



SACP 5th Special National Congress

11–14 December 2024



BOOK 2

Political Report



**CONSOLIDATE AND BUILD A POWERFUL,
SOCIALIST MOVEMENT OF THE WORKERS AND POOR.**



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South African Communist Party Central Committee Political Report to the Fifth Special National Congress 11–14 December 2024

Presented by the General Secretary Solly Mapaila

Tribute to Chris Hani

The Constitutional Court's judgment in November 2022, which granted Janusz Waluś parole, remains the source of profound disappointment not only to the Hani family and the SACP but also to millions of other South Africans and revolutionaries in and outside South Africa. Waluś, the man who cold-bloodedly assassinated our beloved General Secretary, Chris Hani, has effectively evaded full accountability for his heinous crime. For 31 years, the Hani family and the SACP have unwaveringly demanded full disclosure of the truth and all the circumstances of the assassination. We made clear our call that the unrepentant assassins should have rooted in jail for this atrocity.

While we expressed our appreciation to the government reaching out to the Hani family and the SACP regarding the assassin finishing that parole, we expressed our deep concerns about the government doing so at the eleventh-hour, on the eve of the assassin's release and deportation. The eleventh-hour reach out demonstrated disregard for the Hani family, the SACP, the working class at large and the revolutionary legacy of Chris Hani. The Department of Correctional Services' handling of the matter appeared as the root of the problem, epitomising a systemic failure to prioritise justice and dignity for the victims of apartheid-era crimes. This must not be left unattended. It is the feedback we gave to the government delegation led by Deputy President Paul Mashatile when the government reached out.

The Hani family and the SACP steadfastly reaffirmed the call for and still call for a thorough inquest into the assassination. This investigation must uncover the full truth, including the roles of all who were involved in or had prior knowledge of the assassination, to achieve closure and justice. As Marxist-Leninists, we understand that this struggle for justice is not merely about one individual but about confronting the systemic forces that continue to suppress revolutionary change.

Comrade Chris Hani's legacy will continue to guide us. It endures as a guiding light in the fight against the legacy of racial oppression, apartheid, imperialism and capitalist exploitation. His revolutionary ideals call upon us to intensify the struggle for complete liberation, social emancipation and the realisation of socialism. We will not rest until Hani's vision of a just, equal and socialist society is fully realised.

This political report is dedicated to the revolutionary life and times of a hero, martyr, Martin Thembisile "Chris" Hani, our late General Secretary, former Chief of Staff of uMkhonto weSizwe (MK), revolutionary leader of the ANC, communist till the end.

A major political setback

The loss of majority position by the ANC in the battle for democracy through electoral contestation necessitates adapting the strategy and tactics of the revolutionary working-class struggle.

This loss is a major blow to the progressive liberation forces of the NDR, it is a collective loss of the movement.

Elaborating the tasks of the Special National Congress

Let us start where it matters the most: our task here today and in the coming days.

- The most important task of this Fifth Special National Congress of the SACP is to define the new role of the Party in the context of very serious and difficult challenges confronting our National Democratic Revolution (NDR) and the revolutionary working-class' struggle for socialism, and to give impetus, rejuvenation and hope to this struggle
- We are gathered so that we can collectively define the moment, having suffered the loss of a majority position in the May 2024 election: we need to outline the tasks of the working class in this conjuncture.
- As a platform to strengthen ourselves, we equally should assume the mammoth task of tackling together with the people the acute crisis of the cost of living and launch multiple campaigns against neo-liberalism.
- We need to refine and adapt our strategy and tactics of the working class to advance the NDR and socialism for effective implementation of our political programme: the South African Struggle for Socialism, including building a socialist movement of the workers and poor and fronts for struggles ahead.
- This Special National Congress is our platform to prepare our structures for the difficult tasks ahead, including contesting local government elections.
- We should define Party Building in the new period of the struggle

The Special National Congress should also see the task of the Party and the working class at large as that of rescuing the NDR – which lays the basic foundations for socialism - and deepening the South African Struggle for Socialism, which is our Party Programme.

Through our resolution to contest the forthcoming elections, we are practically reconfiguring the Alliance, having tried to reconfigure the Alliance for over 17 years without a success through Alliance engagements. To do all of this, we need to build a strong Party, capable of working with the masses of the people for their wellbeing. Certainly, there will be challenges, but they are not insurmountable

Our Revolutionary Foundations

“We take our stand entirely on the Marxist theoretical position: Marxism was the first to transform socialism from utopia into science, to lay a firm foundation for this science, and to indicate the path that must be followed in further developing and elaborating it in all its parts. ... It made clear the real task of a revolutionary socialist party: not to draw up plans for refashioning society, ... not to hatch conspiracies, but to organise the class struggle of the proletariat and to lead this struggle, the ultimate aim of which is the conquest of political power by the proletariat and the organisation of a socialist society.” – V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 210.

The electoral setback suffered by the ANC-led liberation forces in the May 2024 elections is shocking and a wake-up call. However, let us be clear. This was not entirely new. Nor was it unexpected. It is a reality that has been developing over the years in both local and provincial and national elections. Our Party Programme, adopted by the 15th National Congress in July 2022, pointed out to the possibility that has now occurred in the May 2024 elections.

In our party programme, the South African Struggle for Socialism, adopted in July 2022, we conclude that:

“The prospects for ANC unity and renewal are uncertain and the class character of any such renewal (were it to occur) is equally a matter of struggle. The ANC remains seriously factionalised and moral and political decay has been far-reaching. Its future electoral prospects have also become uncertain, with a strong possibility of experiencing a further decline if it does not achieve a turnaround. If it continues, the electoral decline of the ANC could reach a point where it will be unable to form governments in affected levels without seeking coalition partners, and without which it could be dislodged. This reality has already struck in at least one province and a number of municipalities, including metropolitan municipalities”.

“However, the ANC remains by far the largest electoral formation and its residual support base should not be underestimated. If, after 2024, the ANC is forced nationally into coalition arrangements, it will be the senior partner. On what programmatic basis it enters into coalition agreements will depend on the character of the ANC at the time and on the capacity of working-class and popular forces to influence the programmatic direction.”

The loss of the electoral majority highlights both the deeply worrying weakening subjective factors and the objective material conditions of the working class. In other words, we have a weak leadership at a point when the living conditions of the masses have become worse. We must urgently intervene to halt this deepening crisis. We must make tough decisions and address the errors committed within the movement, especially with the ANC as the epicentre and in the state apparatus, now partially influenced strategically by reactionary forces.

A listening ally with a partner able to analyse society so accurately would normally engage.

In our extended Politburo meeting after the announcement of the May 2024 election results, we further said that:

“Despite our efforts at securing a decisive electoral majority to avoid this scenario, we are now in it. In addition, depending on how the ANC and the Alliance will handle this situation, the ANC and, by extension, the Alliance might as well be dislodged. This moment calls for accuracy in our political assessment of the reality we have now entered and tactical and strategic calculations with the utmost clarity. Any error in this process, whose outcomes might as well be determined by the attitude of the forces of reaction against our movement as the force of action, will culminate in consequences with far-reaching and lasting implications. Which is why an emotive assessment will be unhelpful.”

Sharpening contradictions and revolutionary strategy

We need a deeper analysis of the state of the NDR and a renewed strategy to elevate the inextricably interrelated working-class struggle for socialism. This includes rejecting collaborationist tendencies that undermine the NDR, betrays the hopes of our people, capitulate to capital and reactionary forces.

As Lenin reminds us, revolutionary compromises must not come at the expense of principles. Political power, especially for the working class, remains the central question of any revolution.

When you are elected by the people into political offices and power, do not undermine their confidence and do not become arrogant. Respect the people as a basic rule of all revolutionaries, serve them diligently and whole-heartedly and do not enrich yourself at their expense. This is the precondition to be at the core of societal leadership and to earn their trust, which must be nurtured, otherwise the masses will always humble you.

The roots of the NDR

The roots of the NDR, outlined at the Second World Congress of the Communist International (Comintern) in 1920, represent a national-revolutionary process of transformation. This position, informed by colonial experiences, recognised the domestic bourgeoisie's entanglement with colonial and imperialist powers. The entanglement often resulted in bourgeois reformism, prioritising capitalist wealth accumulation over genuine liberation and social emancipation.

The accumulation of wealth on a capitalist basis was anchored in the economic exploitation of workers by the capitalist bosses – both those who come from the colonial powers and imperialist centres on the one hand and the domestic ones on the other. The domestic bourgeoisies were equally interested in the exploitation of the masses of the working class. Because of their vested interest in this exploitation, they were neither interested nor capable of leading the struggle for complete liberation and social emancipation of the masses. The Comintern distinguished the national-revolutionary path from the reformist agenda.

In South Africa, the Freedom Charter, adopted in 1955, charted the revolutionary path towards liberation and social emancipation. Its economic clauses emphasised state ownership and public wealth – directly opposing the anti-thesis posed by reformism and of late neo-liberalism. The 1960 Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties in the Soviet Union further refined the theory and strategy of the NDR, reaffirming the centrality of political freedoms and liberation and economic and social emancipation.

The 1960 Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties defined the NDR as the "national, anti-imperialist, democratic revolution" and its historical mission as that of pursuing "non-capitalist development" to meet the material needs of the people. This was central in the SACP's elaboration of the NDR as the shortest route to socialism in South Africa's historical conditions. The SACP consolidated the elaboration in its programme, "The Road to South African Freedom".

Adopted in 1962, the "Road to South African Freedom" reaffirmed the Freedom Charter as the basic programme of the NDR, anchored in the national democratic and revolutionary tasks outlined in the statement adopted by the 1960 Meeting of the Communist and Workers' Parties regarding the "national, anti-imperialist, democratic revolution". This elaboration, connected to the Resolution on the South African Question adopted in the late 1920s, carried forward our anti-thesis to bourgeois reformism. In the 1962 Party Programme, the SACP added the concept of "colonialism of a special type" to characterise the colonial conditions of the oppressed majority in our country while South Africa was declared the so-called independent republic in May 1961 by the colonising ruling class which lived in the same country as the oppressed but racially segregated.

Historical context and bourgeois reformism

The Communist Party's early articulations of the NDR consistently rejected bourgeois reformism. Similarly, the first ANC's Strategy and Tactics, adopted in 1969, stressed that true national emancipation is inseparable from economic emancipation. It recognised the necessity of placing the country's wealth and resources at the disposal of the people as a whole. This is what the ANC said, asserting the revolutionary nature and character of our shared strategy, the NDR:

“Thus, our nationalism must not be confused with chauvinism or narrow nationalism of a previous epoch. It must not be confused with the classical drive by an elitist group among the oppressed people to gain ascendancy so that they can replace the oppressor in the exploitation of the mass.”

The Strategy and Tactics further stressed:

“Our drive towards national emancipation is therefore in a very real way bound up with economic emancipation. We have suffered more than just national humiliation. Our people are deprived of their due in the country’s wealth; their skills have been suppressed and poverty and starvation has been their life experience. The correction of these centuries-old economic injustices lies at the very core of our national aspirations... one thing is certain – in our land this cannot be effectively tackled unless the basic wealth and the basic resources are at the disposal of the people as a whole and are not manipulated by sections or individuals be they White or Black”

The Freedom Charter clause three: The People Shall Share in the Country's Wealth! States the following:

“The national wealth of our country, the heritage of all South Africans, shall be restored to the people; - The mineral wealth beneath the soil, the banks and monopoly industry shall be transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole; All other industry and trade shall be controlled to assist the well-being of the people; All people shall have equal rights to trade where they choose, to manufacture and to enter all trades, crafts and professions”.

The fourth clause:

The Land Shall Be Shared Among Those Who Work It! Restrictions of land ownership on a racial basis shall be ended, and all the land re-divided amongst those who work it, to banish famine and land hunger; The state shall help the peasants with implements, seed, tractors and dams to save the soil and assist the tillers; Freedom of movement shall be guaranteed to all who work on the land; All shall have the right to occupy land wherever they choose; People shall not be robbed of their cattle, and forced labour and farm prisons shall be abolished.

To resolve the national grievance of the Africans in particular and black people in general, which is the land question and the economy at large, the SACP calls for radical measures to re-look at the land questions. Opening the dates preventing the return of colonially dispossessed land to their rightful owners, effective distribution of land to the hungry masses, security of tenure and engaging the former colonisers to pay reparations is essential. We should be ready for a long haul and even mobilise for a referendum in this regard.

We cannot carry the sins of unrepentant colonisers who still use their economic power, while the formerly oppressed are economically powerless, to force us towards “self- colonisation”. Which is what this deal by the present leadership of the ANC with the DA in the guise of the GNU reflects “self-colonisation” if looked at differently from how it is promoted. Every our revolution has extended a hand of friendship and humanity, it has been rudely inflicted more damage. It is high time that capital takes responsibility for its sins.

Based on the revolutionary mission of the NDR, including the articulation just outlined from the first ANC Strategy and Tactics and the Freedom Charter, our stance categorically rejected elitist nationalism and the bourgeois reformist tendency. If you like, the economic aspect of the national grievance of the masses today is the deprivation of their wealth not only by capital directly through exploitation but also by an elite pact of the ruling class and sections of the liberation movement. Clearly, the narrow nationalist elites have abandoned the class content

of the NDR and thus the inability to transform the economy and unwillingness to transfer it into the hands of the masses of the people.

The trajectory of the NDR warrants honest assessment, with a strong focus on the post-1994 policy space and its outcomes. The adoption of neo-liberal economic policies, beginning with GEAR in 1996, marked a significant divergence. Neo-liberal policies, which date back to the apartheid regime, entrenched reformist approaches, undermining the revolutionary potential of the NDR. While our democratic breakthrough in 1994 was a strategic victory, subsequent reformist economic policy reforms and their failures led to persistently high levels of unemployment, poverty and inequality. This suggests something enormous about the tasks we face.

The last 30 years of our democratic dispensation have seen significant political developments and the trajectory of South Africa's economic and social policies producing both positive and negative outcomes. Another key task facing this Fifth Special National Congress of the SACP is clear: assert our independence with unwavering determination in the struggle to end unemployment, poverty and inequality, clamp down on crime and intensify the struggle to overcome the system of capitalist exploitation. We have a duty to ready ourselves for the difficult tasks ahead given the changed political situation.

While there have been positive outcomes, such as the provision of housing for the poor and expanded access to water, electricity, education, healthcare and social grants, the negatives reached a point where they overshadow the positives. In addition, there were reversals in some of the commendable advances.

For example, neo-liberal policies combined with state capture and other forms of corruption interacted to undermine the massive expansion of access to electricity post-1994. Yes: it is neo-liberal macroeconomic and sectoral policy approaches in energy, including the White Paper on Energy imposed at the end of the 1990s, and state capture and other forms of corruption, that plunged our country into electricity supply shortages and load shedding. The toxic mixture and criminality are now sustaining load reduction, affecting many parts of the country.

Following the adoption of the neo-liberal economic policy of GEAR in 1996, unemployment rose to exceed 20 per cent. It later surged beyond 30 per cent. Under the expanded definition, which includes discouraged work seekers, unemployment soared to over 40 per cent before insignificant moderations.

The situation is even more dire for Africans, the hardest-hit national group. Total unemployment for this group surpassed 50 per cent before any negligible moderation. This is a devastating indictment of the economic policy trajectory followed since 1996. When we challenged the neo-liberal policy trajectory, we were labelled as people who did not appreciate that the fundamentals were now in place. It was argued that the negatives were only temporary. In the end, not only did the negatives persist but also worsened, lasting for 28 years since the government-imposed GEAR and complemented it with further neo-liberal policy directions.

Like unemployment, poverty and inequality are persistently at crisis-high levels. Associated with these indicators of a deep-rooted capitalist system crisis, crime levels have sky rocketed. While there are slight reductions in some categories of crime during certain quarters, other quarters see increases in these and crime in other categories. The overall reality is grim. Crime remains unacceptably high in aggregate terms. This fuels sleepless nights across affected communities, nationwide.

Private security spending by the government itself, including at the courts of law, in government offices, police stations, and by households and the private sector have increased in no small measure in reaction to crime. This has left working-class and poor household who cannot afford exposed to crime, those who can afford can deter through private security spending.

More and more South Africa is a country of two inexplicably interrelated systems – public provision of services compromised by neo-liberal policies such as austerity and by corruption on the one hand and private provision, including to the state through tenderisation, on the other hand. Education and health, in addition to safety and security, are among the development services affected. In so far as private provision is concerned, it is driven by commodification and private wealth accumulation. Socialism is a social system aimed at meeting everyone’s social needs – including environmental needs – and promoting equality. It ensures that the wealth of society is shared and accessible to all, rather than being concentrated in the hands of a few. It is the end of unequal power relations in race, class and gender dimensions in South Africa.

In safety and security as is the case in point, people endure the scourge of drugs, theft, motor vehicle and house hijackings, housebreakings, robberies, murders, massacres, femicide, gender-based violence and other contact crimes. Public infrastructure has also faced relentless attacks and looting.

The criminal atrocities strike fear into the heart of our nation, mostly affecting those who do not have resources and insurances protect themselves: the working class and poor.

But crime is also bad for investment in the economy.

It demands urgent, militant action to restore public safety and security. This is also important to secure rising investment in the economy to meet the needs of the people.

Let us be frank, comrades.

While the legacy of apartheid and global capitalist crises has contributed to the persistent high levels of unemployment, poverty and inequality, the core issue in the policy space lies in the dominance of reformist policies. This began under the apartheid regime and heightened since the adoption of GEAR in 1996, entrenching long-term economic policy failure.

Trade and financial liberalisation shock therapy undermined the imperative to halt de-industrialisation and create employment at a scale that is sufficient to overcome the unemployment crisis.

Austerity measures have undermined transformative and developmental programmes, including government investment in state-owned enterprises and the expansion of the publicly owned economy.

Industrial policy, public infrastructure development, maintenance and security have all suffered as a result of austerity and other neo-liberal policy measures. These policies have betrayed the working class and derailed our path to genuine economic transformation.it

Current challenges and the post-May 2024 election context

The outcomes of the May 2024 elections highlighted growing dissatisfaction among our constituencies, with millions choosing to stay away. Capital’s overt role in influencing electoral processes further complicated this scenario. Public data reveal a grim picture:

- As just highlighted, unemployment has consistently exceeded 30 per cent, with expanded definitions exceeding 40 per cent.
- Poverty remains entrenched, with over half the population below the upper-bound poverty line.
- South Africa ranks among the most unequal societies globally, with class inequality largely racialised, gendered and spatialised – reflecting the legacy and continuation of combined capitalist and uneven development.

Additionally, violent crime, interpersonal and gender-based violence, and corruption, erode public confidence in state leadership. But under whose leadership? The answer to this question is reflected in the May 2024 strategic election setback. These challenges underline systemic failures and the legacy of colonial and apartheid oppression, both sustained and compounded by post-1996 neo-liberal policy choices.

Strategic realignments and the alliance

The lack of progress on the reconfiguration of the Alliance – now reflected in the ANC approaching the post-May 2024 election developments, such as engagements with other parties without the involvement of the Alliance, and by the subsequent prioritisation of the right-wing, neo-liberal DA in GNU coalition arrangements – poses serious implications for the NDR.

Post-2019, the National Treasury’s adoption of OECD, IMF- and World Bank-backed policy reforms reflects a deeper alignment with neo-liberalism. The DA endorsed this direction and often accused the ANC of not doing enough to push it harder. Convergence on these reforms cannot therefore be ignored if one wishes to examine the prioritisation of the DA in the GNU. The direction of these reforms contradicts the principles of the Freedom Charter, particularly the economic clauses on monopoly industry and ownership by the people as a whole.

We have heard that the choices made are a strategic manoeuvre. Someone active in the category of veterans even went as far as labelling our critical position towards the GNU, but not without terribly distorting it first, his so-called “infantile disorder”. Lenin would have called his tendency right-wing opportunism and childishness.

That said, what has been presented as a “tactical manoeuvre” lacks theoretical and programmatic clarity. In reality, this alignment represents could represent a strategic shift that risks redefining the political agenda away from the NDR’s revolutionary objectives. The Alliance must urgently engage with these developments to prevent further fragmentation and alienation from the working class.

The reconfiguration of the Alliance is imperative for ensuring purposeful unity based on a revolutionary programme and advancing the revolutionary content of the NDR. This reconfiguration involves:

1. Reasserting the principles of collective leadership and accountability.
2. Developing strategies to address the structural failures of the economy based on asserting the revolutionary content of our strategy, the Freedom Charter being its basic or minimum programme.
3. Denouncing and combating neo-liberalism, state capture and other forms of corruption, and resisting other reformist tendencies.

4. Sharpening our engagement with other worker and progressive forces within and outside the movement.

Failure to address these challenges risks further stagnation and betrayal of the masses who have historically placed their trust in our movement.

The SACP must play a leading role in reasserting the revolutionary content of the NDR, reaffirming its commitment to anti-imperialist, transformative and socialist objectives.

Only through decisive action can we restore faith in the movement and chart a revolutionary path toward liberation and social emancipation.

The state of the NDR in the aftermath of the May 2024 electoral defeat and revolutionary setback

If we were to properly articulate the state of the NDR today, would it suffice to briefly summarise as follows:

- The NDR has been stagnant for a long time. This stagnation is largely due to a rampant neo-liberal offensive, with the working class on the defensive. While this discourse has been criticised, we have not sufficiently interrogated its class relations within the Alliance. What does it truly mean to examine these developments through a Marxist-Leninist lens?
- As a movement, we, or rather the leadership that rose to dominance within the movement capitulated to the neo-liberal offensive and became its implementation agents. Consequently, the movement deviated from the core tasks of the NDR, replacing them with a full-blown neo-liberal economic agenda. This has persisted for nearly three decades since the unceremonious abandonment of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) and its replacement by GEAR.
- The May 2024 electoral setback may signify a turning point, deepening the derailment of the NDR's tasks, depending on whether our response will be effective or not.
- The threats of reversing past successes are now glaringly obvious. We cannot avoid confronting this reality as we significantly lose mass support as a liberation movement. We continue to mask the cracks instead of addressing the necessity for a new economic trajectory that breaks away from neo-liberalism.
- This assessment calls for concerted efforts to revive, revitalise and rejuvenate the NDR, especially its revolutionary content. It requires a collective review of our efforts, including acknowledging our flaws and errors. Urgent rectification is needed to bring the NDR back on track and advance towards socialism. This must be rooted in common objectives and tasks that respond to the dire needs of the working class, the majority in society, rather than pandering to neo-liberalism.
- We must build widest possible working-class unity and remobilise the collective liberation forces to rejuvenate and resuscitate the NDR. Mass mobilisation and aligning with the people's struggles are essential to finding common ground in our fight.

The GNU: A strategic error with far-reaching consequences for the NDR?

The GNU represents a categorical political choice made by the elite within the movement in collaboration with the ruling elite in the economy: the DA is the political representative of the ruling class in the economy – the dominantly white bourgeoisie. It is the elements of this

bourgeoisie who pumped millions and millions of rands behind the DA, its “Moonshot Pact” and its “Multi-Party Charter” and other right-wing political parties through party-political donations. The IEC has the data for all those who wish to get into further details.

In essence, the political and ideological choice is an affirmation of the neo-liberal economic trajectory. It is therefore unlikely to change the economic conditions of the working class or drastically alter the masses’ undesirable living conditions.

This decision poses significant implications for the NDR, arguably the heaviest blow to the gains of the liberation struggle, inflicted on the one side from within the movement itself and on the other from within the ranks of the dominant section of capital. The choice to form a coalition with the right-wing, neo-liberal and anti-NDR DA remains baffling.

While labelled a “government of national unity”, this is merely a cover for the political decision to align with the counter-revolutionary DA. The class forces represented by the DA embody apartheid’s economic beneficiaries. Their coalition with the ANC seeks to secure a counter-revolutionary agenda, not to advance, deepen and defend the NDR.

The formation of the GNU with the prioritisation of the DA in what it called power sharing represents a monumental blunder with profound consequences for South Africa’s progressive and socialist agenda and the Alliance. It is a retreat from the principles of the NDR and a missed opportunity to advance the national democratic and socialist agenda.

Proponents argue that the GNU is necessary to address political fragmentation and economic challenges. That is to ignore the state of the Alliance and how the Alliance was left behind in the engagements with the GNU parties and thereby not undermining the Alliance but also its unity. This is a strategic error with far-reaching implications for progressive politics. The DA-including GNU does not auger well for the NDR – rendering its mention in speeches an affront to its revolutionary ideals.

Key critiques of the GNU

- **An ideological choice:** The GNU reflects the ruling elite’s ideological choice, compromising the progressive and socialist agenda of NDR forces. It reduces the NDR to rhetorical nostalgia.
- **Weakening the working-class movement:** Neo-liberal policies, including but not limited to austerity measures, and a high cost-of-living crisis burden on the shoulders of the working class while they attempt to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, are all serious problems.
- **Economic consequences:** Neo-liberalism’s financialisation and de-industrialisation continue to erode South Africa’s economy. The GNU’s alignment with these policies it is clear in the recent Medium-Term Budget Policy Statement will not overcome the crises of unemployment, poverty, inequality and crime.
- **Missed opportunity for leadership:** The DA-including GNU misses the chance to build an alternative leadership rooted in working-class power and demands for economic emancipation. Instead, it aligns with capital, undermining the NDR and aiding “self-recolonisation” – seen from the perspective of colonialism of a special type.

Compromise of progressive and socialist Agenda

At its core, the DA-including GNU reflects a pragmatic compromise among political elites rather than a principled response to capitalist crises. By including right-wing and neo-liberal forces,

it sidelines transformative policies in favour of market-friendly solutions. This compromises the structural transformation envisioned by the NDR and will sustain a status quo that benefits capital while neglecting the working class.

We do not need policies that will exacerbate financialisation and de-industrialisation, redirecting resources from productive sectors to speculative investments and eroding manufacturing employment.

The inclusion of right-wing forces neutralises dissent and erodes the working class's influence, alienating historical support bases, such as Alliance partners, in favour of parties like the DA.

A Missed opportunity for a Left alternative

The DA-including GNU represents a missed opportunity to build a progressive alternative rooted in working-class mobilisation. The SACP must explore leftward alternatives without the DA and similar organisations. The mission must be to rescue the NDR, not to save the DA-including GNU.

By engaging critically and mobilising collectively, we can reclaim the NDR and advance towards a socialist future.

Amongst the immediate responsibilities of the Fifth Special National Congress is to identify and advance the tasks of the NDR to consolidate the unity of the democratic forces, defend the working class from the relentless attacks by capital and compel the state to take responsibility for the well-being of society, especially the majority who are affected by unemployment, poverty, inequality, low-wage employment, and crime. This requires clarity on unifying tasks for the NDR today and defining a common way forward.

Building a socialist movement and mass mobilisation

The way forward should focus on building a powerful, socialist movement of the workers class and poor, establishing left-popular fronts and articulating a bold vision for systemic change. This includes:

- Deepening the campaign to defeat neo-liberalism.
- Asserting the independence of the SACP.
- Mobilising the masses around an alternative, anti-neo-liberal programme for economic and social emancipation rooted in people's democracy and community self-reliance.

Only through such a strategy can the Party and the broader movement reclaim their historic mission of leading South Africa's struggle for a radical NDR and an advance towards a socialist society.

South Africa is at a crossroads. Half-measures are no longer sufficient. It is time to confront uncomfortable realities and abandon the patronising rhetoric of denial while "Rome burns".

Radical policy changes are required to tackle the deep-seated structural challenges of imperialist capitalism, including mass unemployment, poverty, inequality and crime – which disproportionately affect the black working-class and marginalised groups.

We remain consistent in our critique of the rightward shift in government composition and policy and its implications for the working class. Any form of "self-colonisation", including through neo-liberal coalitions with parties representing apartheid beneficiaries as their core, must be vehemently opposed.

South Africa deserves policies that prioritise the needs of the majority, rather than pandering to imperialist forces or neo-colonial interests, domestic and foreign.

The legacy of the neo-liberal GEAR strategy and subsequent neo-liberal articulations has been 28 years of diminished productive capacities, especially, manufacturing output and employment, and the economic exclusion of the majority.

South Africa can no longer endure austerity, capitalism, colonialism, or the arrogance of leaders protected by imperialist forces.

State-led investment and economic transformation

A state-led approach to investment is essential for economic transformation. The public sector must take the lead in rebuilding the economy by:

- Expanding infrastructure.
- Ensuring state-owned assets serve the people.
- Prioritising domestic production, localisation and the creation of decent work towards the right of all to work.
- Filling vacant public sector positions to build a capable and developmental state: any talk of a capable state while there are many vacant posts in government at all levels is nothing but an empty rhetoric.

The austerity measures that have left essential services understaffed and undermined must be reversed.

Public spending should focus on addressing community needs and fostering sustainable development with the interests of the majority, being the working class and poor, at the centre stage.

Transforming monetary and fiscal policy

The Reserve Bank must pursue a people-centred mandate that includes creating maximum sustainable employment. This is the role of Parliament and the government to ensure, according to our national constitution.

The prohibitive regime of high interest rates generated by neo-liberal inflation targeting must end to enable small and medium enterprises, co-operatives and local economies to thrive. Fiscal and monetary policies should work dynamically to support national production development, especially broad-based industrialisation and local government – which are collapsing under the weight of austerity.

We reject the notion that democratic control of society must not be pursued and the market forces must guide economic development and society. Instead, a transformative approach is required – one that ensures the economy works for all South Africans, particularly the working class.

Public employment and social protection

Public employment programmes must become a cornerstone of South Africa's economic strategy. These programmes should:

- Guarantee the right of all to work, a principle rooted in the Freedom Charter.
- Ensure fair remuneration and dignity for all workers anchored in the pursuit of a society without economic exploitation.
- Establish a comprehensive social security system that reflects the values of Ubuntu/Botho, including a universal basic income grant.

Industrialisation and sectoral transformation

South Africa's true independence lies, among others, in developing domestic productive forces as rapidly as possible. Industrialisation is essential in this. The state must:

- Develop industries across sectors, from agriculture to manufacturing and the digital economy.
- Ensure the domestic beneficiation of natural resources.
- Implement transformative agricultural and agro-processing strategies to guarantee food security and sovereignty and advance industrialisation in this sector.
- Strengthen transport and communication sectors to provide affordable services for all.

Strengthening the public economic sector

Public financial institutions, such as the Industrial Development Corporation, Public Investment Corporation and Development Bank of Southern Africa must be empowered to:

- Drive infrastructure projects.
- Finance broad-based industrialisation.
- De-monopolise key sectors.
- Provide empowerment funding to alter ownership patterns rooted in colonial and apartheid capitalism.

A state-owned banking sector and a public banking system should be established to ensure affordable access to credit and savings for all South Africans, especially to support national production development and integrated human settlement.

Combating crime and ensuring public safety

Crime is a significant impediment to South Africa's development. The rise in crime is closely linked to neo-liberal policies, such as austerity and budget cuts, which have undermined law enforcement capacity. To address this:

- Law enforcement authorities must be adequately resourced and their morale restored.
- Crime networks exploiting communities must be dismantled.

- Social and economic policies must tackle the root causes of crime, including unemployment and inequality.
- A democratic developmental state must ensure public safety and security, reducing reliance on private security.

The failure to reconfigure the Alliance

The poor response to the agreed Alliance reconfiguration framework and subsequent unilateral decisions by the ANC in particular have undermined the Alliance's unity and cohesion. Despite these challenges, we supported the ANC in the 2024 general elections. However, we must now, starting with the 2026 local government elections:

- Actively prepare for participation in the next local government elections.
- Empower the Central Committee and Political Bureau to guide tactical considerations, such as the scale and extent, whether wall-to-wall across the country or whether to progress gradually, initially leave this or that specific locality to negotiation in selective co-operation with the ANC, despite its demonstrated arrogance and disregard for collective decisions.
- Conclude the modalities of a popular left front or fronts where it be part of the equation.

The SACP and its allies must seize this moment to reclaim the NDR's transformative vision and implement radical policies that address South Africa's structural crises. Only by prioritising the needs of the working class and advancing a socialist programme can we achieve true economic and social emancipation for the majority.

What is our path to assert the revolutionary content of the NDR?

In the recent bilateral meetings, we posed several questions regarding the ANC's perspective on the current situation facing the NDR. Unfortunately, we received no strategic responses. It is essential that we define our approach and anchor this Special National Congress on a platform that commits to an irreversible shift towards a socialist advance, within the context of the working class's political struggles in our country.

For example, there needs to be a readiness to address the underlying factors contributing to the decline of the liberation forces. This includes confronting neo-liberalism, including, but not limited to, austerity measures, at a time when the working class is already facing a crisis of living standards, poverty, inadequate services and other challenges. These challenges include severe water shortages, electricity shortage, a crisis of potholes and the overall deterioration of public services and infrastructure. The rise in crime and public insecurity further complicates the situation.

Shifting alliances and the ANC's new strategic direction

Given the recent changes in the ANC's political alignments, it is pertinent to ask: Has the ANC, by all intents and purposes and beyond any reasonable doubt, moved away from its traditional allies to form new class alliances, tactical or strategic, primarily with the class forces represented by the DA and others represented in the GNU? Can we still guarantee that the ANC will lead the continuation of the NDR when the political landscape has shifted so drastically? This question is crucial as it could help narrow the areas of tension and determine the issues we need to address with the ANC in the future.

The ANC asserts that the GNU is a tactical move. However, if this is true, why not engage fully with your allies, considering the strategic implications? This raises a pressing question: Is our revolution being betrayed when the ANC imposes decisions unilaterally?

The core issue, comrades, is that the ANC's unilateral actions effectively make the Alliance irrelevant, reducing it to a mere appendage of the ANC's decisions and its election machinery. Post-elections, as typified by the post-May 2024 election developments, the ANC has engaged with other forces alone and acted unilaterally, outside the collective leadership and accountability of the Alliance, leaving the Alliance partners behind. Deep down, we cannot accept an ally that makes critical strategic decisions alone, unilaterally, especially decisions as significant as those involving the direction of the NDR and power sharing coalition arrangements like the DA-including GNU.

Urgent implementation of policy commitments

Promises made in our collective name to the people regarding the National Health Insurance (NHI) and the Basic Education Laws Amendment (BELA) Acts must be implemented without delay once the grace periods announced by the President have expired. These measures are vital to restoring any semblance of a working relationship, given the ANC's conduct to date.

However, we continue to see the government making concessions to reactionary forces such as AfriForum and Solidarity. These forces are confident of their victory, and the government yields too easily. The working class is left to fend for itself.

Illegal mining

Illegal mining in South Africa is a glaring indictment of the capitalist system's inherent failures and crises. The capitalist minerals mining regime, rooted in the ruthless exploitation of labour and national resources, has left a trail of disused mines and devastated communities. These abandoned sites are a grim example of the greed of capitalist mining bosses who prioritised profit over sustainability and social well-being, extracting wealth and leaving behind environmental degradation and economic despair. The crisis in Pilgrim's Rest and Sabie, Mpumalanga Province, and Stilfontein, North West Province, exemplifies how this legacy fuels new forms of exploitation, violence and acts of criminality.

The surge in illegal mining is intertwined with the broader crises plaguing Southern Africa. The capitalist system has failed to create work for all, leading to widespread unemployment, poverty, inequality and a general crisis of capitalist social reproduction. Mostly undocumented migrants, many of whom lack work permits, have been drawn into illegal mining, some coerced by recruiters, while others join out of sheer desperation from Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and other countries.

The mostly undocumented migrant miners and their South African illegal mining counterparts, often referred to as "zama zamas", operate in dangerous conditions, risking their lives, while fuelling an illicit economy that benefits criminal networks. Included in these criminal networks are white-collar criminals, who buy and sell the illegally mined minerals, profiteering. There is collusion by certain established mining houses in this phenomenon.

The crisis in Pilgrim's Rest, Sabie and Stilfontein is not isolated but part of a broader systemic failure. This is rooted in the capitalist logic of profit over people. All this takes place in a state with weakened capacity as a result of neo-liberal policies, such as austerity, as well as state capture and other forms of systemic and opportunistic corruption.

Illegal mining does not occur in a vacuum. Just as it takes place amid the multiple capitalist system crises and failures and associated political crises in our continent, region and country – including the structural crises indicated by the high levels of unemployment, poverty, inequality, and the ever increasing concentration of socially produced wealth in the hands of a few – being the capitalist class, illegal mining is accompanied by a host of other crimes, such as illegal trade in minerals, illegal firearms and assault rifles, illegal drugs and the scourge of gender-based violence, including sexual assaults, as well as human trafficking. Communities affected by illegal mining are often caught in a web of violence and corruption, with some members benefiting financially, while others bear the brunt of crime and insecurity.

This division of the community exacerbates social tensions and weakens collective efforts to confront the root causes: the exploitative capitalist system and its failures and crises. The SACP has consistently stood with communities, advocating for unity, structural transformation and the eradication of these injustices.

To address the crisis effectively, we must confront the capitalist system and the failed macroeconomic and sectoral policies that have created conditions for this crisis. A revolutionary transformation is needed, one that prioritises the needs of the workers and poor. This includes holding mining corporations accountable for their historical and ongoing exploitation, environmental degradation, and implementing stringent regulations to combat illegal mining.

We reaffirm our commitment to the widest possible working-class unity to ensure that communities are at the centre of sustainable development efforts, including a thriving small-scale mining sector – in a context where environmental protection prevails. Without tackling the structural causes of inequality and exploitation, the crisis will continue in a variety of ways.

Food safety and local economic development crises

The crisis of unsafe food and the tragic deaths of children expose deep systemic issues in townships, villages and sections of towns and cities with high concentrations of working-class and poor communities. This is also a sign of the social reproduction crisis linked to the high levels of unemployment, poverty, inequality and crime.

Amid the situation, informal traders and tuckshops often operate without proper regulation or adherence to health standards. Hazardous practices, including the storage of food with banned pesticides like terbufos and aldicarb have, according to various reports, directly caused deaths. Poor waste management exacerbates the dangers, compounding the risks of contaminated products. This neglect is a betrayal of our communities.

Local economies are now dominated by well-supported and co-ordinated foreign-controlled networks, on the one hand, and by domestic large retail corporations, on the other hand. This has displaced local shopkeepers, small and informal sector enterprises, and survivalist activities, forcing many to close down, entrenching poverty. The affected local shopkeepers, small and informal sector enterprises have not had sectoral policy support and enabling co-ordination. This has badly affected local economic development and the empowerment of communities.

The government must act decisively to root out the crisis. Removing banned pesticides and implementing stricter food safety regulations is vital. However, meaningful progress requires more than enforcement. It demands robust support for community-owned stores and co-operatives, integrated with local production development and ensuring sustainable livelihoods. Failure to invest in and empower local community members, particularly under austerity measures that have also weakened law enforcement capacity, will perpetuate the crisis. This must stop.

The global crises of capitalism and the failure facing US-led imperialist collective West

“America has become one of the foremost countries in regard to the depth of the abyss which lies between the handful of arrogant multimillionaires who wallow in filth and luxury, and the millions of working people who constantly live on the verge of pauperism.” – Vladimir I. Lenin

We are now in the period of the general crises of world capitalism. This crisis has been exacerbated by leading capitalist states, which not only have concentrated capital but are also spearheading militaristic strategies to maintain the profitability of their production systems. This is evident in the worsening crisis in Ukraine, an imperialist-co-ordinated and funded war executed through the proxy state of Ukraine, with oversight and direction from NATO – the military arm of the US and Europe.

At the heart of the world, economic crisis is also reflected in the weakening but still string US-led political, economic and security power system. This crisis reflects the hegemon’s inability to rule in the old ways without facing significant challenges. In other words, the US’s Monroe Doctrine of hemispheric influence is in crisis. This signals the visible breakdown of the global imperialist system and its neo-colonial form.

This disintegration is driven by several factors. Technological advances have transformed the development and advancement of productive forces. The evolution of new production factors, such as data, is driving digital economies. These changes have been accelerated by the growth of multiple production centres worldwide, particularly in the People’s Republic of China. The US’s capitalist corporatist economic system, along with its state system, is now in crisis.

These and other geostrategic developments have disrupted the US-led unilateral world power structure. This structure was based on an aggressively imposed capitalist economic system that controlled global supply chains. Although this system claimed to integrate the global economy, it selectively applied rules that favoured imperialist interests. As a result, the rules-based international system has collapsed, turning into a mockery. This summarises the crisis of contemporary imperialism and neo-colonialism.

The crisis of the US and Western hegemony is further exacerbated by the emergence of a multipolar world system. This system is led by the People’s Republic of China and, more assertively, by the Russian Federation, which is currently at war with the collective West through NATO using Ukraine as a proxy. This brief reflection highlights the geostrategic challenges facing core powers and their ongoing disintegration.

The SACP stands for peace and opposes wars, particularly those affecting our continent, the resilient and often ostracised mother Africa. In addition to the overarching global crisis, African countries face multiple crises brought on by aggressive imperialism and neo-colonialism.

When the leaders of the first 30 independent African states met at the Summit Conference in May 1963 in Addis Ababa, it was a time of great struggle. South Africa, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Angola and others were still under colonial rule, enduring Portuguese, apartheid South African, Rhodesian and British domination.

During that gathering, there was a proposal to establish an All-Africa Development Bank. However, as Algeria’s Ben Bella stated, “it was more important at this stage to establish a blood-bank for freedom fighters than to set up an All-African Development Bank”. This sentiment, supported by leaders like Emperor Haile Selassie and Julius Nyerere, highlighted that the foremost task for newly independent states was to complete the African Revolution, achieve full liberation, independence and sovereignty. African unity was seen as central to resolving the colonial question.

In today's context of capitalism at its highest stage, imperialism, we argue for a "blood-bank" for anti-imperialist fighters and struggles. This is essential to creating a global counter-hegemonic pole that challenges Western imperialism. This requires a combination of African unity and anti-imperialist, anti-neocolonial resistance.

African Unity in a multipolar world and the struggle against neo-colonialism

The immediate tasks against neo-colonialism and the consolidation of progressive forces are urgent. The push for African unity is impeded by a co-ordinated series of challenges, many of which stem from the neo-colonial influence of post-independent leaders. Conflicts in the DRC, Sudan, Mozambique, Southern Cameroon and other regions demonstrate the difficulty of achieving peace and stability.

This analysis should not be misunderstood as prioritising military solutions over political ones. It recognises that African unity and multipolarity are not contradictory but complementary. African unity is not possible within the confines of the Washington Consensus and the US-led collective West imperialism, which impose their rules as universal. Those who deviate face isolation, sanctions, economic sabotage, terrorism and war.

No African country can independently pursue a developmental path while surviving the retaliation of former colonial powers. Even the alliance of Sahel states – Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger – has learnt this harsh lesson early.

The imperialist agenda, marked by destructive wars and aggressive strategies, underscores this point. Imperialist powers seek to control resource-rich geographies, countries and regions. Nowhere is this more evident than in the genocidal aggression against Gaza and the Palestinian people in the West Bank, supported by international Zionism and the imperialist regime of the United States.

The ongoing genocide in Gaza has underlying motives. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu hinted at this when presenting a map at the UN, drawing a "red line" that indicated US-backed Israeli aggression aimed to control Palestinian offshore gas reserves.

Canadian scholar Michel Chossudovsky cited an Israeli intelligence memo recommending the "forcible and permanent transfer of Gaza's 2.2 million residents to Egypt's Sinai Peninsula." This "extermination" of Gaza seeks to position Israel as a major gas and oil exporter from the Levantine Basin in the Eastern Mediterranean.

The US Geological Survey estimated in 2010 that the region holds an average of 1.7 billion barrels of recoverable oil and 122 trillion cubic feet of recoverable gas, with only a small portion of these resources on Israeli shores.

We live in dangerous times, witnessing not just the end of colonial partitions but the emergence of a new form of imperialist "re-partitioning."

Multipolarity and anti-Imperialist resistance

What does multipolarity mean, and who are the forces driving an anti-imperialist counter-pole of resistance? We see a counter-hegemonic agenda gaining ground amid the deepening crisis of imperialism.

While BRICS is not synonymous with multipolarity, it is a vital component that can be strengthened as such. For us, BRICS should embody more than governments. It must represent people's movements – working-class organisations, communist parties, trade unions and other

democratic mass movements. This “BRICS of the people” must strive to improve the lives of working families and reduce their dependence on capitalism, as the SACP puts it, “breaking the silent seal of economic compulsion”.

The BRICS Trade Union Forum, meeting independently over the years, exemplifies this. These movements, despite the collapse of the Soviet Union, contribute to the new multipolarity, but they also face challenges. Without working-class forces, any government can impose anti-people programmes. This process is not automatic; it requires active social and political struggle driven by individual and collective interests.

In defining the “BRICS of the people, for the people,” we do not diminish the role of governments in challenging US domination and supporting global peace. The efforts of BRICS countries to transform the global financial architecture, while still incomplete, show their aspiration for sovereignty in international affairs.

Although US dollar hegemony remains strong, a move to de-link from it must be strengthened but must be buttressed by popular mobilisation to succeed in the end. People need to understand how a supranational currency for international trade could meet their basic material and cultural needs.

The establishment of a development fund and a contingency reserve fund, capitalised with billions, is also significant. Without IMF transformation, these funds provide a buffer against US-led economic crises triggered by policy decisions.

Positioning Africa to challenge imperialism

The African continent must determine how best to position itself to confront imperialism. This includes closing foreign military bases, dissolving NATO influence and promoting public ownership of technologies controlled by imperialist powers. True sovereignty depends on unity – not just among states but among the people, particularly the working class.

African unity must dismantle neo-colonial structures that perpetuate dependence on imperialist powers. It must transcend borders imposed by colonial rulers, which divide and weaken us. True unity will come not from bureaucratic agreements but from the struggles of our people in streets, fields, and factories.

Unity must be principled, not a utopian vision that allows those serving imperialist interests to undermine it. For African unity to succeed, it must rest on an anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist foundation. The SACP is committed to making our contribution and grounding it in Marxist-Leninist philosophy. This unity must reflect a revolutionary All-Africanism that rejects neo-liberal illusions and imperialist development models and works to build self-reliant economies.

Building a multipolar world: A call to action

Creating a multipolar world requires political and ideological consolidation of the mass base. As communists, we advocate for a democratic, mass-organisational approach – what we call a popular left front, a powerful, socialist movement of the workers and poor, and a widest possible patriotic front – that organise the masses in solidarity and internationalism. These fronts and movement must engage local institutions, co-operatives, trade unions and embody unwavering political integrity but most importantly fight for the realisation of the daily struggles of the common person for food, water, housing, energy, health and education.

The SACP has already led anti-systemic and counter-hegemonic initiatives aimed at African unity and multipolarity. We founded the South African Peace Initiative (SAPI) and co-ordinate the Africa Left Networking Forum (ALNEF).

Our cadres, through involvement in trade unions and youth organisations, lead the fight against economic exploitation, xenophobia, racism, sexism and imperialism. Our efforts to support freedom fighters worldwide and liberate South Africa from the legacy of colonial rule and imperialist exploitation and dominance underscore our commitment. This is our “blood-bank” for the struggle against imperialism.

This is a pivotal moment in human history. The unipolar hegemony of American imperialism is fracturing, albeit still very strong. The fracturing is underpinned by an emerging counter-hegemonic force and multiple crises. However, as Marxists-Leninists, we know that merely shifting the global power structure does not guarantee liberation for the oppressed. The vitality of the national democratic revolution will be strengthened by African unity and a multipolar world. These ideals support one another in the global struggle for justice. We must consolidate African solidarity, support anti-colonial movements, and build institutions that reinforce them.

The crisis of liberal democracy

Liberal democracy has assumed the driving ideology of contemporary capitalism. It is itself in crisis, as is its underpinning system itself.

Liberal democracy has become a driving ideology of contemporary capitalism. But it has failed to adapt to the new realities facing humanity. It has proven itself incapable of maintaining its incoherent hegemonic control and leadership over the so-called free world. Its ideas, moral authority and integrity have drastically declined.

Simultaneously, the pillars that support this hegemonic presence and influence are collapsing. This is evident in the crisis of the genocidal apartheid settler Israeli regime, a key imperialist outpost in the Middle East. This apartheid regime of Israel has not only lost the symbolic decorations of its liberal façade, intended by its imperialist creators, but its outdated application of Zionism has moved beyond mere tensions with liberalism. It has entered into irreconcilable differences and justifications that have now destabilised the US political system, especially its moral authority – if it ever had any at all.

The election of Donald Trump, who recognised East Jerusalem as the capital of the apartheid Israeli settler regime, has further heightened the resolve of imperialist forces to destroy what they term political Islam. They pursue this goal while employing their own religious annihilation strategies, such as Zionism and political Christianity.

The South Korean outpost, intended to keep North Korea in check and maintain the imperialist divisions of the Korean people, is also weakening. North Korea has become more assertive, largely due to its advancements in military technology and industrial capabilities. These capabilities now extend beyond threatening South Korea to challenging the US and its NATO allies.

Similar challenges are faced in the Taiwan Straits. China has asserted its territorial integrity, drawn a red line and explicitly stated its willingness to go to war with the US if provoked. This comes despite continuous US provocations, such as the navigation of US warships through the Taiwan Straits under the guise of maritime freedom.

It is worth questioning whether the US would allow Chinese or North Korean military frigates to pass between Cuba and the US in the name of maritime freedom. Recently, when the Russian Federation conducted military exercises with Cuba and sent a submarine, the US reacted by escorting it with nuclear-armed bombers. This took place in waters within 200 nautical miles of Cuba, which is only 90 miles from the US coast. The US has long used the strategic importance of Cuba, particularly its access to the Panama Canal and Caribbean Sea lanes, as a pretext for such actions.

The US's expansionist agenda in the East, through Ukraine, Yugoslavia and others, has also met serious resistance. This has led to an imperialist war against the Russian Federation, with NATO generals providing full military training and advisory support and NATO supplying military hardware and technical capacity.

The mobilisation of financial and military resources by the US and its European allies has openly pitted the Russian Federation against Europe the imperialist collective West.

While this expansionist agenda continues, we can observe its disintegration alongside its liberal ideology.

Since the 1970s, the rise of neo-liberalism has been sustained by an offensive against progressive and radical leftist ideas, including communism. Despite its professed commitment to aspects of libertarianism, neo-liberalism has only aimed to ensure the sustained profiteering of corporations. When profits decline, these corporations raid the state through the privatisation of state-owned enterprises and public economies.

This agenda has been further advanced through austerity measures to prop up failing profit margins. Emerging, assertive, and independent states face intensified attacks using various means. These include unilateral sanctions, such as those imposed by the EU and US on the Russian Federation, trade restrictions, and military occupation. These methods are used to maintain hegemonic control, while calling for global disarmament. According to research by the Renmin University of China, nearly all EU countries have been expanding and modernising their military stock, replacing old weapons with new ones, and participating in over 55 active wars worldwide.

Brutality of the liberalism and collapse of Syria

The contradictions of these ideologies, which have deceived the emerging democracies of post-World War II colonial Africa, have been exposed by the brutal genocide of the Palestinian people. This genocide is carried out by the Israeli occupation regime with full US support.

We have also seen the destruction of the Syrian state by imperialist forces in a massive offensive that rendered the Syrian defence further weakened and ultimately crumbled under imperial bombardment by USA funded terrorists' groups, further supported by Turkey and aided by Israeli attacks on the other side.

Now Israel has claimed to have destroyed almost 80% capacity of the Syrian and leaving it completely vulnerable to continued attacks and exploitation of its resources. Syria was a major pillar in the axis of resistance against imperialism by the people of the Middle East. These imperialist advances albeit using domestic issues will strengthen their coordinated efforts against Iran and seeking to annihilate the entire region and control its massive mineral wealth, especially oil and gas.

This reality has also exposed South African liberals, particularly those anchored in Jewish capitalist interests. These elements have sought to remove the South African liberation movement from political power, despite having once used it to profit from the working class suffering under neo-liberalism.

It is important to recognise that capital, while asserting the DA for market access, international networks and the protection of its historical accumulation under colonialism and apartheid, still requires the ANC. This dynamic has racial undertones and must be exposed and rejected. In this scenario, the ANC ensures social and economic stability in the country and enforces discipline among the working class.

The DA, like the neo-liberal faction within the movement, does not prioritise the people. Its main objective is to save face, guaranteeing the continuation of a neo-liberal economic trajectory and capital accumulation. The DA has effectively secured a position that challenges the ANC's dominance, becoming the second-largest party in the GNU, despite losing votes in the May 2024 elections, and rendering the official opposition largely irrelevant. This success is backed by support from European allies, the US and local capital, which is mainly if not exclusively under white control. The DA sought to unite opposition to the ANC, including the various right-wing parties in the GNU, through the so-called moonshot pact and "multi-party charter".

We must reflect on the basis of this unity and the weaknesses within the ANC and broader movement, including our own. We need to identify these weaknesses and ensure they are not repeated.

So, how do we advance democracy in a world marked by the degeneration of democratic systems? Western liberal values are presented as universal, while others are deemed barbaric and targeted for elimination.

Lenin, in his address to the Second All-Russia Congress in November 1919, stated:

"The socialist revolution will not be solely, or chiefly, a struggle of the revolutionary proletarians in each country against the bourgeoisie – no, it will be a struggle of all the imperialist oppressed colonies and countries, of all dependent countries, against international imperialism."

That is one of the international front task today.

Contesting elections, a reconfigured alliance and the roadmap

The 15th SACP Congress represented a decisive moment in the strategic task of building a powerful socialist movement of the workers and poor majority in this country, to defend and advance the national democratic revolution and the struggle for socialism. One of the major outcomes of the SACP 15th National Congress was on the matter of contesting elections, which calls for the first SACP Augmented Central Committee Plenary following the 15th National Congress to:

"...conclude a review of progress and assess its experience on the reconfiguration of the Alliance, the renewal and unity process, and related to these and after relevant factors, finalise the roadmap and modalities to contest elections.'

The resolution makes it clear that the task of contesting elections is interconnected with the immediate and strategic tasks of the vanguard party of the working class. These tasks are reflected in the SACP 15th National Congress Declaration, resolutions and our adopted Party Programme – The South African Struggle for Socialism.

This Special National Congress should give the binding finality of the matter. We took this resolution informed by the currently changing and extremely difficult political, socio-economic and organisational context we find ourselves as a movement and as a country.

We are referring to a growing a loss of people's confidence in, and disaffection with the ANC to lead on many fronts, as reflected by the declining electoral prospects of the ANC, and of our broader movement, which is a major setback for progressive politics in our country.

We are referring to an overwhelming sense that corruption within our ranks has reached an untenable phase of moral and political decay. In the eyes of our people, renewal of ANC could be mainly measured by the ability of the ANC and government to turn the tide of corruption and all manner of unethical conduct that this brings along.

We are referring to failure to turnaround our country, from the accumulating and multiple crises of capitalism – especially unemployment, poverty, inequality and associated crises of social reproduction.

Furthermore, the current high cost of living (and a factor that has also global dimensions) and continued imposition of neo-liberal fiscal austerity (through massive budget cutting) measures on the working class, and load-shedding could only worsen these crises and further harm the electoral prospects in 2024, thereby reversing the major redistributive social gains and local provision of basic services since April 1994.

We are also referring to the general weakening of our organisational capacities – of the ANC, but also of the Alliance in general even the SACP itself.

It is important to stress that some of the challenges may be of short-term nature, however, if left unattended, may well influence the strategic direction of an ANC-led government.

However, this does not suggest that there are no efforts to reverse this decline and win back confidence. There' already some visible efforts to dislodge and isolate forces of corruption, by instituting important step-aside measures - ineffective as they are and now also weaponised by internal factions, curbing the role of big money in internal ANC politics and by prosecuting the looters of public resources.

Unless we end austerity and roll-back the prevailing neo-liberal macro-economic framework with regard to fiscal and monetary policies and the mandate of the Reserve Bank, progressive interventions at social and micro-economic levels will continue to be hampered and even eroded.

In short:

Both the current political challenges, and the economic and social crisis facing the workers and the poor majority and our movement's weaknesses, provides context on which we should locate the matter of Alliance reconfiguration, broad-left front, electoral options, modalities and the roadmap for the Party. One thing is clear from now on we are contesting all elections starting with the local government elections.

We should also seek to draw the SACP contesting elections from the lessons of our participation in elections through the ANC ticket since 1994, as well as international experience of communist parties and left formations contesting in capitalist dominated societies.

Progress on the reconfiguration of the Alliance

For over two decades the alliance embarked on critical debates about its adaptation to the new prevailing political and organisational realities and conditions. With the Young Communist League of South Africa we had discussions at the 2002, 10th Congress in Rustenburg.

The 11th Congress referred the CC to draft a discussion for the 2005 Special National Congress in Ethekweni (Durban). The 12th National Congress in July 2007, Gqeberha (Port Elizabeth then) took the first resolution we later presented to the Alliance. We have since modified this resolution several times:

- at the 14th National Congress in July 2017, where we emphasised the need to contest elections more effectively and to forge popular left and widest possible patriotic fronts, along with continuing the imperative to reconfigure the Alliance;

- at the 4th Special National Congress in December 2019, where we allowed for representation to the Central Committee by lower structures to contest elections under special circumstances, such as where the spirit of Alliance reconfiguration was undermined and candidates were imposed by faction
- at the 15th National Congress in July 2022, where we concluded that the SACP must contest elections more effectively with (within the framework of Alliance reconfiguration) or without (if the Alliance remained not reconfigured) a reconfigured Alliance.

In some instances, our comrades were punished and even expelled from the movement. Some reacted even by standing as Independent Candidates and expelled by the SACP. Later on, the ANC embraced them back, like in the West Rand in Gauteng. Others stood as independents supported by the SACP, like in Ntshanga, KZN.

There were some representations within the Party for electoral contestation. Others were rejected for a variety of reasons either at the provincial or national level, like the uMzimkhulu case in the previous local government elections. Some structures, like in the Joe Gqabi District, in the Eastern Cape, even registered to contest without permission. We had to withdraw their application from the IEC and they went ahead and contested differently and we exercised disciplinary measures.

The classic example of an approved contestation was the Metsimaholo case after 195 of municipal workers, were expelled from work by the ANC-led municipality. These workers were members of SAMWU. They presented their case to the Party District, which agreed with them and made presentations to the province, which then made representation to the Politburo and afterwards the Central Committee. When the CC agreed to implement some members of the CC did not even support the campaign. The 14th Congress was very instructive and indeed went a long way to define the modalities of contesting elections in the event there is no reconfiguration. It is this congress that laid the basis for a series of Alliance discussion documents on the reconfiguration and set timeframes.

On the Alliance Discussions Documents on reconfiguration of the alliance

The SACP developed the first document. Which the ANC derided and produced their own document which we also criticised. Then came a COSATU document and SANCO made verbal presentations. We then constituted a joint Alliance Task to finalise the document. First it was comrade David Masondo, ANC NEC member and Head of the O.R. Tambo Political School. But President Zuma objected that he was biased as a member of the SACP and former YCLSA National Chairperson. We acceded to that, for the sake of progress, really(?), and Comrade Nathi Mthethwa, ANC NEC and Head of Policial Education led the convening of the Alliance Drafting Team, SACP and COSATU representatives. This is the team that finalised the draft. All National leadership structures of the Alliance components adopted the final draft which and in November 2019 we printed the joint document Towards a Reconfigured Alliance.

But, after three successive congresses, the 15th Congress attached a deadline to finalise this debate and contest elections with or without a reconfigured alliance by the next Augmented Central Committee. We engaged our allies on this new reality. But something unbecoming happened. Some of our comrades in the Central Committee questioned the resolution as we were emphasising its implementation. We had to dig deep in the congress proceedings through video to see the finality of the resolution. We confirmed it.

In our bilateral meeting with the ANC in September 2022, the ANC Officials agreed to convene a Special NEC in October to finalise approach which never happened. They went to the

National Conference in December 2022 and had some scant sections on the Reconfiguration of the Alliance. The political report on this was good but non-committal and the Organisational Report was dismal, arguing as if there was never a discussion and accusing the allies of wanting micromanaging the ANC.

Few months later in April 2023, just two weeks after we conceded to support the ANC in the 2024 general elections and agreed to contest local government elections, the ANC releases a new document from the ANC titled Renewal of the Movement. This document criticised the Alliance document as if it is an SACP document. Then ANC publicly said that the SACP seek to liquidate the ANC by calling for reconfiguration of the Alliance. Certainly, this is far from the truth. But unfortunately, these lies have been continued. Nevertheless, we endured the unfair criticism and because we did not have any bilateral meeting since the 2024 elections until about two weeks and we duly only informed them of our Augmented Central Committee decision to contest the local government elections, 30 March to 1 April 2023.

All these years we placed the ideal electoral modality for the SACP to contest elections through a reconfigured Alliance, an alliance founded on joint-programme of action, including elements of an electoral agreement, that may involve common approach to coalitions post elections. The ANC leadership simply ignored this and made unfulfilled promises. Yet we rose up whenever the ANC called. But their behaviour also weakened us. We cannot continue this way without dying and betraying our original mission to build socialism in our country and end all forms of human exploitation by the other human being – which is communism.

We have tried our best and have been patient enough to the point of losing our credibility and even fail pop analyst do not take us seriously on this matter. This decision does not mean we have left the ANC or ended the dual membership. It basically asserts the organisational independence of the Party, ideological purification and responsibility as a party for socialism and taking responsibility for socialist struggles not mitigated struggles and program though an ally but seek to reinforce the strength of its weakening ally whilst advancing the working-class agenda against the oppressive capitalism.

A reconfiguration of the Alliance should be closely tied with the renewal of the ANC with its own visible elements and even with the renewal of the SACP itself. For the SACP especially but all components of the Alliance this will be dependent mainly on building an independent Communist Party of the working class, able to harness other social forces on strategic struggles of the working class, and but not exclusively on building of a powerful socialist movement of the workers and the poor on the ground.

We have previously even posed questions that if a reconfigured Alliance does not materialise soon, what other modalities should be considered? The idea and practice of a broad-left front should not be merely understood as an electoral modality but also as a strategic task for deepening and advancing a radical national democratic revolution with active and leadership role of the Party.

Having considered the electoral roadmap and timelines for the Party, including our participation in 2024 elections and 2026 local government elections we should start the preparations to contest local government elections with or without a reconfigured Alliance or a broader left popular front.

For the SACP the electoral campaign platform, will need to be built around an anti-neo-liberal, anti-corruption, pro-worker and pro-poor agenda, a platform guided by the South African Struggle for Socialism.

All our electoral considerations, either through a reconfigured Alliance or left popular front will have an impact on our collective relations with the ANC. We therefore need to strengthen maximum unity within the Party on our opted electoral position and our ability to mobilise resources for contesting elections.

We will need to embark on an extensive and intensive process of engagement and consultation to advance our message on electoral position we adopt, beginning with the Alliance itself and broader society. We will do so, once again, in a manner that enhances the unity of the Party and directing our energies on the imperative of building a powerful socialist movement of the workers and poor.

Rejuvenating the SACP, strengthening and asserting its independent voice and the working class struggles for socialism

The need to go deep in analysing the strength of the Party is very important. We should always regards political building as a basic principle and important part of Party building. A Marxist-Leninist Party must put Party political building first and be able to take a clear political stand because that is a fundamental requirement to meet.

There are many political compromises and sacrifices the SACP made along the way of advancing our revolution and some of them have left the working class vulnerable.

“The working class cannot play its world-revolutionary role unless it wages a ruthless struggle against this renegade, spinelessness, subservience to opportunism and unexampled vulgarization of the theories of Marxism”, Lenin - 1915.

We must ask ourselves whether we are a spineless or subservience Party who always its leaders think of their personal interests than those of a class. All of us must take Party political building as an overarching guiding principle. This will be an important tool as we seek to provide direction. It means that Party political building holds a central, primary, fundamental and overarching position in Party building. To lead the Party’s organisational building with its political building is to adhere to the principle of the Party supervising its elected leadership and membership, emphasise political performance from each of them and they commit to honesty, self-discipline and willing to assume responsibility.

In the recent years, we seem to have deviated from Party political discipline and preservation of communists’ character. For an instance, there is a growing tendency of federalism and liberalism within Party structures and something that should not be tolerated if we are to build a vanguard Party of the working class and poor. This requires Party members and leading cadres to always put the people above all else, carry forward the Party’s fine conduct, and forever preserve the political character of communists. Party political building is interlinked with organisational building and our characters should be witness to that.

Lenin further guides us in his speech on the Agrarian question in November 1917 when he said,

“A party is the vanguard of a class, and its duty is to lead the masses and not merely to reflect the average political level of the masses”.

We should do excellent everything that concerns the wellbeing of our people as a standard measure of communist activism. We should end the moonlighting of activism in the ANC or government and trade unions and other spheres at the expense of the Party and its mission.

Immediate to medium-term tasks of the Party

- We need to rebuild the responsive and campaigning organisational structures of the SACP seriously, along new trends and societal development, not entirely in the rigid archaic way it is now. Involve science and technology in the new form of campaign but primarily root the Party amongst the people and work with them to resolve immediate economic and social challenges they face.
- This aspect is fully tied to the ability of the Party to renew itself and certainly embrace the notion of 'self-revolution' to anchor the necessary change and perhaps lead to a point of rediscovering the main mission of the liberation movement that may enable us to rid the chains of capital reversing the gains of freedom.
- We need to unite the liberation forces especially the Alliance and deepen the reconfiguration of the alliance on new terms and terrain and enhance the mutually beneficial renewal agenda. This aspect should not be conditional on the whims of the ANC that rejected any tangible proposal on the table.
- Build and consolidate a popular left front based on campaign for radical transformation of the material living conditions of the working class and changing of unequal power relations in society upon the race, class and gender dimensions
- We call our structures urgently rebuild the Red Brigades established for the elections campaign to rebirth on the programmatic campaigns of the SACP and consolidating the socialist movement of the workers and the poor on the ground as we prepare for the elections.
- This should then be followed by a broad engagement with our cadres and the left and progressive social forces in general to demonstrate our seriousness to contest the current conjecture and give progressive orientation to the GNU against its already visible rightward shifts and tendencies.
- We should therefore commit towards building the New Cadre for the Socialist Movement of the Workers and the Poor
- Strengthen our international solidarity

Comrades, the time has come for us to fully grasp the critical moment facing the working class. We must seize this moment and refuse to capitulate to capitalist forces and their collaborators. This is not the time for half-hearted intentions. It is time to understand the situation correctly and act decisively. We must draw the red line and refuse any further betrayal. It is socialism or barbarism!

Thank you, Comrades.



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