation, state procurement, co-op and SMME development, skills training) needs to be understood not just as a response to the crisis of unemployment – but measures which, by lowering unemployment, can in principle increase the labour market bargaining position of workers ;

66.3. The ability to withdraw is a very important but neglected

potential point of working class leverage, however limited it might be.

The ability of workers to withdraw from the capitalist labour market – i.e. the ability to de-commodify work

67. During the AMCU-led platinum strike, rock-drill operators were able (at great pain of course) to extend their strike over many months. This was, in part, due to their ability to "go back home" to rural homesteads and to meagre household sustainability due to the continued existence of communal land tenure and to the expansion of social grants in these rural areas. (Obviously we are not commenting here on the wisdom of the prolonged strike or on its likely medium-term impact – mine closures, retrenchments and increasing capitalisation of mining operations). While the conservation of communal land tenure in a meagre and increasingly over-crowded 13% of SA's territory was a cornerstone for the reproduction of cheap migrant labour for the mines – the continued existence of communal land tenure is a potential point of leverage for the South African working class. This means that:
    - The struggle for the democratisation of communal land tenure – rather than its abolition and its shifting into a capitalist land market dispensation – must be strengthened. The latter (advocated by the DA) will - as has happened in other African countries - result in rapid rural class stratification, with a few willing buyers and many impoverished and desperate sellers. This will lead to increased landlessness and impoverishment of the majority of those currently living in the former reserves, and it will impact, in turn, on many workers in urban areas whose extended household survival strategies still depend in part on

a foot-hold in the countryside. We need to understand the linkage between labour struggles and the land struggle including the struggle for sustainable land reform and the struggle against the commodification of land tenure.

- A second route down which labour's bargaining power can be enhanced by strengthening its ability to withdraw (temporarily or permanently) from the capitalist labour market is through the expansion of the social wage and particularly through a more comprehensive publicly provided social security system
- Thirdly, as the data noted above has clarified – a significant role in altering the class balance of forces has been the expansion and unionisation of public sector work in the post-1994 period. Much of this work still remains "alienated" work, owing to a lack of thorough democratisation of the public sector – but it does act as an important counterweight to the ravages of the neo-liberal labour market.
- Public employment programmes – the EPWP and CWP programmes – should also not be seen simply as temporary "make-work" measures, but rather as another potential form for changing the balance of class forces on the capitalist labour market. Currently involving some 1-million participants a year, these programmes need to be expanded, improved in terms of the quality of training and assets and services produced, and progressively move in the direction of becoming a "work guarantee programme", as envisaged in the Freedom Charter ("Everyone shall have the right and duty to work").

68. We now turn to the second leg of labour's potential structural power (its location within capitalist production and circulation).

Labour's power at the point of production

69. It is obvious that labour's location within the capitalist production process itself is a critical (if not the critical) point of leverage that it has in the on going class struggle. Trade union struggles and progressive legislation (LRA, BCEA and Health and Safety legislation) have all contributed to rolling back some of capital's monopoly over the management of production to maximise surplus extraction at the point of production. Capital's counter-offensive, which we have already elaborated upon (casualisation, labour brokering, increasing capital intensity, etc), has sought to dilute and reverse these advances.
70. Another well-acknowledged fact is that labour's potential point of production power is challenged in dispersed work-places (domestic work, agriculture, the security sector, much of the informal sector, etc).
71. In these sectors innovative forms of organisation are required – some of which will be touched upon below.

Labour's potential logistical power

72. While generally speaking, over the last 30 years or so capital has succeeded globally in weakening organised labour's leverage at the point of production, the very nature of imperialist globalisation has opened up new spaces of capitalist vulnerability.
73. Capitalist production and realisation is now organised across vast spaces and along geographically dispersed "value chains". A product may be designed in one locality, and its different components manufactured in several other localities, with its eventual packaging and marketing occurring in yet other places.
74. This potentially creates logistical points of vulnerability that can be strategically exploited by labour.

75. A classical case is provided by the farm-workers strike in De Doorns in 2012/13
76. The De Doorns farm-workers strike involved mainly seasonal temporary workers – interestingly with a class solidarity forged in which Coloured and African South Africans as well as labour-brokered foreign nationals struck together. Family and community members from informal settlements were also involved.
77. The success of the strike action depended upon the workers exploiting several "logistical" realities:
    - The strike occurred at the critical harvesting time for high quality table grapes to be exported to European markets
    - Much of the strike action consisted in blocking highways
78. Organisationally it is important to note that (partly as a result of the complexity of organising in the farming sector) there was minimal trade union involvement. FAWU had a very weak presence, and other small "unions" – often operating more as local advice offices in the Boland – were more active. The strikers often depended much more on their own localised community networks.

Leveraging labour's potential logistical power – should we organise sectorally or along "value chains"?

79. Unfortunately, the current Numsa leadership group has introduced this important question in a factionalising way to justify attempts to unilaterally cannibalise union membership from other sectors. Cosatu's founding principle – one industry, one union – was a crucial foundational step for the launch of the federation 20 years ago. Unless and until there are principled discussions and collective resolutions taken to change this founding principle, it is simply factionalist opportunism to undermine

the principle.

80. However, this does not mean that we should not open up a sober and principled discussion on how, organisationally, the working class can best leverage its potential logistical power. This might mean that there is agreement that sectoral organisation remains the key principle, while better cooperation and coordination along multi-sectoral value-chains is developed. It might, on the other hand, mean re-thinking organisational structures.
81. Either way. We should not underestimate both the important positive possibilities AND the difficulties of maximising worker power along value chains. For instance, during the 2013 Numsa-led auto-sector strike, coordination WITHIN a single sector and WITHIN a single union broke down when auto assembly workers settled, only to find that many couldn't return to work because the components sector then came out.
82. Which brings us to the broader question of:
83. Labour's actual/potential associational power
84. This refers basically to labour's potential power through alliances, social movements, union-community mobilisation, social pacts, networks, international affiliations, etc.
85. All of these inter-related issues require critical assessment and review in the current South African reality – what has worked, what has changed? In this intervention we will focus on three aspects, and with a particular reference to Cosatu:
    - The tripartite alliance – is it functioning optimally?
    - Trade unions – social movements and working class communities
    - Trade unions and the ANC-led government

Cosatu and the Tripartite Alliance

86. The 1985 launch of Cosatu as a "Charterist" formation in effect aligned the new federation not only with the UDF, but also with the banned ANC and SACP. It marked the relative displacement of a syndicalist/workerist leadership hegemony of its predecessor, Fosatu. The launch of Cosatu was not an automatic or pre-ordained outcome, but it represented a strategic shift in response to a changing reality. The re-building of a progressive trade union movement from 1973 after the strategic defeat of the liberation movement in the mid-1960s owed a great deal to what was later described as "workerism". In the conditions of the mid- to late-1970s it made sense to focus on careful shop-floor organisation, and caution not to expose the new shoots of union organisation too easily to security police crack-down through overt politicisation. However, in some quarters, tactics became ideological principles, and with the rising tide of both community and union mobilisation and militancy by the mid-1980s, a narrow workerism had become a blockage.
87. But what of the tripartite alliance today?
88. Soon after the 1994 democratic breakthrough, the Alliance ran into challenging times. With the hegemonic emergence within the ANC and ANC-led government of what the Party characterised as the "1996 class project", the Alliance ran into turbulent waters. A key pillar of the 1996 class project was to marginalise the SACP and to de-politicise Cosatu – confining it largely to a wage-negotiating role.
89. Ideological and mobilisational opposition to this 1996 class project was the basis on which a strong SACP/Cosatu working relationship was built in this period and important partial victories were won, including:

- The halt towards a runaway privatisation project
- The reversal of Aids denialism; and
- Importantly – the provision of an alternative perspective to a rising tide of disaffection within the ANC itself

90. Within both the SACP and Cosatu there were those in leadership positions who were unhappy at the anti-1996 class stand. This encouraged considerable internal and (arguably at times) factional lobbying within each other's formations and also within the ANC itself.
91. A turning point was reached at the ANC's 2007 National Polokwane Conference, and the subsequent recall of President Mbeki as state president. These relatively dramatic events within the Alliance's recent history opened up a new terrain and new prospects – but they also carried their own baggage:
    - The Polokwane conference outcome was achieved with a "marriage of convenience" between a left bloc and a right-wing populist group, which the SACP soon thereafter characterised as a tenderpreneuring "new tendency". Part of this "new tendency" later morphed into the EFF.
    - The struggle against the 1996 class project often became over-personalised (as if the displacement of Cde Thabo Mbeki in itself would end the project), and the solution to the problem also at times became excessively individualised around the person of Cde Jacob Zuma.
92. This "baggage" from Polokwane (inevitable as it might have been) has since had some negative impacts within Cosatu and in the relationship between Cosatu and the SACP.
93. Among the dangers in excessively personalising politics and developing personality cults is that undue expectations can easily be invested in individuals. Worse still, when these expectations

are disappointed, hero worship can turn into an infantile anti-fixation. Much of Julius Malema's current politics, with its myopic fixation on President Zuma, is a case in point. However, with a different character and content, we believe some of the same syndrome can be found in the recent political posture of Cde Vavi – for instance, his entirely inappropriate (for a serving Cosatu general secretary) reaction to the electoral outcome of the ANC Mangaung National Conference.

94. A related, but more substantial point of weakness in the post-Polokwane alliance has been the perpetuation of the failure to develop an effective, joint programme of action.
95. With the notable exception of election campaigns, since 1994, the ANC has failed almost entirely to lead its alliance in grass-roots campaigns that mobilise its mass constituency. (The recent important anti-xenophobia mobilisation is an encouraging partial exception). Which brings us to the next aspect of "associational" power:

The trade union movement and working class communities in the current SA reality

96. A key strategic and organisational response to capital's segmentation of the working class into increasingly precarious work must be for unions to form much more active and organic links with a network of community and social movement formations. But how? And around what strategic agenda?
97. In the early 1990s and immediately after the 1994 democratic breakthrough, the SACP's perspective was that the Tripartite Alliance's grass-roots structures – notably ANC and SACP township branches, and Cosatu shop-steward locals – along with the civic movement and other CBO and social movement formations

would sustain the earlier union/community struggle traditions that had been critical to the defeat of the apartheid regime.

98. In particular, working with our alliance partners, the SACP proposed the formation of community based RDP Councils. The proposal was taken up by the ANC's SGO, then under Cdes Cyril Ramaphosa and Cheryl Carolus. In particular, the idea was that Alliance branches and shop steward locals would mobilise communities to actively engage, amongst other things, with the range of popular participatory structures envisaged in the RDP, and given some statutory weight through parliament in the course of the 1990s – CPFs, SGBs, Ward Committees, people's budgeting, public transport forums, popular engagement in developing local IDPs, etc.
99. These initiatives never really took off, falling victim, in part, to the 1996 class project which had a very different, bureaucratic, top-down "delivery" model of transformation.
100. Increasingly, ANC local branches became narrow electoral formations, focused on local elite rivalries and often remote from the socio-economic problems of the communities in which they were located. While active, from time to time, in Red October and other campaigns, local SACP branches have also sometimes became embroiled in the politics of politicians. Many shop steward locals have also dissolved. At a local community level, the Alliance at best only comes together in joint mobilisation and campaigning for ANC-elections.
101. The SACP has run several important Red October campaigns, notably the Financial Sector Campaign, with uneven support from Cosatu, and with little more than lip-service support from ANC structures.
102. In short, the important traditions of localised organs of popular

power in working class communities have largely been lost, and certainly as an Alliance we are not active as formations providing strategic leadership and coherence. The repertoire of resistance tactics (burning tyres, barricades, toyi-toying) remains, but it tends to be spontaneous, sporadic, and diverse. It is often inward-turning (one faction against another, back-yarders against informal settlement households around priorities on the formal housing list, one taxi association against another, xenophobic violence, etc). It would be absolutely wrong to believe that most of the township delivery protests do not have their roots in very real socio-economic problems and in real frustrations with government, or our own formations. But popular power remains, at best, protest power and not transformative power. Most independent studies also suggest that in the majority of cases the protests are not anti-ANC as such, but rather designed to capture the attention of someone, or structure "higher up" – in other words, the protests tend not to build popular protagonism and popular governance in local communities. Some destroy public property, and at best many others simply reinforce the top-down delivery model by demanding "delivery".

103. This is the context, presumably, in which from the side of Cosatu during the general secretaryship of Cde Vavi, or latterly from the side of Numsa, attempts have been made at forming a different kind of relationship with working class communities through some kind of "civil society platform", or United Front. In principle initiatives of this kind are to be welcomed. However, in practice these initiatives, in the view of the Party, have been flawed by:

    • Positioning themselves factionally, simply as oppositional to the Alliance and ANC-led government,

- Framing themselves as "watch-dogs" against government corruption, for instance, without acknowledging the challenges of corruption in the labour movement, for instance
- Being constituted less out of grass-roots formations, and more out of "advocacy" NGOs, many funded by European or North American donors

104. At the same time neither the SACP nor Cosatu should, in response, conduct themselves factionally in regard to any genuine causes raised from these quarters – whether it be solidarity with Palestine, or campaigns against corruption or xenophobia, or (as Cosatu has correctly done) with the Food Sovereignty Campaign.

The changing character of working class communities and settlement patterns

105. We have argued that we cannot simply go "back to basics" in terms of union organisation, without considering the dramatic changes under way in the character and composition of the working class. So, too, when it comes to rebuilding labour-community organisation, we need to consider the changes that have been happening to working class communities. In fact, the two things are inter-related.
106. The peri-urban South African working class township with its origins in the early 20th century was formalised, rigidly planned and perfected during the apartheid years – far enough away from white suburbs, amenities, and recreational facilities, close enough for daily migrancy into work. It was deliberately designed for racial confinement over weekends (when there was little public transport running) and during times of "trouble". Carefully ringed with rail-lines and freeways, townships were de-

signed to have the minimum points of exit so that the residents could be sealed off by the security forces should the need arise. For hostel dwellers on mine compounds the deliberate isolation was even harsher. However, the key point to remember is that apartheid was not just about racial exclusion – it was simultaneously about including the oppressed majority on inferior terms within the political economy of SA – primarily as workers, but also as mass consumers on the capitalist market.

107. A major part of the success of the rising waves of semi-insurrectionary struggle was the ability of our liberation movement to turn the apartheid strategy on its head, to use racial exclusion (in a township) as a weapon to collectively self-exclude – through general strikes or stayaways, through consumer boycotts of white shops, etc. In this way townships were turned into semi-liberated zones. However, because we were dealing here with a proletarianised reality (rather than an independent peasantry as in Cuba, Vietnam, or China), the general strike or stayaway, or general consumer boycott (as opposed to specific product boycotts) could only be sustained for a period of days or weeks, and not indefinitely. However, the collective self-exclusion forced the regime and capital into negotiations about the terms of inclusion.
108. It is, of course, important also to remember that the township, informal settlement, or hostel was not always controlled by progressive forces – shack-lords, witdoeke, ethnic vigilantes associated with Uwusa, or criminal gangs also contested for power and control.
109. This whole legacy still persists in many forms within working class communities. But there have also been significant changes – many of them essentially progressive, but which have had the

paradoxical effect of weakening working class solidarity in some respects.

- With the relative (but still only very partial) de-racialisation of urban settlement patterns, a key union (and political) cadre, along with more professional strata of the working class have moved into "lower-middle class" suburbs and townhouse developments. Those remaining within townships have better access than before to amenities and services, and there has been a minor migration of township school students into suburban schools – sometimes prompting the allegation that today's township-residing teachers "no longer send their own children to township schools". In these, and many other ways, the more organic bonds that once tied different black working class strata and their families together have been loosened.

Question: *Does the increased intra-working class violence evident in some of the recent working class strikes (notably, but not only the Security Workers strike) have anything to do with the greater challenges of maintaining strike discipline in the present as a result of the more fragmented settlement patterns of the working class?*

- The paradox of real or intended progress in transforming working class settlement patterns undermining working class solidarity is even more glaringly illustrated in the case of Marikana. One of the great achievements of NUM was to overcome the divide-and-rule ethnic strategies of mine management, by transforming mine compound hostels into organisational bases. One of NUM's important post-1994 victories was the abolition of the prison-like single-sex hostels. But the mining houses and government have failed to provide adequate alternative housing, and many migrant workers use the "living out allowance"

as a remittance to families in the rural areas, while moving into squalid informal settlements. Union organisation in these sprawling shanty towns has been compromised and there is considerable evidence that both the Five Madoda and the later Amcu phenomena used a network of informal settlement formations – shack-lords, ethnically-aligned anti-stock theft vigilante groups from the Eastern Cape, the minibus sector, etc as the organisational basis from which to launch their often violent anti-NUM projects.

110. We believe that these examples underline two basic points:

110.1 No progressive union can ignore the interplay between workplace and residential struggles and organisation. To advance working class struggles we need to analyse more carefully the persisting as well as the new realities confronting the broad working class in terms of settlement patterns and mobility.

110.2 It is not good enough dwelling in a nostalgia for "the-good-old-days" of township life. It is critical to mobilise around issues which unite the broader working class. These include:

- The crisis of chronic ***indebtedness,*** which impacts upon both the marginalised sectors of the working class as well as (indeed, often, even more) upon many workers in the so-called "new black middle-class"
- Decent, affordable, and reliable public transport
- The problems of crime and drug abuse and basic safety afflicting many working class localities

Cosatu and the post-1994 democratic state

111. One of the major areas of confusion and challenge confronting Cosatu and the broader union movement in SA after the 1994 democratic breakthrough has been understanding the nature

of the state, and therefore on how to engage with it. On the one hand, since the 1994 democratic elections there has been a steady flow of senior unionists into legislatures and into senior positions within the executive and state owned enterprises. Initially, in Cosatu ranks there was often a very instrumentalist version of the state – "put the right people into it, and all will be well". The experience has been mixed – with some former unionists playing a progressive role, others disappearing into invisibility, and still others actively espousing anti-worker, neo-liberal agendas.

112. Decades of union work is fatiguing subjectively. Understandably, some of the passage of unionists into government has been partly motivated on humane grounds – providing some financial and family stability. But this factor, coupled with the uneven experience of ex-unionists in government, has led in some quarters of the union movement to a largely dismissive attitude towards political activism within the state and legislatures. Fusing with inherent tendencies towards workerism, we find tendencies within parts of the union movement simply to regard all political activism from within the state/government as "inherently corrupt", "part of the gravy train", etc. As we have already remarked above, this then (unwittingly) plays directly into the neo-liberal agenda of rolling back the capacity to exert national sovereignty (by way of a state-led industrial policy, for instance) on the basis of democratic majority rule.
113. Further complicating this picture has been the evocation of a vulgar Marxism which assumes that the state has to be "either a capitalist state, or a socialist state finish an' klaar". Since the current South African democratic state is clearly not a socialist state, so this vulgar pseudo-Marxist position goes, "it must be a state

exercising the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie – finish an' klaar". This easily leads, in turn, towards a regime change agenda (directed against a democratic government with over 60% electoral support). Which again means that pseudo-leftist positions like this inevitably end up in the same agenda as right-wingers.

114. A concrete example of exactly how this kind of vulgar Marxism ends up in contradictions is provided by the disgracefully opportunist media statement issued by Numsa following the Marikana August 2012 tragedy.

> In the first place, the Numsa CC correctly condemned the police killing of miners on August 22 2012. It condemned the "savage, cowardly actions and excessive force used by the police, which invariably led to the deaths of 44 workers..." But notice how the statement deliberately conflates the killings of August 22 (34) with the 10 earlier deaths (including of policemen) at the hands of the strikers in the days before August 22.
>
> At this point in the statement vulgar pseudo-Marxism enters the scene. We are told that the police carried out the killings because they are simply an instrument of bourgeois rule and "will do anything to defend the property rights and profits of this class, including slaughtering the working class".
>
> But then, confusion starts to occur. A few sentences later the Numsa statement pleads that these "organs of class rule, particularly the police, should not be used recklessly and violently to intervene in industrial disputes involving workers and bosses." Leaving aside the presumption that what was at play in Marikana was a simple "industrial dispute between workers and bosses", what does this sentimental pleading mean – that the organs of supposed "bourgeois class dictatorship" shouldn't be unduly reckless

or violent as they go about their inevitable slaughtering work?

The confusion thickens when, later in the same statement, economic policy matters are discussed. The statement calls for "strengthening of the state sector in mining in particular…" But we have just been told that the post-1994 state and government's "strategic task and real reason for existence is the defence" of the capitalist "Minerals/Energy/Finance Complex"! If there is any logical consistency in all of this, then the Numsa statement must be calling for the mines to be taken over by a state that operates in the interests of mining capitalists!

115. The post-1994 democratic state is not a simple instrument, nor is it unilaterally "capitalist" or "pro-worker and poor" – it is a deeply contested space. It is often characterised by bureaucratic silos and policy contradictions and inconsistency (typically these are the symptoms of contesting class agendas from within and the impact of diverse class pressures from without). The state needs to be actively contested by progressive, anti-capitalist forces both from within and from without. Desertion from these tasks in the name of "remaining pure" is a betrayal of the democratic mandate that the overwhelming majority of SA's working class continues to bestow on the ANC-led government. Conversely, a naive defence of everything emanating from government is equally a desertion from our revolutionary tasks.

Let us re-build and unify Cosatu and the broader working class!

116. The current challenges within the trade union movement are a wake-up call for all progressive formations in South Africa. As we seek to recover the proud traditions of our revolutionary labour movement there are several basic principles that must be

observed:

- We need to appreciate that worker democracy within unions, and the servicing of workers in their daily shop-floor struggles is of paramount importance. Only a determined re-dedication to these tasks will counter the dangers of bureaucratic deviation and business unionism.
- The massive restructuring of the working class, placing large sectors of workers in "a-typical" employment effectively beyond the reach of traditional unionism, requires innovation.
- Responding to a massive non-unionised "precariat" also means recovering previous struggle traditions, notably the re-building of active solidarity between work-place and community struggles. This talks not just to internal union weaknesses, but also to the organisational and campaigning challenges of ANC and SACP local-level branches. It also raises questions around the numerous local level struggles in townships and the imperative of linking more effectively with them.
- Finally, above all, it is critical that progressives understand that a timid and uncritical stance by unions towards government, on the one hand, and (the flip-side of the same coin) worker mobilisation on the basis of a regime-change, anti-state oppositionism both play into the agenda of monopoly capital within the current realities of our society.

117. The trade union movement in our country stands at the crossroads. The dangers of increased intra-worker contest and of lose-lose union rivalry over membership with ordinary workers treated merely as cannon fodder to be mobilised demagogically into untimely and ill-considered actions on behalf of union head-office ambitions is very real. On the other hand, the traditions of worker solidarity and of militant shop-floor struggle have not

disappeared. The SACP is convinced that the great majority of Cosatu unionists, the tens of thousands of shop stewards, and the millions of organised workers in the federation's ranks will, once more, not fail the revolution.

Footnote

1. The latest Stats SA figures (released 26 May 2015) indicate a growth in the expanded unemployment figure to 36,1% (8,7-million people able to work but not employed).

THE NATIONAL QUESTION

Post-apartheid tribalism, language and the national question

South Africa's attempts to guarantee equality among its major languages is being abused to promote narrow ethno-nationalism, argues **Cde David Masondo**

The recent demand by the people of Malamulele, a predominately a Shangaan/Xitsonga speaking rural township in Limpopo, for their own municipality has been prominent in the public discourse.

The debate has often been reduced to whether a municipality at Malamulele is viable given the size of the population and the revenue potential. Framed in this way, the matter has been turned into a technocratic institutional issue, which ostensibly requires institutional-boundary designs devoid of politics. In certain circles the issue has been simply understood as a tribal conflict[1] between Vendas and Vatsonga/Shangaans. To reduce the demand for a municipality to tribalism is to over-simplify the issues. In the same vein, to deny the existence of tribal consciousness is to ignore how economic class interests are sometimes mediated through tribal and other identities.

The demand for a municipality by the people of Malamulele is essentially borne out of economic demands articulated in ethnic terms. Put differently, this is a reflection of inter and intra class struggles for basic services, jobs and other economic needs mediated and in-

terpreted through tribal lenses. These economic demands also provide tribal entrepreneurs with raw materials to use tribal identities to mobilise tribalised mass power to gain political and economic power. These tribal phenomena have brought back into focus the question of how to build a nation in a democratic South Africa.

In this article, I show that the articulation of economic demands through Shangaan tribal consciousness is also nourished by resurgence of ethnic consciousness throughout South Africa. The resurrection of different forms of ethnic consciousness does not just demonstrate our ANC government's failure to resolve our economic problems, but is also a manifestation of our inability as the ANC-led movement and all spheres of government to provide revolutionary answers to these seminal national questions in post-apartheid South Africa. To put this in Marxist abstract terms, this shows that the ANC has not only failed to transform the post-apartheid economic base, but also many features of the colonial apartheid superstructure. In arguing this, I use issues such as language, the renaming of geographic areas and the tribal authorities system (as a form of monarchical rule in our colonial context) to validate the claim that our movement has not yet provided revolutionary solutions to the post-apartheid national question. Instead, our ANC is unintentionally re-tribalising South Africa in different ways. This has set the conditions for a reawakening of politically regressive tribal consciousness, which not only impedes the rise of national consciousness, but more importantly class-consciousness.

The ANC-Alliance's clarion call for a "more radical, second phase" of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) provides an opportune moment for thinking not just about radical economic transformation, but also about questions of nation building. In the discussion of the content of the 'second phase', there is huge exaggeration of the politi-

cal achievements since 1994, and the focus has been largely on economic radical transformation. While it is important to deal with the material conditions (land redistribution, access to basic services, etc.) that set a conducive environment for tribalism, it is also important to pay attention to issues such as language as part of nation building that facilitates better conditions for class-consciousness. Language can be an important instrument in fragmenting or constructing a nation and a class. Language plays a key role in identity formation, collective action and class-consciousness. Nation building should include the adoption of two or three official languages (lingua francas), which should include English and one or two African official languages that should be spoken by all South Africans.

The argument for the adoption of these official languages should be clarified, lest it be misunderstood. It is not to suggest the resolution of the national question simply lies in the adoption of the suggested official languages. Neither do I argue for the banning of ethnic languages. I simply state that, adopting two or three languages as our South African official languages could set the necessary (but not sufficient) conditions for a common national identity and nation-building. Other ethnic languages should continue to exist as national languages, but not as official languages. In the context of my argument, Afrikaans would be a national language, but not an official language. The difference between a national and official language is that the latter is formally recognised and used in formal government communications and commerce – it is the language of the dominant political economy; and the former is recognised but not used as a government and trade communication language. For instance, Khilobedu[2], Khoi and Nam are currently national languages, but not official languages.

To place the centrality of language in nation building, I start by lay-

ing out a brief historical European experience on how language was used to answer the national question. This is followed by how colonial power answered the national question. I then show the pitfalls of our ANC-led 'nation-building' project in post-apartheid South Africa.

Non-linguistic and linguistic nationalisms

Before we get into the historical context of the role of language in nation-building and destruction, it is worth mentioning that language as an instrument of nation-building has to be located within the political economy of a given social formation. Language has its material roots in the material production and reproduction of human beings. To produce, human beings need to co-operate, which in turn requires the generation of meaning through a language as a key mechanism of communication.

Language can serve as a source of power for those who master the dominant language of production, exchange and distribution. Those who cannot grasp the language are automatically disempowered and excluded from the dominant forms of production, distribution and exchange. It is for this reason that in post-colonial societies the ability to speak the erstwhile coloniser's language (Spanish, English, Portuguese and French) catapulted the oppressed native middle classes into better social positions in their particular post-colonial societies.

The question in the national question is who belongs to a country? That is, who is part of the nation, who is a citizen? It is only in the mid-19th century that a nation was defined in terms of language, race, and geographic origins[3]. The 1789 French and 1776 American Revolutions defined a nation as a group of citizens living together under one sovereign power. During this period, the definition of a nation was based on population size and economic viability (e.g. endowed resources[4]). Here the nation-building project was expansionist, incor-

porating smaller geographic areas into larger polities to establish viable economic communities. National movements were movements for national unification. Until the mid-19th century, there was no connection between language and belonging to a nation. Who belonged to a nation was not determined by an ethnicity or language, rather by a willingness to live under the same government, rules and laws.

In post-revolutionary France in the late 18th century, the Jacobins treated non-French speaking citizens in France with suspicion, ostensibly on the grounds of potential foreign invasion. Hence, ethno-linguistics was also often used as a criterion to define who belonged to the French nation, but people could become French citizens by learning French. Hence, there was an insistence that willingness to learn French was a conditional requirement for full French citizenship. Furthermore, learning French was for also for the administrative convenience of the state and universalising education. But overall, these nations were political communities based on a set of values such as the United States Declaration of Independence (albeit to the exclusion of black people) and the French revolutionary traditions. Here people were bound together not by culture (language), but by shared citizenship. So, individuals could always become part of a nation.

It is only in the mid-19th century that human communities began to organise themselves into nations defined in linguistic and ethnic terms. Between1880-1914, nationalism becomes a movement not of unification but of separation from the nation states in which linguistic nationalists sought nation-state security based on ethnicity and language. Individuals who considered themselves as a nation on cultural and linguistic grounds could form a nation. This affirmed the right to self-national determination, which also entailed the right to secede from an existing state. This meant a community could form its own nation and state or break away from an established nation state.

Ethnicity and language became the criteria for forming new nations. Language became critical as the criterion to determine who would belong to which new nation. This was characterised by internal ethnic secessionist struggles.

Linguistic nationalism required the state to standardise languages. Its primary focus was also directed at capturing or creating a nation state. Here the rising bourgeoisie imposed a "national" language over linguistically different communities. Mechanisms to build nations included genocide, assimilation, and racist bigotry. The process of nation building was also developed through assimilation, physical integration (by roads and railways), market expansion, and military service. In France, the use of Breton and Basque were banned; and Canada stripped the Quebecois of their rights and institutions to promote their language and ways of living. The pseudo-theories of genetic descent provided ideological justification for racism as well as fascism, which claimed that the racially 'purified' should constitute separate and superior nations.

The national question in colonial context

As earlier mentioned, the national question is largely about who belongs: that is, who is a citizen. The colonial strategy to solve the national question was largely determined by specific class interests of the colonial power and the internal strength of the native population. Where their material needs was land only and the natives were weak, the outcome was genocide (for example, in the USA and Australia). Where the object was both land and labour; and the natives were relatively stronger, the outcome of colonialism was semi-proletarianisation or full proletarianisation. Here the indigenous nationalities were forcefully separated from the land and were left with no meaningful choice but to sell their labour for wages. It is for this reason

that in our South African context, the working class have been largely black, and the bourgeoisie have been white. Both the working class and bourgeoisie have been internally differentiated by ethnicity. To illustrate, there is a Xhosa working class and a Tswana working class, and an Afrikaner working class.

Before the Indian anti-colonial uprising in 1857 led by the 'civilised' Indian nationalists, the stated justification for colonising was in terms of the "civilizing" the natives in the entire colonial world. The reality was ownership and control of the economic resources such as land and markets. Ownership of property and levels of education among the natives were measures of civilization to determine or set the criteria for access to a limited political and civil liberties. The colonial project was to assimilate native elites through Western-type education, a monotheistic religion of Judeo-Christian origin, nuclear family, and European clothing and language (English, French, Portuguese etc.) based on capitalist economic relations. This strategy produced a counter-colonial hegemonic educated native middle class (priests, lawyers, journalists, school teachers etc.), which in turn used English to fight for the freedom, enfranchisement and democracy that their white counterparts had, and equality in all aspects of life. It is this 'civilized' black elite which became the founders of the nationalist resistance movements, including the ANC.

In the aftermath of the 1857 Indian and 1865 Morant Bay uprisings in Jamaica against the British Empire, the colonial power redefined belonging to colonial nations in terms of colour and culture (that is, ethnicity) in trying to deal with the rising and militant nationalist movement[5]. Whites, and blacks, particularly Africans, were subjects of their tribal authorities. The colonial power constituted colonisers (whites) and the colonised (blacks) differently. Whites belonged to nations and were right-bearing individuals in colonies; while the col-

onised Africans belonged to the tribal land (homelands) governed by a chief through a traditional authority. Under this colonial strategy all whites (non-indigenous, regardless of their glaring religious, cultural, linguistic differences), were governed under the same law and were also rights-bearing individuals, whereas indigenous Africans were classified in terms of tribes based on their linguistic differences. In the same way race determined the distribution of economic resources (land, jobs, etc.). Tribal identity among indigenous Africans also defined who gets access to land and governance structures in their respective tribal areas[6].

Just as in other colonised countries, under apartheid ethnic groups were allocated ethnic rights and privileges under their respective traditional authorities to the exclusion of other ethnic groups. One could not become a member of a tribal group, except by birth. Members of the tribe were supposed to have rights in their respective homelands. Anyone outside of the homeland or tribe had no rights.

The path to language formation in colonial Africa was different from Europe. As earlier mentioned, the rising bourgeoisie led the formation of linguistic nationalism to facilitate communication within its national markets. In colonial Africa, missionaries played a key role in the standardisation of ethnic languages to civilise and evangelise the natives, and to save their souls using their ethnic languages in different missionary stations[7]. Standardised African ethnic languages were used to facilitate the spread of Christianity by enabling natives to read the Christian gospel without the aid of the missionaries. Linguistic literacy also provided interpreting, teaching and preaching career opportunities for the natives. As with the spread of printing in Europe, the rise of common linguistic morphology and syntax set the necessary conditions for common ethnic identity among Africans, which was also crystallised under apartheid.

Geographic boundaries also coincided with ethnicity among Africans, legalised by the 1959 Bantu Self-Government Act. Under the South African homeland system consolidated by the 1970 Bantu Homelands Act, Tswanas lived in Bophuthatswana, Vatsonga/Shangaan people lived in Gazankulu, Vendas in the Venda 'Republic', Zulus in KwaZulu and Xhosas were designated to live both in Ciskei and Transkei. In townships such as Soweto and Soshanguve, Africans were grouped according to their linguistic ethnic identities. Furthermore, single-sex migrant-worker compounds and hostels, which carried within themselves the quasi-feudal-rural modes of governance (traditional leadership and induna systems); and peasant mythology were also segregated along ethnic lines. The Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and other bantustan political parties mastered the art of using ethnic identity to divide the nationally oppressed and working class in urban and rural areas, thereby diminishing the national and working class' consciousness.

Apartheid ethnic legislative acts also disrupted a process of new identity formation, which was emerging among black South Africans. In many parts of what later became Venda and Gazankulu there was a new identity that was emerging among Vendas and Vatsonga/Shangaan known as 'Venture', signifying the mixture of Venda and Shangaan languages and cultures. This was a spontaneous resistance to apartheid and remaking of identities from below. But the apartheid central state with the support of the bantustan ethnic-nationalists entrenched ethnic differences for linguistic and cultural 'purity' between the two ethnic groups.

Language and anti-colonial resistance

Colonialism produced organised anti-colonial nationalism, which was not based on linguistic identity, but on the common experience of

racial and national oppression. The aim was self-national determination. As with many versions of anti-colonialism, it was not language and culture that led to the formation of the ANC but common experience of oppression and the demand for political national sovereignty. Understandably, the nationalist movements have never adopted an overarching African language as a language of resistance, which could also be potentially used as a post-colonial language. Instead they appropriated their colonisers' languages to articulate their demands. English in South Africa became the language of the resistance, revolution and empowerment.

Furthermore, the ANC-led liberation movement tended to discourage discussion on ethnicity in order to maximise the unity of the racially oppressed, and to undermine apartheid colonial identities. The language question was acknowledged, but not fully resolved. For instance, Cde Moses Kotane in 1931 pointed out: "The language question would form one of the main difficulties. There is no one language … sufficiently known and spoken by a majority of the people in South Africa. Zulu is mainly spoken in Natal, Xhosa in the Eastern Cape, Sotho in Basutoland, and some parts of Free State, Tswana in Bechuanaland, Western and North-Western Transvaal, as Sepedi, Tshivenda and Shangaan in Eastern and Northern Transvaal. Neither English nor Afrikaans is widely spoken among Africans. So, while in each republic or national area everything would be conducted in the language of its people, there still remains the problem of the official language to be solved. Nevertheless, this could be settled by the common consent of all.[8]"

In trying to solve the language question, in the 1950s one of the ANC's leading members, Cde Jacob Nhlapo suggested that Nguni (Zulu, Ndebele, Xitsonga (Shangaan), Swazi and Xhosa) and Sotho (Sipedi, Setswana, Kgatla and South Sotho) languages should be

synchronised and standardised to create two national languages to promote national unity[9]. At the same time, Cde Nhlapo further argued that English should also be an official language. Another leading member of the ANC, Cde Peter Raboroko, argued for Swahili to be the lingua franca for South Africa and Africa as whole; and English as optional for international communication[10].

The 1955 Freedom Charter, which visualised a South African nation in which all who live in it regardless of colour belonged to it, stated that 'All people shall have equal right to use their own languages, and to develop their own folk culture and customs'. We argue that this was incomplete in that it did not specify if all these languages would be official. The Freedom Charter should have also called for the establishment of an overarching African language along the lines of Cdes Nhlapo and Raboroko.

Post-apartheid naming and renaming

Apartheid geo-political boundaries coincided with language, which has been a social marker of ethnicity. Geographic spaces were given ethnic names and identities. Apartheid also enforced territorial ethnicity through the creation of bantustan states. Put differently, the spatial patterns coincided with the ethnic group populating it. Unfortunately, this is largely being reinforced in the post-apartheid era. That is to say, geographic spatial names such as Sekhukhune, Giyani, Malamulele and Zululand in post-apartheid South Africa still coincide with the tribal identities of the inhabitants. Even some institutions of higher learning such as the University of Venda and the University of Zululand have retained their tribal identities. These names and boundaries undermine the sense of national unity and identity. Retaining apartheid names and renaming geographic spaces in this way deepens apartheid ethnic consciousness and sets necessary con-

ditions for demands for ethnic geographic belonging. Here people consider themselves as part of an ethnic group before they are part of the nation.

Of course post-apartheid renaming must recognise local heroes, but there is also a worrying tendency to reduce national icons to tribal geographic locations. Here national leaders who have become our national heritage get provincialised and tribalised, as we see for example with the Peter Mokoba Stadium in Limpopo and the Moses Mabhida Stadium in KwaZulu Natal. Naming a province KwaZulu Natal in itself is very problematic in that it reproduces ethnic geographic symbolism. Almost all the municipalities in the Eastern Cape are named after the national icons that are originally from there. Just like the Mandela name, names like Moses Mabhida, Moses Kotane and Thabo Mofutsanyane should not be provincialised and assigned to the geographic areas they come from. Naming of public institutions and spaces should not be linked to heroes and heroines' geographic origins.

No doubt, post-apartheid spatial renaming has been done without tribal intentions; but the unintended outcome has been a dominant correlation between the inhabitants' ethnic identity and spatial naming, thus reproducing territorial tribalism. Furthermore, there have been instances in which the renaming of certain geographic areas was met with tribal opposition. In 2002, there was strong tribal opposition to the renaming of the Limpopo town of Tzaneen after Cde Mark Shope, who was one of the key leaders of the South African Congress of Trade Unions (Sactu) and the ANC in the 1950s.

Equally worrying, are instances where national icons like Cdes Nelson Mandela, Moses Mabhida and Moses Kotane are being (re) buried in their respective birthplaces, instead of the state creating national heroes-and-heroines' burial sites. Furthermore, we have even become too South African and racial in the naming of our geographic areas.

Except for a few streets and squatter camps there is no single municipality named after white South African revolutionaries (Joe Slovo, Bettie du Toit, Harold Wolpe, Ray Alexander etc.). With a white few exceptions such as Kenneth Kaunda Municipality in the North West, there are also very few places in South Africa that are named after African and world revolutionaries such as Franz Fanon, Amilcar Cabral, Julius Nyerere, Samora Mashele, Che Guevara and Lenin.

Traditional authorities and ethnic civil society post-apartheid

Traditional authorities under colonialism were also meant to generate and reproduce tribalism and colonial despotism. Within the national liberation movement guided by the Freedom Charter, it has always been understood that traditional leadership is not compatible with the principles of democracy. Therefore, the end of apartheid would also mark the end of the system of traditional leadership. This was not to ignore the roles played by some traditional leaders in the fight against colonialism. In the same vein, it was understood traditional leaders' participation in the struggle would mean the end of black African feudal privilege, in the same way as the participation of white individuals in the struggle against apartheid would also mean the end of racialised white privilege.

During the Codesa negotiations and in post-apartheid South Africa, the ANC's approach to the concept of traditional authority and its associated powers and functions has not been guided by the Freedom Charter's principles, but largely by its reading of the balance of power in which traditional leaders were considered powerful in certain parts of the country. In the 1980s period of "ungovernability", there was a sense of dual power, in that in many parts of the country the traditional authorities were de facto overthrown and were replaced by people's committees. Traditional authorities only regained their

feudal power during the constitutional negotiations through the IFP, which had projected itself as a vanguard of traditional leaders and other bantustan political leaders.

Since 1994, traditional authorities have been strengthened through, among others things, real ownership of land, increased salaries and political power. These traditional authorities still preside over significant portions of land, which tend to be allocated on the basis of ethnicity and gender lines, thus reproducing sexism and homophobia. Instead of strengthening the tribal authorities through legislation such as the 2003 Traditional Leadership and Governance Act, the Communal Land Act and Traditional Courts Bill and other provincial monarchical statues like the 2005 Limpopo Traditional Leadership and Institutions Act[11], ending tribalism will require the dismantling of the tribal authorities, including kingdoms. It will also require nationalisation of land and the placing of it under the control of people's village councils and withdrawal of government funding for tribal authorities. These should be the first steps towards obliterating these ethnic institutions.

In the recent past, there has been a proliferation of ethnic students' organisations in institutions of higher learning. Linked to this, there is also the rise of ethnic affirmation through T-shirts, car stickers and other ethnic paraphernalia. There is also a rise of ostensibly clan-based groups, which also have annual and other cultural activities. These acts of ethno-nationalism seem to suggest that while ethnic nationalism has been defeated in its bantustan state forms, it has now developed a life in civil society. For example Venda ethno-nationalism, which was officially promoted through the former Venda bantustan state, is now being promoted in civil society through among other things, car stickers – *Shumela Venda* (loosely translated - work for Venda). Similarly, Xitsonga ethno-nationalism and its institution-

al carrier – the then-Gazankulu bantustan state have been defeated – but is being revived through a demand for a Shangaan king and a municipality. In the context of the Malamulele issue, it would seem Venda ethno-nationalism seeks to consolidate its ethno-nationalist revival through its tribal authorities. On the other hand, Shangaan ethnic nationalism seeks to create a local modern state – a municipality and its own kingdom, through which to extract and redistribute resources to its own subjects in the light of the perceived or real Venda ethno-nationalism and other ethno-nationalisms.

Indeed, these forms of tribal nationalism are also enunciated or encouraged by the mere existence of other ethnic kings and queens such as the Zulu and Pedi kings, and the Balobedu queen. Hence, other ethnic groups are now demanding their own ethnic kings as an expression of tribal pride.

Yearning for ethnic belonging also enables ethnic political entrepreneurs in our ANC-led movement to make demands for representation in public institutions. They start by supporting or joining ethnic based civil society movements. Then, just as the IFP[12] evolved first as a cultural civil society organisation, the post-apartheid ethnic political entrepreneurs in our ANC movement and in society translate power accumulated within their ethnicised civil society environment into a political society and demand ethnic representation in the name of an ethnic balancing act and addressing the "national question". Consequently, nation building simply gets reduced to an ethnic numerical equation. In the absence of a transformative nation-building project, indeed this ethnic balancing act in our public institutions is understandable. But this cannot be the preferred method of addressing the deficiencies within our nation building vision, not only because it reinforces apartheid ethnic identities, but because it is also a recipe for political disaster: it sets the conditions for political elites

to mobilise along ethnic lines for incorporation into mainstream centres of power at the expense of the working class in whose name they claim to get into power.

Language policy in post-apartheid schools and universities

Tribal consciousness is also enabled by some university's post-apartheid language policies. It is now compulsory for all undergraduate students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (supposedly a national university) to pass a prescribed isiZulu language module before they can graduate. This language policy is justified on the basis of culture and tradition, and that isiZulu is a provincial language. It would therefore enable students to communicate with the KZN population. Does this mean the Eastern Cape should also adopt isiXhosa and universities in the Free State adopt Sesotho? I am not sure what provincial language the University of Limpopo would adopt given the province's linguistic diversity. But more importantly, will this not reproduce a modernised bantustan consciousness in our democratic South Africa?

The recognition of 11 languages as official in the South African Constitution has also enabled schools governing bodies (SGBs) through the South African Schools Act to largely determine school language policies. In many instances, particularly in white-owned private schools, SGBs have tried with varying levels of success to adopt languages that do not empower white learners to communicate with their fellow South Africans. Furthermore, many of these SGBs have adopted Afrikaans as a medium of instruction to exclude or alienate non-Afrikaans-speaking South Africans, thus perpetuating exclusionary educational policies. For instance, Danie Malan Primary School SGB in Tshwane attempted without success to make Afrikaans a medium of instruction for schools[13].

There are historically white private schools that are introducing

African ethnic languages at schools. They tend to be faced with some dilemmas on which of the African languages they should choose to teach African learners from different ethnic linguistic background. In the next section of this article I argue that instead of promoting ethnic languages, universities can play a key role in developing a new non-ethnic and transformative national language, drawing from the insights of the Nhlapho-Raboroko debates of the 1950s.

Towards common African languages

Flowing from the Freedom Charter the ANC correctly argues that the nation should not be defined in cultural and linguistic terms. Instead the concept of nationhood should signify a population residing in a given independent state in which language, religion, race and other social attributes are not criteria for belonging to a nation. While appreciating South Africa's ethnic diversity, the 1997 and 2005 ANC policy documents argued that different ethnic identities could easily be mobilised to divide the country, thereby undermining national unity. Post–apartheid ANC documents further argue that the main thrust of our revolution is to promote a 'common South Africa identity'. Apart from our Constitution, our national currency, national flag, anthem, identity documents, common territorial geographic boundary, and common experience of oppression (as black people) and the same voting roll, what else do we commonly share as South Africans? What makes a South African typical regardless of her/his skin colour, religion, culture, gender and class? In addition to the core values entailed in the Constitution, we argue that language as one of the critical nation-building mechanisms has a huge potential to build a South African common identity.

The post-apartheid language policy formally treats all languages as equal. In reality, English is the language of the dominant politi-

cal economy in South Africa. The other constitutionally recognised languages are generally only spoken in certain geographic areas, thus making it difficult for all South Africans to share a common linguistic identity and communicate with ease. It is highly improbable that a rural peasant from deep KwaZulu-Natal or the Eastern Cape can communicate with a Pedi peasant in Sekhukhune or a Venda peasant in the Mutale area. Furthermore, even the urban middle classes in cosmopolitan cities such as Johannesburg have to second-guess which language to use in communicating with fellow black people. At least, with white people it is easy. They tend to use English.

The earlier reference to the European nation-building experience in which language also played an important part in nation-formation was not to suggest that national unity necessarily depends on linguistic commonality. Instead it was to point out that a common national language could be very useful in nation-building projects. In South Africa, languages(s) can play a key role in forging a national identity and enhancing the ability of South Africans to communicate with each other regardless of our geographic location. I take the point that people have more than one identity even in mono-linguistic societies. Furthermore, it should be obvious that building a nation through common languages does not mean that class inequality will disappear. However, I argue that a common linguistic identity helps in setting better conditions for working class consciousness, which tends to be trumped by linguistic ethnic consciousness.

The reduction of South African languages to two or three official languages must be based on the ANC's revolutionary nationalism, which has transcended a typical reactionary nationalism-based abhorrence of out-groups (as expressed in xenophobic attacks, genocide, etc) and affection for the inside-group (linguistically defined or otherwise). Our nation building should be based on the notion that

everyone can be South African. South African identity should not be anchored in linguistic exclusivity or other social identities. Here, being a typical South African is not a colour thing, but posits an ability to speak the two or three South African common languages which enables one to communicate with ease across South Africa through these languages. One or two native black African languages and English should constitute these common South African languages.

Why English? Firstly, despite its colonial origins in South Africa, English has been the language of the national liberation struggle, albeit concentrated among a few elites. Its use is rapidly growing among the black middle class. Furthermore, while it is not spoken in all parts of world, it is used in significant parts of the globe. Many of the revolutionary post-colonial African countries such as Tanzania also adopted their erstwhile colonisers' languages as their official languages with varying degrees of success.

The possibly of English being the language of a tiny elite, thus excluding the majority of our people, is real. The solution is not to maintain narrow tribal languages. Instead it is to make access to education, including these languages, free and compulsory. The South African nation can only be forged through working class struggles supported by linguistic commonalities and education. This will also require massive educational campaigns.

In addition to English, we should develop one or two African black languages to set conditions for overcoming tribal identities. This could start with what Cde Jacob Nhlapo suggested, that Nguni (e.g. IsiZulu, IsiNdebele, IsiXhosa, Xitsonga, SiSwati, etc.) and Sotho (Sepedi, Setswana, Sesotho), etc) languages should each be harmonised and standardised to produce two African languages since there are many similarities among the Nguni languages and among the Sotho languages. I would add that Tshivenda and Khilobedu should form

part of the synchronised Sotho language. In the final analysis, South Africa would have two native African black languages.

Alternatively, South Africa could develop either a new African language to be developed at the continental level or adopt Swahili, which is widely spoken in about 16 African countries, among them Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, DRC, Zambia, Mozambique, Malawi, Rwanda, Somalia, Zambia and Mozambique. Africa should bring together her social historians, terminologists, lexicographers, translators, and sociolinguists to carry out this project. The development of an African language could be led by the African Union for all African countries' adoption.

The above-mentioned proposals have the potential to set conditions for a new South African and continental Africa-wide identity, but there will be obstacles in the way of this nation-building project. The project will require a lot of time and resources to be fully completed. Another obstacle will be resistance from white and black linguistic ethnic nationalists. Furthermore, educationists who specialise in these ethnic languages as well as tribal traditional leaders, who profit out of the ethnic linguistic nationalism will mount a fight against these ideas. Politics and change is not just the art of the possible, it is about political will and struggle. Nation building is a struggle. The task is how to organise and mobilise the progressive forces towards a transformative nation-building project.

Endnotes

1. Although in the nineteenth century many of the African communities had evolved beyond being tribes, colonial Europe still classified them as such. In this article we still refer to these African communities as tribes since this has become the dominant understanding of these African communities. Furthermore, ethnicity and tribe are used interchangeably.

2. Khilobedu is a language which shares grammatical similarities with both Northern Sotho and the Tshivenda language spoken by Balobedu in Limpopo under Queen Modjadji.
3. See Hobsbawm, EJ: Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth and Reality.
4. See Smith A, 1776. An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations. London: Penguin.
5. Mamdani; M, 2012. Define and Rule, Native as Political Identity. London: Harvard University Press.
6. See Mamdani M. 1996. Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
7. See Harries P: 'The Roots of Ethnicity: Discourse and the Politics of Language Construction in South-East Africa', African Affairs, Vo. 87. No. 346
8. Brian Bunting, 1975: Moses Kotane, South African Revolutionary, Chapter 2, The National Question Part 4 of 4: Native Republic Slogan.
9. Nhlapo J, 1944. Bantu Babel: Will Bantu Languages Live? Cape Town: The African Bookman.
10. Raboroko PN: 'The linguistic revolution', Liberation, No.5, September 1953.
11. The 2003 Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act, which is largely similar to the 1951 Bantu Authorities Act. The Communal Land Rights Act gives tribal authorities power to allocate communal land.
12. See Southall R: 'Buthelezi, Inkatha and Politics of Compromise' in African Affairs, 80 (320); and Nxumalo, J ('Mzala'). 1988. Gatsha Buthelezi, Chief with a Double Agenda. London: Zed Books. These readings show how Buthelezi transformed the IFP from being a cultural movement using Zulu ethnic identity for political purposes.
13. See 'School becoming Afrikaans' Pretoria North Record, 14 August 2014.

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