



# Bua Komanisi

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**TOGETHER,  
LET US BUILD A  
POWERFUL, SOCIALIST  
MOVEMENT OF THE  
WORKERS AND POOR**

**THE LAND, SOCIAL REPRODUCTION AND  
GENDER EQUALITY**



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**TOGETHER, LET US BUILD A  
POWERFUL, SOCIALIST MOVEMENT  
OF THE WORKERS AND POOR!**

**MOVE THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION  
INTO A SECOND RADICAL PHASE  
THE LAND, SOCIAL REPRODUCTION AND GENDER  
EQUALITY**

# Contents

1. **Land Redistribution In Post-Apartheid South Africa** 4
2. **Fighting Patriarchy As Part Of The National Democratic Revolution And Building Socialism** 32
3. **The Vanguard Role of the Party in the fight against the Crisis of Capitalist Social Reproduction** 48

# LAND REDISTRIBUTION IN POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA

## Land reform and the agrarian question

Historical materialism poses two central questions pertaining to capitalist development in agriculture with society-wide impacts (Levin and Neocosmos 1989). The first relates to the process of oppression and repression affecting most labouring rural people, including peasants, petty-commodity producers and agricultural labourers. The second arises out of the differential and differentiating effects of capitalist development on the majority of the rural population. Colonialism intensified the forms of oppression and exploitation experienced by conquered and subjugated peoples across the globe, with settler colonialism in particular, leading to massive land grabs and expulsions of working people from farmland. How the agrarian and land questions are resolved is key to the form of capitalist development and the state in both the colonial and post-colonial periods.

The land question is but one of the key agrarian questions that shape land reform outcomes in post-colonial societies. Land and property ownership and the attendant social relations have been critical to evolving class relations in capitalism globally and in South Africa, where colonialism of a special type resulted in land conquest and expropriation confining Africans to limited land holdings that suppressed their agricultural modes of livelihoods and squeezed them out of emerging market relations, depriving them of civic rights and confining them to reserves and restricted areas of conquered land converted into white owned private property. This made it impossible for Africans to participate and compete in the market. Emerging forms of super exploitation in all economic sectors, particularly mining and agriculture, provided Africans with access to land for social reproduction to subsidise reduced wages

while increasing profits in enterprises often characterised by low productivity rates.

The issue of mining becomes important to underline at this stage, to highlight that the economic sectors that depend on land or the political economy of land is not limited to agriculture. Historically, mining, and the Chamber of Mines of South Africa (which has today changed its name to the Minerals Council of South Africa), played a key role in shaping the development of capitalism in the land of South Africa, bloodily imposed from Europe through colonisation processes.

Like commercial agriculture, capitalist mining development in South Africa played a key role in land expropriation or dislodging communities from their land and the livelihoods attached to it. It was a key factor in the forced proletarianisation of the expropriated African people and their insertion into the labour market in the most subordinate position, where, as the Communist International (1928) Resolution on the South African Question noted, they were mercilessly exploited (superexploited).

Therefore, while reflecting on the land question, with agriculture seemingly emerging as a key issue and to that extent appearing to be used in this paper more than other areas of focus as the chief example, **it is important for the SACP 15th National Congress to come up with an outcome that appreciates, and therefore encompasses, the pursuit of structural economic and broader social transformation and development in the entire sphere of land ownership and the political economy of land, including, but not limited to, agriculture, mining, the property sector, human settlements, the oceans economy and the water sector.**

That said, the reshaping of imperialist and colonial relations in east Asia in particular saw land reform become a key driver of successful developmental states. The vision of a capable developmental state in South Africa's National Development Plan (NDP) has failed to replicate or reimagine the east Asian model of development.

Unlike in China and South Korea, which are now competing at the highest global levels of technical innovation to become leading forces in technological innovations transforming society and the deepening process of the industrial revolution, in South Africa, colonialism and apartheid stifled the peasantry in the “reserve areas” and sharecroppers and labour tenants on white conquered farmlands. This undermined these emerging classes, which were demonstrating their capabilities and capacity to compete with white settler agriculture. Agricultural petty commodity production and the emergence of a peasantry led to class differentiation and the alignment of class forces that have transformed over time through the colonial, apartheid and democratic periods with attempted resolutions of the national question and the transition to a democratic state form.

Within the rural space, the role of the traditional leaders, most especially who were converted into indirect rulers of the settler colonial state over the emergent peasantry saw contradictory outcomes of resistance and collaboration by these rulers, whilst, throughout, the mass of rural peoples remained subjects without civic rights. Materially, Africans on white owned farms remain subjects with little more than voting rights until today—most do not have access to basic services such as water and electricity, and not least early childhood education facilities.

The importance of labour tenancy as a social relation of production is key to understanding capitalist transformations in the South African countryside. A focus on these specific social relations of production assists in understanding the limitations of instrumental ideal typical understandings of capitalist modes of production, relations of production and social formations in the development of capitalism. In the colonised world, in particular, it is not possible to speak of a “pure state” of capitalism and its “periodisation” (Poulantzas, 1978). Lenin argued in *The Development of Capitalism in Russia* that the “capitalist economy could not emerge at once, and corvee economy could not disappear at once,” and that in the Russian

context, “the only possible system of economy was... a transitional one ...combining the features of both the corvee and the capitalist systems...(and) that sometimes the labour service system passes into the capitalist system and merges with it to such an extent that it becomes impossible to distinguish one from the other” Lenin (1964, pp.194 & 197).

Similarly, labour tenancy endured as a social relation of production throughout the 20th century in South Africa. Labour tenants are a class of agricultural labourers providing casual, seasonal, and ongoing labour power to white capitalist agriculture in exchange for in-kind payment, minimal if any wages and access to land for residence, cropping and grazing. The imposition of legal categories of labour tenant, farmworker, and farm dweller on petty commodity producers on white owned farmland during the colonial, apartheid and post-apartheid periods has generated class differentiation accompanied under democracy by different and competing rights.

Labour tenancy persisted throughout the 20th Century in most of South Africa, while many residents in the African labour reserves, mainly women continued to use the meagre land available to “subsidise” wages of migrant workers through petty commodity production. Nevertheless, those responsible for the implementation of the Labour Tenant Act, the Restitution of Land Rights Act and emerging land redistribution policy did little to explore these contradictions while failing to recognise the potential for successful and sustainable land reform targeting a semi-landed class of petty commodity producers in post-apartheid South Africa.

The uneven characteristics of labour tenancy and the creation of “native reserves” and “bantustans” together with the practices surrounding these would imply that in the law as in social science, a flexible application of the prescripts would be appropriate and comply with the letter and spirit of Chapter 2, Section 25 of the Constitution. This could enable reparations and redress for black South Africans who bore the burden of colonial conquest, slavery

and laws of discrimination and merciless super-exploitation accompanied by theft and expropriation of land, “intolerable living conditions calculated to cause the physical destruction of the African populations; the creation of native reserves and ghettos; the mass and arbitrary killings of Africans; the indifference to diseases in black areas; and the confiscation of African livestock (leading to apartheid being declared in 1973) a crime against humanity” (Ngcukaitobi 2021).

## **Democracy and alliances in the land question**

The democratic dispensation and the issue of leadership in the agrarian and land question has been a central question in socialist revolutions and national democratic transformations. In Africa, the role of the emergent bourgeoisie and its character, whether comprador, self-centred, parasitic or a patriotic national bourgeoisie together with the role of traditional leadership, the erstwhile indirect rulers of colonial and settler regimes becomes central to the theory and practice of national liberation movements.

After 28 years of a democratic dispensation over land and agrarian matters, an emergent bourgeois class alliance between white farmers/landowners, politicians, traditional leaders, and agricultural and mining capital in the South African land question has become glaringly visible. This is manifested in many ways, including within the hegemonic rhetoric of national food security, and land reform beneficiary selection. The capitalised writing is on the wall, and the message is clear—land should be given only to those who can farm productively on a large scale. This view has ushered in a new class of statistically insignificant black farmers from above. Some are farming productively on the expected large scale. Some have little appetite for farming but enjoy the bourgeois status of landownership. They may be described as part of the (absentee) “land reform lords”, as articulated by the SACP. This political drama is currently played out on the so-called PLAS farms owned by the state and leased out to mainly politically connected individuals

(Mtero et al. 2019). However, some of the latter's class formation trajectories illuminate struggles from below, particularly in petty commodity production (PCP) of agricultural commodities and other small scale (PCP) service sectors and used such blood and sweat credentials to gain land through land reform programmes (Ngubane, 2020). However, most of this tiny minority of black landowners are land reform lords proper, and have come into farming from above, with little success in farm production.

The lessons of this flawed land reform must focus on a rigorous class analysis of current land reform beneficiaries without losing sight of the class positions of those who are not benefiting from land reform. The latter constitute an estimated three million people still living on white owned land as farm workers, farm dwellers, occupiers, and the remnants of the labour tenant class who are faced with arbitrary evictions, and unequal power relations, and who have not tasted the fruits of freedom as other South African citizens. They remain subjects and are not citizens of the "new South Africa" (Levin & Ngubane forthcoming).

Democratic rural municipalities have essentially failed to overcome and eradicate latter day but backward landlord-tenant relations. This is evident in toxic relations between the local municipality, and white landowners that inhibit the democratic local state, the municipality, barring it from transforming, but rather entrenching the lack of basic municipal service provision such as housing, water, and electricity to marginalised black, and coloured communities currently living on white owned farms.

Working-class populations in general and surplus labour populations in the former homelands are part of those not benefiting from land reform. This also includes the plight of coloured rural communities of the Western Cape who are faced with chronic evictions from farmland. The latter should also be targeted as beneficiaries of farmland, including peri-urban commonage land outside small rural towns of the Western Cape. For example, the commonage land

outside Citrusdal needs to be expanded for it has been used to full capacity for livestock rearing by the farm workers residing in its township.

## **Land reform policy and practice pre and post national democracy**

The freedom charter land to the tiller approach is still a significant political campaign for the current 700,000 or so casual and permanent farm workers on South African soil. Redistribution of land is a more meaningful political struggle for this workforce than the mere minimum or universal wage. With rigorous state support, the redistribution of land will transform the agrarian structure, and give rise to petty commodity production, or in bourgeois discourse, small and medium scale capitalist farming. This will no doubt create the much-needed self-employment, self-reliance (Biko, 2004), and the employment of the current surplus labour populations.

The farms that are already in the hands of former labour tenant claimants are proof of the validity of this trajectory, where successful claimants have regained their dignity with the democracy that has been deepened to their doorsteps, articulated firstly by the democratic removal of the oppressive landlord, and the unleashing of previously restricted livestock herd sizes, which opened new opportunities of selling significant head of livestock in weekend ceremonial informal markets (Ngubane, 2020). Furthermore, on a farm recently allocated to claimants in the Mpofana-Umzinyathi border area of the KZN midlands one finds 12 claimants on 900 hectares of bushveld vegetation. These labour tenant land beneficiaries have a herd of brahmin, brahmin cross and Nguni cattle. With minimal infrastructural investment of secure fencing, access to topical pour-on or hand-spraying and the creation of grazing camps hosting six beasts per hectare, the potential exists both for participation in the commercial market with the claimants' herd of brahmin and informal market participation in the weekend ceremonial market for both their Nguni cattle, and brahmin.

Struggling for land redistribution for productive use to build sustainable livelihood, support life in general and meet the material needs of the beneficiaries on a mass scale is a more meaningful struggle, perhaps more than that of wages, for the radical transformation of the current agrarian structure. For example, in the Western Cape farming sector, to struggle for wages in perpetuity, only recycles the poverty of mainly coloured impoverished communities therein and gives them no empowerment whatsoever. The 2012–13 De Doorns farm workers' strike is a typical example of temporary farm wages increase and subsequent reversal of these gains as capital mutated for the worst when virtually no one was looking.

We need radical transformation, the land to the tiller way - expropriation, subdivision, and redistribution to farm workers. Related to this, the Communist Party became the first organisation in South Africa to call for expropriation as a policy for land redistribution. The Communist Party advanced this imperative in a series of its programmes at least dating to its programme adopted in December 1924 (Mashilo 2021). To give effect to this, **it is important for the SACP to articulate guidelines and to continue its support for an expropriation Act, noting that the process to amend the constitution has stalled until a two-thirds majority is secured. In a series of its interventions, the SACP has argued that pursuing constitutional amendments, while essential to give categorical clarity, should not be regarded as the only option. Rather, argued the Party, there is space to advance expropriation within the current constitutional framework. The government either chose to not test or failed to test this space since the adoption of the constitution. Thus, the SACP called for an expropriation Act to test that space to its full potential and devise a new strategy based in the outcomes of the test.**

In addition, the SACP, which was the first post-1994 to drive a major land redistribution campaign, said the process to produce an expropriation Act within the current constitutional framework and to

test it to its fullest should not be held back by market fundamentalist interpretations of the compensation provisions in the constitution, as well as by such other things as the so-called “Willing buyer, Willing seller” which are not even in the constitution.

In advancing the above, position, the Communist Party argued that **expropriation is originally not a market-based-exchange-relation involving selling on the one hand and buying on the other hand. As a result, the expropriation legislation (“law of general application”), which the constitution calls for, argued the Party, must have provisions excluding compensation altogether, taking into account—historical factors such as how the land was acquired, whether there were other people expropriated in the process from the onset that led to that acquisition, whether there was state involvement, and taking into account public interests, and the need to resolve the imbalances of the past (which are reproduced by the capitalist market) and ensure equitable access to land and South Africa’s natural resources.**

The process towards the expropriation Act is under way in Parliament, but it needs more deeper engagement on the part of the Party and the working-class to secure an outcome that will contribute to resolving the land question, in particular, and the property question, in general. As Marx and Engels (1848) state in the Manifesto of the Communist Party, in every movement of the working-class, (and poor), the communists “bring to the front, as the leading question in each, the property question, no matter what its degree of development at the time.” In advancing this line of march regarding land redistribution, the SACP needs to deepen engagements with its Alliance partners, as well as with worker and other progressive formations, to correct the weakness of the lack of engagement and the absence of a joint approach and programme of action that has been visible on this important question.

Not unrelated, the creation of new laws that protected farm workers and labour tenants from arbitrary eviction were approached timidly by the government and its new apparatuses as white farmers launched the greatest onslaught of forced removals, evictions, and displacements of black, and coloured people from white owned farms in all our country's history. The number of extrajudicial relocations, displacements, removals and evictions affecting three million people in the first decade of our 1994 April democratic breakthrough (1994-2004) is the highest of any decade in South African history.<sup>1</sup>

Essentially, these forced relocations, displacements, removals and evictions entail land dispossessions, and the attached losses of material wealth, including housing, furniture, livestock, and the loss of a sense of place, and a loss of dignity for current and future generations as people's dreams and aspirations are shattered by being uprooted involuntarily from the land. Furthermore, even in cases where people elect to leave farms, these are essentially forced relocations, under pressure from the wider economic, and political forces sometimes beyond the farm, but often embodied in the ruthless and often unlawful eviction orders issued by current landowners. Given the timing of these forced relocations (1994-2004) they appear more like a political response by the current landowners than economically driven, especially when one considers the promulgation of the Land Reform (Labour Tenant) Act 3 of 1996.

The South African state appears to show too much respect towards capital, if not praising it, perhaps in the case of the land question, while progress in land redistribution has been too slow, leaving exiting land related inequalities intact or worsening. The limitations of neoliberal land reform over the last 25 years, when the decisive power of the state is needed most, is seen in the failures of the state to move decisively in developing and fully testing expropriation

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<sup>1</sup> Nkuzi Development Association and Social Surveys Africa, Briefing to Parliamentary Portfolio Committee for Agriculture and Land Affairs, 30 August 2005.

legislation to provide the general law of application to implement expropriation for land redistribution as enabled by Section 25 of the constitution.

The Labour Tenants Act is already a general law of application, but there has been a failure to test the law in favour of labour tenants. For seven years, the government was unable to reveal the actual number of labour tenant claims. The Association for Rural Advancement (AFRA) had estimated that there should have been around 500,000, but the government claimed there were just over 20,000, half of which had been “resolved” by the time the Constitutional Court ruled against the department and appointed a Special Master to supervise, monitor and oversee the government’s implementation of the programme.

This left the government with the market as its major lever to drive land reform. Moreover, it elected to use one of the World Bank’s options, the so-called “Willing buyer, Willing seller” as the preferred approach to redistributing land. Redistribution at market value was the best option for capital as concentration ensued, white capitalist family farming declined, the number of landholdings diminished, and industrial agriculture became dominant. Market values became distorted, despite the establishment by the department of an Office of the Valuer General. The “willing sellers” were able to produce their own valuations, almost always higher and the preference for settlement in the case of restitution and labour tenant land claims, or land purchase in the case of land redistribution projects for amounts closer to or the equivalent of the higher land valuation became preponderant.

The adoption of neo-liberal approaches to new public management saw state restructuring and the proliferation of agencies in sectors such as transport, tourism, housing, finance, social security and trade and industry as opposed to building state capability through strengthening the administrative apparatuses of the state. The redistributive thrust of post-apartheid political economy diminished

and the appetite to develop the legislative tools to expropriate land with just and equitable compensation as provided for in the constitution has not been tested. The consequence has been deepening marginalisation of the landless and poor in rural and urban South Africa. Land reform through the willing buyer-willing seller approach has seen white landowners as major beneficiaries with government paying over the odds often in allegedly corrupt ways to facilitate elite and state capture of the land reform process.

Clear class objectives of agrarian reform did not find their way into policy, such as those encapsulated in targeting petty commodity producers on white owned farmland, and in the former homelands (Levin and Neocosmos 1986). Significant potential was lost through failing to recognise and target petty commodity producers on white owned farmland who are wrongfully conceptualised in demeaning hegemonic liberal language translated into legal categories of farm dwellers, farm occupiers, labour tenants and farm workers. Since 1994, this led to the resuscitation of landowners' power and culminated in evictions of approximately one million farm workers, labour tenants, farm dwellers and farm occupiers from white owned land in the decade following the onset of the democratic order, while over 2,3 million were displaced.<sup>2</sup> In essence, land dispossession through forced removals, which were a central feature of apartheid oppression and super exploitation of black people continued unabated during the first decade after apartheid, depriving labour tenants, farmworkers and farm occupiers of their means of social reproduction. The new democratic government was caught off guard, and the new fledgling administrative state apparatuses responsible for land reform left it up to local magistrate courts to deal with farm evictions in ways that favoured and continue to favour white landowners.

Nonetheless, at least three million Africans, many of whom continue to combine agricultural petty commodity production with other livelihood strategies remain on white owned land today. Kwazulu-Natal and Mpumalanga account for most the Department's number

of about 10,000 outstanding labour tenant claims. On the other hand, tens if not hundreds of thousands more labour tenant applicant claims were lost as became evident in various court cases, including the Msiza case and the Mwelase case, while some did not lodge claims because the administrative processes were not systematically put in place. During engagement with the Kgalema Motlanthe High Level Panel convened by Parliament to evaluate key legislation, AFRA indicated that they had estimated that there would be 500,000 labour tenant claims lodged (Cowling, Hornby & Oettle, 2017). Legal categorisation aside, land reform solutions for the millions of black and coloured communities resident on mainly white-owned farmland must ensue.

The office of the Special Master Labour Tenants has conducted research on the labour tenant claims and embarked on fieldwork interviews with labour tenants on white owned land in Kwazulu-Natal and Mpumalanga. In most of these farms, labour tenants and their descendants farm livestock and maintain vegetable gardens, while marketing their livestock in auctions and in black weekend ceremonial markets. Those whose land claims have been resolved, display the attributes of successful petty commodity producers (small-scale capitalist farmers) with farming skills and aspirations towards medium, and large-scale capitalist farming.

For example, labour tenant land claimants on Ravensworth farm have a herd of 500 goats, while claimants on Kleinwaterval, Kleinfontein, Wydgelegen, Pietersberg, Koubad farm, Welverdien and others continue to produce high quality livestock despite forced enclosures, ongoing impoundment of cattle and generalised oppression by landowners that undermine their efforts to sustain their petty commodity production activities. In these cases, and generally on white owned land that is claimed by former labour tenant households, the latter have been historically squeezed onto marginal land in terms of size and quality through ongoing extra-judicial relocations. Any improvements in terms of land size and land quality through access to larger pieces of good quality land

would most likely lead to the expanded reproduction of the currently hidden petty commodity production taking place on these farms.

## Land Redistribution

A total of less than 10 per cent of farmland in South Africa has been redistributed through land reform. This is an outcome of a snail's pace land reform rather than a diagnosis. A realist diagnosis is the apprehension of the counter agrarian reform forces that have conspired to give rise to these outcomes. By counter agrarian reform forces, we mean all the counter currents working against land reform. These include neoliberal policy itself, and the wider macro-economic context of the position of the state within the South African economy in which land reform policy is situated. On the ground this position is manifested in bourgeois class alliances between white farmers and state officials, some have dubbed the elite capture of land reform (Hall & Kepe, 2017).

Latest population estimates put South Africa's population at approximately 60 million<sup>3</sup>, and its steadily declining rural population at 19,4 million. Total households countrywide number approximately 17,4 million. Rural households are estimated at 5,8 million, with an estimated 1,3 million households in informal settlements surrounding metropolitan areas. Land reform in rural and urban South Africa should be targeting approximately 7 million households or 24 million people in rural areas and informal settlements. Approximately 30,4 million people in South Africa live below the old upper-bound poverty line of R1,268 with 13,8 million people living below the food poverty line (Pietermaritzburg Economic Justice and Dignity Group, 2021). These numbers provide a picture of the importance of rural and urban land reform for building livelihoods and food security.

For this reason, land redistribution lies at the heart of anti-poverty

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<sup>2</sup> Wegerif et al. 2005, Nkuzi Development Association and Social Surveys Africa, Briefing to Parliamentary Portfolio Committee for Agriculture and Land Affairs, 30 August 2005.

<sup>3</sup> <https://data.worldbank.org>; Statistics South Africa, Mid-year Populations Estimates, 2019.

strategies. Struggles against poverty are struggles for democracy and the national liberation alliance should stand at the centre of this struggle. Communists must identify the key progressive social class forces around which alliances must be built to wage democratic struggles against poverty and inequality. While labour tenants, farmworkers, farm occupiers, shack dwellers and informal settlements residents are not homogenous in terms of world view and outlook, they do form part of the working-class. Land hunger and a common history of forced removals including during the post-apartheid democratic era pose key questions for the national liberation movement and the alliance. The fact that alliance structures have to deepen their activism and build leadership on the ground, in informal settlements, in townships and in rural areas both directly and through building the organs of people's power. To this end, there is spacious room for improvement in the work and presence of the Party and the entire Alliance, as well as associated formations, in the daily struggles of the working-class and poor on the important question of the land.

Serious questions have been posed about the organisation of rural struggles (Bundy 1984) by the national liberation movement as well as the conceptualisation of the agrarian question (Levin & Neocosmos, 1989) due to a linear conceptualisation of the destruction of the peasantry and formation of an urban based proletariat. The story of land redistribution in our democratic dispensation reflects the absence of a strong mass-based tradition of rural struggle, which has to be corrected through consistent mass organisation and mass mobilisation. This does not mean that the land question is only important for rural areas. On the contrary, it is a serious problem in urban areas as well. However, we need to disrupt the subordination of the country to the town by building and advancing mass organisation and mobilisation in both rural and urban areas.

Land redistribution in our democratic dispensation was from the outset subordinated to the market forces, which are more

entrenched in metropolitan areas, and the option of the so-called “Willing-buyer, Willing-seller” as the key lever of land acquisition for redistributive purposes. The first five years saw the establishment of the Settlement Land Acquisition Grant (SLAG) benchmarked against the housing grant of R16,000, enabling households with incomes below R1,500 to access the grant. While the intentions were pro-poor, the commitment to the so-called “Willing buyer, Willing seller” at market price inevitably led to a “rent a crowd” approach to gain sufficient numbers of “beneficiaries” in a particular context to match farm price. Incoherent groups of beneficiaries often with numbers running into several hundred for particular “projects” were grouped into Communal Property Associations (CPA). In the absence of a clear petty commodity production supporting or “small-scale farming” approach, inevitably these projects were conceived as largescale enterprises with departing white farmers or other individuals with farming skills identified in the business plans that informed the projects as farm managers to be overseen and governed by CPAs. Invariably these projects were doomed to failure and fresh policy options sought during the second administration, after less than one percent of white-owned commercial farmland had been made available to black South Africans (HRSC 2014).

This led to a new policy, the Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development (LRAD), dropping all pretensions of pro-poor orientation, and opting instead to identify a new group of beneficiaries from amongst the patriotic national bourgeoisie as the principal beneficiaries. This approach was complemented in 2006 by the Proactive Land Acquisition Policy (PLAS), which later replaced LRAD and sought to purchase land and lease it out to beneficiaries with the intention of ultimately transferring it to them as private property. This approach was modified through the State Land Lease and Disposal Policy adopted in 2013, whereby state purchase and long-term leases as opposed to ownership became the model for redistribution.

The irony of the State Land Lease and Disposal Policy is that in

many instances government purchased PLAS farms are inhabited by farmworkers and labour tenants whose rights and opportunities to engage in agricultural petty commodity production in both livestock and crops is undermined by the emerging bourgeois land lessees and landowners who ride roughshod over their rights and practice forced enclosures leading to impoundment of their cattle. In the case of labour tenant applicants, their claims may not even be processed as their farms and land are occupied by beneficiaries of purchase, lease, and disposal policy implementation. This approach has predominated and the advertisement for lessees following the 2019 elections suggests that new redistribution policy options are still in the making if at all. As far back as 2014, it was argued that despite ongoing policy processes, summits, commitments, and reviews since 1995, a new policy framework to guide the redistribution process was yet to emerge. Little has changed.

## Land restitution

Land restitution is a critical area of land reform. Colonial conquest, colonial and apartheid forced removals are part of the genealogy of the national question and the legacy of white racism cannot be erased unless these are addressed through restitution of land as articulated in Section 25 of the constitution. Just like in post - World War II Germany, Bosnia, Serbia and other conflicts classified as genocidal in character, the international community has called for reparations as a remedial measure. The United Nations declared apartheid a crime against humanity in 1973, yet reparations were never exacted on the apartheid regime (Ngcukaitobi, 2021) including for its excesses in forced removals, which created a “discarded surplus population” dumped across the length and breadth of the country. The practice became so ingrained and widespread amongst white farming communities in particular, that they reacted to post-apartheid legislation with characteristic brutality, removing, displacing, and evicting 3,3 million black South Africans from white farmland under the noses of the newly established democratic state between 1994 and 2004 (*ibid.*).

There is little to debate around the importance of land restitution in the construction of a just non-racial society and to restore dignity to the victims and survivors of forced removals, other than its form and characteristics and who is to benefit. This is where it has become problematic insofar as the process has at times been captured by bourgeois or elite forces for personal gain. The potential is there for progressive outcomes in cases when whole communities benefit from land restitution in terms of settlement and petty commodity production for social reproduction and accumulation from below. The pathways and “models” to achieve this have not been designed, and the agrarian question is deemed to have been resolved in favour of capitalist family farming (invariably the continuity of white family farms) and industrial agriculture and agro-processing. This is partially due to the widespread myth that blacks do not know how to farm, ignoring the centuries long struggle of black peasants, agricultural petty commodity producers in the reserves, homelands, bantustans, white farms and on the commons on the fringes of urban areas where the oppressed black, and coloured masses have struggled to retain a toehold on the land. There is no piece of land that has not been historically struggled over, conquered, and people of colour banished from it, in South Africa.

The land restitution programme of land reform in South Africa should therefore be retained, but its bourgeois capture should be discarded vigorously, because millions of people stand to benefit from land restitution, not only chiefs, or well-educated land restitution vanguards that currently preoccupy the minds of land restitution pessimist pundits. The former suffered memorable forced removals and would very much want to realise social justice through land restitution (Walker 2008, Ngcukaitobi 2021) and not financial compensation.

In KwaZulu-Natal north-eastern midlands alone (uThukela, uKhahlamba, and uMzinyathi Districts), whole communities have benefited from land restitution and are using the land for human settlements, and small-medium scale agriculture (livestock and

maize production) for mainly social reproduction, and accumulation from below.

Financial compensation for land restitution claimants is a short-sighted approach—for money runs out in the shortest period and is incomparable to the value of the land in perpetuity as a natural resource with natural reproductive biological and livelihood generation capacity. Furthermore, what people lost with forced removal is not considered in financial compensation for land nor in suggestions to end the land restitution program.

Those who were forcibly removed from the land may not be at liberty to let go of this important aspect of land reform in South Africa, especially those with outstanding land restitution claims. Moreover, it is a constitutional imperative. Much more thought needs to go into the outcomes of land restitution in building a non-racial society and fighting poverty and inequality. The framework that emerges needs to be far more than design of a reengineered process, a new institution. It needs to put the victims and survivors of forced removals at the centre and question whether the process up to now has placed too great an onus on them to “prove they are victims”? Any decision about the land restitution program should take these issues into account. Furthermore, notions of belonging and aesthetic connections with the land on the part of those who suffered forced removals and their descendants should be taken into serious consideration, especially because these values are enshrined in the constitution. These rights would be fundamentally violated if the land restitution aspect of South African land reform is stalled or abolished.

## **Land tenure reform**

Land tenure reform is essentially about radically eradicating unequal social relations between the powerful and the powerless; between landed property and the propertyless classes. In South Africa, two political jurisdictions require radical tenure reform, white

owned farms, and communal areas administered by traditional authorities. Security of tenure is fundamental to the creation of the constitutional promise and needs to be sought in alternative systems of registerable rights, with lessons to be learned across the African continent and elsewhere in the “developing world”.

On the land administered by traditional authorities, a fundamental issue, today, is mining affected communities that are currently being dispossessed of their land for mining (Mnwana et al. 2016). These have seen the emergence of comprador class alliances. This also reveals how, for example, Anglo American through Rustenburg Platinum Mines (RPM) has enjoyed super profits for the last 70 years and how the state has been used as a mechanism of accumulation through the Minerals and Petroleum Resources Development Act through deals to convert old order rights into new order rights. In this case, shares were issued to various actors in the comprador class nexus, while the annual royalty payments were cancelled through an “equity swap” for some of them that became widespread across the platinum belt and did nothing for the poorest and most vulnerable (ibid).

Related to the above, the SACP needs to revitalise its campaign for a sovereign wealth fund, among others with royalties from the country’s mineral endowment a key source of the fund. In addition, it is important to strengthen the royalties, for example, vis-à-vis profits, to assert, in value terms, the principle that the country’s minerals belong to the people as a whole.

Besides mining, land dispossession for nature conservation and agriculture is also disempowering to the affected communities. This cuts aggressively across the other aspects of South African land reform (land redistribution and land restitution programs). Large scale capital penetration dressed as nature conservation or large-scale agriculture is the current threat to democracy in some of the rural areas that were condemned to reserves under apartheid, as unscrupulous capital seeks new reserves of mineral

deposits, including at sea; as nature conservation capital seeks new frontiers for appropriation; as large-scale speculative capital seeks cheap land to exploit, paying below market value to whoever the man in charge happens to be. Highlighting this is not to be anti-development. On the contrary, we need inclusive development based on just broader social transformation as opposed to capitalist uneven development, exploitation, rising inequality and manipulation of our basic wealth and resources by elitist grouping or individuals, be they black or white.

There are also mining affected labour tenant communities in the coalfields between Witbank and Middelburg. Labour tenants were unilaterally evicted from their land on Anglo-Exarro owned farms including Springboklaagte and Nooitgedacht in 2013. A second wave of evictions looms with some labour tenants being enticed to waive their rights through persuasion from the mine owners under the noses of Department of Agriculture Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) government officials in Mpumalanga, who have failed to provide them with legal representation to defend their land rights, which in the light of the Maledu Constitutional Court Judgement of 2018, are certainly defensible.

In 2017, it was estimated that 60 per cent of South Africans lived under insecure land tenure arrangements (Hornby et al. 2017). The majority of these (60 per cent), live in Communal Areas under traditional authorities, with the democratic government having failed to pass legislation to protect and register their rights within a system that would give them access to the rights of property owners with registered title. Farm workers and occupiers, labour tenants, informal settlements, backyard shacks, inner city buildings, RDP houses without title and RDP houses with inaccurate or outdated titles make up the rest.

Communal land residents, labour tenants and farmworkers should be the current focus of deepening democracy in rural areas through providing secure tenure on adequate land to facilitate

social reproduction, livelihoods, petty commodity production and accumulation from below. In doing so, this deepening of democracy must transform power relations in favour of the masses.

## **Urban land reform and the housing question**

Without going into the well-known movement of reclaiming the city and finding low-cost accommodation for the working-class in cities, we want to touch briefly on the so-called ‘urban proletariat with peasant characteristics’ (Jacobs 2017). These are essentially the precariat small scale livestock farmers in marginal spaces in our cities. Jacobs’ vantage point is Cape Town. These proletarians with peasant characteristics are more widespread than we think. They are not merely constituents of a quantitatively insignificant small scale/petty commodity production system, far from it. They consist of thousands of small-scale livestock producers on commonage land outside urban areas in South Africa on a generalised scale. These are essentially small-scale capitalist livestock producers internally differentiated by class (Atkinson & Inge, 2020). The point to grasp about these small-scale livestock producers on the urban fringes is that they have used commonage land obtained in the democratic era to full capacity—they need more land. More land can be obtained through the redistribution of farms closest to these commonages, as well as the golf courses which may be geographically closer. This will facilitate expanded reproduction of these small-scale livestock production systems. This could create employment and self-employment for the herders.

Much the same can be said about the feminised backyard gardens in black townships that supplement the diets of surplus labour populations. Indeed, some of these black women have progressed way beyond backyard gardens into building communal gardens and developing new forms of urban agriculture as illustrated in the Lenin Drive communal garden in Alexandra township. A similar success story is seen in the Maraki sustainable Community Project in Eldorado Park. Vertical gardening technology provides similar

opportunities in urban areas. These projects show how agricultural petty commodity production can thrive in formal and informal markets in both rural and urban areas and provides the logic and rationale of urban-based land reform to secure well located land for residential purposes for the working-class as well as land to secure livelihoods and generate accumulation from below through agricultural petty-commodity production of both livestock and crops.

Over the years, the SACP through its activists, among others in the Lungelo Lethu Human Rights Foundation, and in other fronts, has engaged in serious battles affecting the land and other property questions in urban areas, with Gauteng Province as the centre. It was within this campaign, fighting unjust evictions and repossessions, that the Communist Party exposed the issue of the house that was sold by bank auctioneers at R10. The Party formed part of marching to the commercial banking monopolies against the unjust evictions, repossessions and auctioning off of the houses. There were victories scored in this process, including court a victory. **However, we are far from dealing a deadly blow to the problems of unjust evictions, repossessions and auctioning off of the houses or stands from which the victims are evicted. An initiative was started within the framework of this campaign to launch a class action against the banking monopolies, which fought back through their muscle acquired from the deposits they receive and finance capital. There is specious room for improvement to strengthen and intensify this campaign by the SACP, especially through mass mobilisation across the country, and through other forms of support and activism. We need to deepen our work in this regard, including fighting the abuse of court processes by the banks and unscrupulous elements within the system and deal a deadly blow the problem of corruption in this space.**

## **Towards a popular left front movement to resolve the land question**

What kind of a class alliance should be formed by Communists and how should alliances be forged in both urban and rural spaces?

Recent living examples and intellectual work suggest that securing hegemony through state power and violence in informal settlements will empower neither shack dwellers nor ward committees. Instead, it provides the space for urban and peri-urban space capture by criminal networks, syndicates and shack lords in these spaces, as well as by elites and the bureaucratic bourgeoisie in councils, who allegedly control or sell off land shack dwellers to or from which they are then removed.

Similarly in rural areas, redistribution of land in favour of vulnerable groupings, particularly women on communal land are unlikely to be resolved in many contexts through alliances with undemocratic, unelected authorities who are incorporated into the state machinery.

In terms of labour tenants and farmworkers, the divisions between the two, often interrelated or overlapping, strata of the working-class, are often contrived to fit legal categories. Within this framework, vast numbers of labour tenant claims were lost. Nevertheless, in the drive to resolve labour tenant claims to farmland an unstable but progressive class alliance is emerging between lower ranking government workers, mainly but not exclusively located in agriculture, land and rural development, and labour tenant land claimants, and social movements.

In its broadest expression, the alliance between millions of workers, semi-proletarians, the unemployed and petty commodity producers is an alliance of those who have no security of tenure. This reflects divergent social forces with the common interest of securing land rights in communal areas, white owned farms, industrial agriculture, shack dwellers, inner city buildings, backyard dwellers, those in

RDP housing who lack titles and whose titles are outdated, and those dislodged from the land conveyed to profit-driven mining interests.

**The SACP can be at the vanguard of this worker-peasant alliance but not against development but in favour of social justice, in favour of a just and equal world, in favour of structural economic and broader social transformation and development, to roll back inequality, uneven development and the historical injustice of inequality in access to land, water and the country's natural resources, broadly understood. However, the Party will have to earn and secure hegemony through drawing the vast array of social movements, committees and community-based as well as sectoral organisations which have emerged in in the community, in informal settlements, in city centres, and in other land or human settlements spaces, into a popular left front. Securing security of tenure for residential and petty commodity production across a range of, but not only, agricultural productive activity, should be among the central objectives of this movement.**

The current posture of certain sections of leadership within our broad movement appears to be one of competition for organisational space and control over social movements and committees rather than hegemony as articulated by Gramsci in *The Prison Notebooks*. Gramsci who raises the fundamental theoretical question as relevant in the 1930s as it is in contemporary South Africa: "... can modern theory [i.e., the philosophy of praxis or Marxism] be in opposition to the 'spontaneous' feelings of the masses?" (1971, p. 199). These organisational forms and their leadership are, and should be, shaped by everyday struggles against poverty, inequality and associated realities. **Related to this, the SACP has adopted a strategic task to build a popular left front movement and the Party's SACP 15th National Congress is convened under the theme "Together, Let's Build a Powerful, Socialist Movement of the Workers and Poor". These are the types of alliances that the Communist Party should pursue.**

To return to Marx and Engels (1948):

*“In short, the Communists everywhere support every revolutionary movement against the existing social and political order of things.*

*“In all these movements, they bring to the front, as the leading question in each, the property question, no matter what its degree of development at the time.”*

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# FIGHTING PATRIARCHY AS PART OF THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION AND BUILDING SOCIALISM

*“The social emancipation of South African women is not possible under capitalism. What it requires is embedded gender equality and anti-patriarchal struggle in the organs of people’s power from community level to the state, in the family and cultural institutions, in the education and training sector, in the economy and world of work, and in the building of the socialist institutions and practices.*

*The struggle against patriarchal oppression and gender inequality is far from over. We commit to build on the shoulders of communist women who have gone before us, in full appreciation of the class and national content of the gender struggle and the gender content of the class and national struggles. True to their contributions, we will ensure that women are never relegated or pigeonholed to particular roles and tasks in society” (SACP Central Committee Statement, 09 August 2021).*

The question is always asked why progressive feminists, and left feminists in particular, so often see men as their strategic allies in the fight against dismantling patriarchy—the very social system that is contrived to benefit them as males, by default of biological sexual orientation. These questions are often raised by the Western inspired radical feminists, whose conception of this systemic question begins with seeing all “men” of different shades as a problem by virtue of being the beneficiaries to the patriarchal system. Our approach has always been in focusing on the struggles to dismantle the system under which male supremacy of any manifestation in general and capitalist male supremacy in particular thrives.

At least for the Party, the emphasis on the urgency to address the national and class question must not underplay the social weight within which the gender dimension weighs heavily like an albatross in the present conjuncture. In a word, the struggle against patriarchy must be fought in the current conjuncture, a terrain that is not yet a socialist one. Comrade Jenny Schreiner summed it in her 1990 paper delivered at the University of Natal, titled “Organizing Women”, in the 1990s: *“Now we are faced with the question of how we prioritize the struggle for democracy, or later on, in the struggle for socialism. Part of the answer should be clear – it is not a question of a balancing act between different struggles. The issue of women’s emancipation is not the back burner”*

Even in a socialist phase, women emancipation will not be handed over through the generosity of the socialist revolution, but it would be a product of placing these demands before the revolution. The Soviet Union and the role of socialist leaders like Alexander Kollontai bears testimony to this continued fight, albeit under more favourable conditions.

While appreciating the inherent impediments that the bourgeois system has on the resolution of women’s total emancipation, we must simultaneously reject the defeatist notion that seeks to tacitly demobilise the left feminists from immersing themselves too much about these struggles under the guise that this question will self-resolve under a socialist South Africa. This notion, albeit not dominant within the left, amounts to feminists’ unilateral disarmament.

In a 1991 article titled: *Marxism and Feminism: Uneasy Bedfellows?*<sup>1</sup> it is argued that:

*“The first Marxist who attempted a substantial materialist analysis of subjugation of women in patriarchal society, in order to avoid the pitfalls of naturalist thinking was F. Engels, in the Origin of the family, Private Property and the State...”*

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<sup>1</sup> Authored by Pat Horn, published in African Communist No.126, 3rd quarter 1991

*He (Engels) describes this family form as the subjugation of the female sex by the male for purpose of regulating the ownership of the private property, and regards it as essential perpetuating the capitalist system.*

However, the article goes on to argue that Engels' conception is "economistic", as it presupposes that ...*"when capitalism is overthrown and replaced by a classless society, this form of exploitation would be replaced by non-exploitative freely chosen sexual unions within which the status of male and female would be equal, as would their status in the broader society"* and gives the idea that the class struggle would automatically solve the problems of women's oppression in the cause of their battle against capital for a classless society.

So, it goes on to argue that the revolutionary emancipation of women requires the following:

1. Dismantling of patriarchy.
2. Transformation of the marginal role of women in the occupational division of labour to a central one.
3. Reformulation of the national question in South Africa to reformulate our national liberation struggle into a gendered struggle for a transformed South Africa.

If we review how much progress has been achieved in these three tasks, we can see that the SACP has made strides in number three (above), and the purpose of this paper seems to be for us to tackle number one. With reference to number two, the 1998 SACP programme identified a "key task in taking forward, developing and renewing the socialist project requires a much greater theoretical and practical attention to reproductive labour, and it is here that much of the intersection between class and gender oppression is to be found".<sup>2</sup> This has been attentively followed through in the SACP

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<sup>2</sup> Cronin, J. 2007 "Developing a Marxist approach to the struggle against patriarchy in SA (African Communist No 173, 2007)

policy and documents. As we strengthen our fight against patriarchy, we believe that a stronger focus on reproductive labour is indeed a necessary, but not a sufficient, tool for this revolutionary struggle.

## **What is to be done in 2022 and going forward?**

**Transform the gender division of labour throughout the economy (*including informal economy*): Analyse the changing world of work and its impact on the gender division of labour.**

For continuity, we refer to “The Inseparable Connection: The woman question, class struggle and the NDR” position paper presented to 14th National Congress of SACP in 2017.

As the SACP, we tackled the notion of the “dual economy” and its sub-notion of the “second economy”. There was a moment in South Africa where policymakers flirted with this notion as a way to try understanding the informal economy, and what to do about it—but it is no longer current in the South African government policy frameworks, nor internationally. More accurately, all capitalist economies are characterised by the existence of “economic activities by workers and economic units that are—in law or in practice—not covered or insufficiently covered by formal arrangements” which make up what is known as the “informal economy” in current International Labour Organisation instruments<sup>3</sup> and which are an integral part of the mainstream economy.

We should probably also drop the “lumpen-patriarchy” narrative, in favour of analysing the patriarchal character of a number of dysfunctional and increasingly violent tendencies across all classes in response to the crises of capitalism—gender-based violence, gangsterism, xenophobia, vigilantism, patronage systems, protection rackets, taxi wars, turf wars, scams, crime syndicates, criminal capture of resources such as state capture, increasing right-wing populism, etcetera.

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<sup>3</sup> Clause 2(a) of ILO Recommendation 204 on transitions from the formal to formal economy  
[https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO:12100:P12100\\_ILO\\_CODE:R204:NO](https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO:12100:P12100_ILO_CODE:R204:NO)

To avoid being misunderstood, we should also change the language of radical economic transformation for women workers, going forward, to socialist feminist economic transformation or structural economic and broader social transformation and development based on gender equality and redress.

COSATU characterises the capitalist labour market as follows:

The main characteristic of employment in the 21st century, is mainly structured around the gendered concept of a “male breadwinner”. The male employee was available to work, in generally on a full-time basis, while women were not expected to be in their majority in the labour market, but to do unpaid household and family work which were unrecognised. However, trade unions inherited gender bias of the employment and labour market, especially in association with male workers under male leadership. Even though women were large in numbers in the workforce, in sectors such as agriculture, clothing and textile, retail in developing and colonial countries, the leadership of the trade unions remained with the men.<sup>4</sup>

The COSATU KZN Gender Conference identified the agriculture sector as a priority site for economic transformation:

Formal labour contribution to the agriculture sector, is seeing a resurgence of female farmers, even though they have been the dominant productive force in South Africa, especially in the informal sector and rural communities, they have unfortunately not been properly recorded, in our Census Statistics. There is, however, no clear statistical line whether women’s participation in the agricultural industry has increased or either women have been made overly visible. The rise in the agricultural industry of food producers and manufacturers does not

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<sup>4</sup> Report of COSATU KWAZULU NATAL PROVINCIAL GENDER CONFERENCE, February 2022

necessarily translate into gender parity of income and control of resources.

The participation of women in the agricultural industry would now mean the change of land ownership patterns and distribution and economic opportunities are not gendered equitable. The landownership practices are needed for women to be competitively productive. Women's contribution to food security and they too would contribute largely in access to land. Hunger burdens have suffered colonial exploitation of resources and labour and they experience post-colonial harm to breach distributive justice, especially climate impacts through globalisation damaging productivity.

The COVID-19 crisis further deepened inequalities in the reproductive labour market, particularly health and care work—of which the following were highlighted in the COSATU KZN Gender Conference report:

The feminisation of the healthcare profession has women, especially mothers, carrying the weight, in the wake of increased working-hours. Women have been particularly vulnerable, unlike in other economic downturns. The COVID-19 induced recession left mostly women disproportionately jobless. Life under strict lockdown was inadequate to frontline workers due to shortage of staff, unless on special case as proven health problems, to grant sick leave

The pandemic has reconciled family structures and struggles to caregiving and critically, employment, especially for the working-class women. For families with young and school-age children, the loss of full-time childcare and participation in home-schooling are mainly associated with employment outcomes for mothers. In South Africa, lockdown restrictions had to be allowed for the public childcare system (Early Childhood Development (ECD)) to be flexible around the Children's Act on schooling, besides the labour

and economic policies, public spending increased towards family services, especially healthcare, childcare and consumer goods.

For a thorough-going socialist feminist economic transformation of the productive labour market, we will need to elevate economic struggles for women in the economy.

- Take up struggles for women to occupy leadership and executive positions in the corporate sector in line with the provisions of the broad-based economic empowerment.
- Fight for the rights of women hawkers in the central business districts, bus and taxi ranks, conceive of the protection and offering of decent stores and shelter with guaranteed rights to trade.
- Fight for women to get employment in sectors that are historically regarded as male domain such as transport and logistics sector, construction and mining. Engage the sector bodies to push for quotas for women to measure the progress.
- Drive the implementation, through government, of the Social and Solidarity Economy Policy whose content is directed at empowering co-operatives, community Trusts, Non-Profit Organisations, Stokvels and other related survivalist economic activities embryonic to grow towards formal economy.
- Re-establish Dora Tamana Co-operative Centre to institutionalise and train co-operatives at a community level, especially in rural communities for various economic social ownerships from agricultural activities to small scale agro-processing producing value-added foods, which form part of the emerging rural food systems detached from huge bourgeois retailers and some of them are producers for suppliers of schooling feeding schemes.

## **Strategy and Tactics for the SA Road to Socialism— gender mainstreaming**

Build meaningful black working women’s leadership in all economic sectors (both productive and reproductive) in not less than the proportions of women working in each sector

Strengthen the role of women workers in all levels of new emerging forms of work in the Digital Industrial Revolution.

Develop a socialist policy on sex work in consultation with organised sex workers (in South Africa and internationally) followed by policy conversations at all levels of the organisation to build some socialist understanding and consensus on this work sector.

### **Enhancing the gender dimension in the Party Programme.**

As the SACP, we have to admit that we have not punched above our weight on fighting patriarchal relations. In addition, as we emphasise, this task is not only an exclusive reserve for women within the Party but the entire SACP in full commitment. A solid and measurable programme will have to emerge and be embedded in every aspect of the programmatic pursuit of the Party. In all our seven sites of power as enunciated in the South African Road to Socialism programme, the fight against patriarchy must be asserted to loom large as a particular and specific enhancement of the key sites of power.

Red October campaigns must be gendered in their outlook, as a permanent feature of the SACP. Any minimisation of this aspect of the programmatic approach, at all levels of the Party must automatically disqualify such a programme as incomplete for implementation, until it articulates vividly on how it impacts on improving the lives and status of women in society, especially the working-class women. It is this rigidity that will super-impose the

responsible of women struggles to every member of the communist party, without a choice.

## **Immediate Tasks for the Party in Augmenting Gender Struggles.**

1. The SACP must build and strengthen gender department with human resources, as a locus for policy, gender theory and centre of gravity for gender programmatic campaigns. This department must fall under the gender transformation commission political oversight.
2. Part of the tasks for this office must be to influence policy and programmatic work and direction of the department of women, children and people living with disability and Gender Commission.
3. Mobilise all national and regional single-issue activists' civil society gender organisations. Some of these are doing a lot of work on gender-based violence; some are focused on Gender and Lands rights in rural communities and others on children's rights. The Party must galvanise these organs of people's power under the common solid platform and offer a support system without overtly imposing our ideological straightjacket, for purposes of wider buy-in.
4. Like the free availability of condoms in public spaces, the Party must engage robustly the Department of Basic Education to formalise the supply of free sanitary towels to the schools located in poverty-stricken communities, such as those classified as No-Fee Schools. No girl child must not go to school because of the non-affordability of sanitary towels.
5. Through gender transformation and the gender department, elevate economic struggles for women in the economy. Take up struggles for women to occupy leadership and executive

positions in industry and other economic and social sectors in line with the letter and spirit of employment equity and broad-based economic empowerment.

6. Solidarity support and participation in ongoing trade union workshops<sup>5</sup> to capacitate shop stewards and worker leaders for them to be able to continue advocating for the workers, including:
  - Young Women Development
  - Violence Awareness
  - COSATU Gender Webinars
  - HIV and AIDS workshops
  - Sexual Harassment
  - Trainer education workshops

## **Inner party work on the woman question**

- Conduct surveys among women in working-class communities, in trade unions and organisations of workers in informal economy, to find out whether SACP appeals to them, if yes then why, if not why not? Ask what kinds of changes would make them interested in joining SACP? Set up a survey committee to analyse the results and produce a report with recommendations.
- Conduct another survey among SACP women leaders to find out what works for them and what does not work well for them as SACP leaders.
- Roll out a “personal is political” or “practice what you preach” campaign in SACP.

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<sup>5</sup> Report of COSATU KWAZULU NATAL PROVINCIAL GENDER CONFERENCE, February 2022

## **Feminist organisation**

The imperatives of autonomous feminist struggles against domination and exploitation need to be merged into one struggle for the transformation to a non-sexist and socialist political economy. This means looking beyond the (mass) women's organisations SACP has tended to rely on, which may or may not self-identify as feminist in the sense of fighting patriarchy.

For us in SACP this means that we need to recognise the independent emerging mass feminist self-organisation led by young women and Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQI+) with strong focus on intersectionality—and engage with such organisations/movements as part of building a left popular front movement of working-class and progressive forces to which SACP committed in the 14th National Congress in 2017.

## **Elimination of violence against women**

The United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (UNDEVAW) of 1993 signified a key turning point in the understanding of violence against women and girls and gender-based violence (GBV). The UNDEVAW recognised that effective implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women would need to be accompanied by a declaration on violence against women. The Declaration recognised also that “violence against women is an obstacle to the achievement of equality, development and peace” in recognition of its far-reaching impact and its ubiquitous roots. It touched on the fact that “violence against women constitutes a violation of the rights and fundamental freedoms of women and impairs or nullifies their enjoyment of those rights and freedoms”. The declaration sees the systemic nature of Violence Against Women as “a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of the

full advancement of women, and that violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men”. It also recognised “that opportunities for women to achieve legal, social, political and economic equality in society are limited, inter alia, by continuing and endemic violence”

## **How women experience structural and systemic gender-based violence**

This is experienced in various forms by women and other marginalised groups, for example:

- An endemic inability to secure justice from the legal system in divorce cases, in maintenance cases, in rape cases, in sexual harassment and other gender-based violence cases
- A lack of commitment or seriousness in investigating cases of violations of, and any crimes against women, children, disabled people and LGBTQI+
- A stubborn refusal by our patriarchal systems to record femicide cases as femicide cases and to recognise misogyny in our environments
- An inability to impact effectively on the practice of harmful traditions
- An inability to eliminate human trafficking
- An inability to deal effectively with GBV and femicide in the world of work, and instead persisting to ignore it
- An unnecessary struggle to recognise woman leadership and to develop gender-responsive budgets in different levels of the state

- An inability to develop and or consistently apply policies that benefit the neediest who are overwhelmingly women, in South Africa and in the whole globe
- Intimidation, threats and disempowerment (rendering voiceless) of women in leadership and in society
- A campaign of underfunding or defunding of institutions that deal with women's rights and gender equality in South Africa and the world
- A resistance to genuine transformation of our institutions for women's benefit, attainment of gender equality and socio-economic justice

## **Addressing structural and systemic GBV to advance women's and people's rights**

### *In the Economy*

- Develop ideas about a solidarity economy: feminist, inclusive, leave no-one behind, ubuntu economy.
- The practice of the solidarity economy must be hegemonised in society because it will bring in norms, values, beliefs and practices of genuine equality and remove all the norms, values, beliefs and practices of a capitalist (read patriarchal economy) that thrive on greed, competition and monopoly.
- Zero-tolerance for any oppressive practice.

### *Across society*

- Develop ideas about socialisation and resocialisation for equality, for re-humanisation, for mutuality, for communality, for ubuntu.

- Hegemonising and practicing these ideas in the home and in all social, political, judicial and economic institutions and organisations.
- Zero-tolerance for any oppressive practice.

### *In politics*

- Developing shared ideas about what political systems should be for (not as they are now)
- Developing ideas about solidarity politics
- Developing the systems for solidarity politics
- Develop systems of accountability (checks and balances) in this space
- Zero-tolerance for any oppressive practice

### *In the judiciary*

- Develop a legal framework that is fit for the people of that nation, for example, in South Africa: democratic, human rights, African element of ubuntu as the base instead of Roman Dutch Law.
- Zero-tolerance for any oppressive practice
- Re-education of all role players in the system: remove elitist and individualistic frame in favour of a mutuality/ubuntu frame and practice.

# International Labour Organisation Convention 190 for the elimination of violence & harassment in the world of work

This is the first international instrument to comprehensively deal with the protection of ALL workers against violence and harassment. Convention 190 allows for a broad definition of the “world of work”<sup>6</sup> that includes “employees as defined by national law and practice, as well as persons working irrespective of their contractual status”<sup>7</sup>—ensuring that “the right of everyone to a world of work free from violence and harassment” is established as a new labour right that can be drawn on to protect workers around the globe, including workers in the informal economy<sup>8</sup> and new forms of work such as platform work and the gig economy.

The definition of “the workplace” goes beyond traditional formal workplaces, making specific mention of public and private spaces<sup>9</sup>, and a broad definition of violence and harassment. The Convention goes even further and mentions measures to support workers who are survivors of domestic violence<sup>10</sup>.

The scope of Convention 190 addresses violence and harassment in the world of work and protects ALL workers, including own-account workers in the informal economy, such as street vendors and waste pickers, who are not employees. Convention 190 requires the state to take legal and policy measures to ensure the protection of all workers from violence and harassment in the world of work.

The implementation of Convention 190 requires a holistic gender-

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<sup>6</sup> C190 Article 3

<sup>7</sup> C190 Article 2 Clause 1—goes further and includes “persons in training, including interns and apprentices, workers whose employment has been terminated, volunteers, jobseekers and job applicants, and individuals exercising the authority, duties or responsibilities of an employer”.

<sup>8</sup> C190 Article 2 Clause 2 explicitly specifies the informal economy, and Article 8(a) takes this further by “recognizing the important role of public authorities in the case of informal economy workers”.

<sup>9</sup> C190 Article 3(a)

<sup>10</sup> C190 Article 10(f)—“recognize the effects of domestic violence and, so far as is reasonably practicable, mitigate its impact in the world of work”

sensitive approach to ensure that the rights and protection from violence and harassment derived from the convention are equally applicable to all workers in the world of work. This means a package of measures simultaneously being developed, to ensure that all workers (*including own-account workers*) and economic units in the informal economy (*including co-operatives and independent contractors*) will have equal rights and access to the benefits and protection of the measures adopted to implement Convention 190. Whereas employees who experience violence and harassment are protected by employment law (*including the Labour Relations Act, 1995 and the Employment Equity Act, 1998*) and may rely on the statutory framework established for employees, workers who are not employees do not benefit from the provisions of this employment law. To provide equal protection to such workers, work has been initiated on the draft of a Code using the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act, 2000 (PEPUDA) for the implementation of Convention 190 for workers who are not employees. PEPUDA expressly prohibits harassment, as well as gender-based violence. The PEPUDA framework, in accordance with the requirements of Convention 190, should address the need for protection, in particular for vulnerable workers who are most likely to experience violence and harassment in the world of work.

The implementation of Convention 190 may in addition require revision to other laws, for example the extension of occupational safety and health measures to cover violence and harassment. In addition, Convention 190 refers to the effect of gender-based domestic violence on workers—and so the new gender-based violence legislation should also be considered for alignment with Convention 190 and Violence and Harassment Recommendation (R206). This will mean extensively revisiting the Labour Relations Act, Occupational Health and Safety, Employment Equity Act, PEPUDA, as well as new gender-based violence legislation, dealing holistically with the issues of violence and harassment in the world of work with the inclusion of atypical workers and workers in the informal economy and new forms of work.

# The Vanguard Role of the Party in the fight against the Crisis of Capitalist Social Reproduction

## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Social reproduction is a complex set of relations and activities that create conditions that enable a society to sustain itself and its social relations. Human beings, in order to meet their material needs, are compelled to engage in some form of material production that requires certain forms of co-operation between them. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society and is a base for the social, political and intellectual superstructure of society. The relations between human beings within the context of the mode of production are usually exploitative, whereby the owners of the means of production create a whole network of non-productive relations to protect and reproduce their privileged position. Social reproduction therefore incorporates the reciprocal and dialectical interfaces between the base and the superstructure, as well as how this interplay is shaped by objective and subjective material conditions.

In a class stratified society, social reproduction is a substantive part of what sustains and reproduces the class relations. Preparation and consumption of food; provision, use and washing clothes and household linen; cleaning and maintenance of the household and living environment; life skills, training and education; play, sport and recreation; health and fitness; and culture, tradition and ideology are key dimensions of social reproduction. All these facets of social

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<sup>1</sup> This paper is dedicated to the late Cde Thandi Ndlovu, a uMkhonto weSizwe soldier, medical doctor, and construction industry leader, who was motivated to become a businesswoman not by a drive for profit and wealth but by her drive to deliver housing to working-class and poor communities. She was a cadre practically involved in intervening in the social reproduction crisis of working-class communities and fighting against gender-based violence within the home, society and workplace.

reproduction constitute sites of contradiction between class forces as to how working-class labour power, capitalist owned surplus value and government revenue are utilised.

Analysis of areas of and changes in reproduction of capitalist social relations is as central to an anti-capitalist struggle as is the analysis of how the productive economy changes through time, but unfortunately is often not given the required attention in analysis or practice.

Forms of social reproduction are in general terms specific to the mode of production, much as they are shaped by the specific history of each particular society, and much as they often retain forms from previous modes of production. The essential difference between capitalist and socialist reproduction is how surplus value generated by the economy is appropriated and utilised. Profit maximisation drives the capitalist approach to social reproduction, with the burden of social reproduction of the working-class family and community falling on the state and on the working-class family itself, making this a critical site of socialist and anti-capitalist struggle.

This discussion document aims to put forward a concise and explicit outline of Marxist-Leninist Feminist theory<sup>2</sup> outlining the links between the economic mode of production (the base), the ideological, social and political relations and the mode of social reproduction (the superstructure) and the role of the state as the manager of class relations in society. Against the background of the relations of production, including the impact of technology on relations of production and class relations, the article aims to analyse the concrete conditions of different sectors of the working-class and the urban and rural poor, emphasising the theoretical and practical interplay between social reproduction instruments

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<sup>2</sup> Marxist-Leninist Feminism seeks to undertake analysis of the class, race and gender relations within a society in an integrated manner that enables the vanguard Party to drive an organising strategy for mobilising the working-class and its allies into socialist struggle to redress socio-economic, political and ideological inequalities between all classes, between sectors of classes, between sectors of society, in the process of building a socialist society. It embeds a gender lens into the theory and practice of Marxism-Leninism.

as reflected in the battle of ideas, education, culture etc of the superstructure and the sectors of the class and its allies.

The discussion document also aims to reflect on the state's role in shaping the ideological, political and social relations as an aspect of the superstructure and the role of the state in social reproduction, including analysis of the role of local government and its capacity in the current conjuncture.

The final part of the discussion document considers what the analysis of the crisis of capitalist social reproduction means for the nature and role of the SACP, our Red October campaigns and the SACP Know and Act in Your Neighbourhood campaign. Reflection is made on the kind of cadre required to drive that role and how it fits into the SACP organisational renewal process and the reconfiguring the Alliance and the building of patriotic and left fronts.

The discussion document concludes on how our theorising of the crisis of capitalist social reproduction links with the strengthening of social capital and community activism, the driving of alternative socio-economic projects, the creation of healthy, safe living environments, and its impact with regards to redirecting social production patterns, and establishing building blocks of socialism

## **Why is a Marxist-Leninist Feminist analysis of the crisis of social reproduction important to the South African revolution?**

Analysis of crisis of capitalist social reproduction in our society focuses on the essential meaning of and desired outcome of the class struggle, namely the constant improvement of the quality of life, the releasing of the potential of humanity, and the promotion of equality of all people. Reducing class struggle to a struggle around the mainstream economy, struggles in the workplace, and struggles around state power excludes key sites of struggle and key dimensions of the emancipatory socialist future.

The purpose of deepening Marxist analysis of social reproduction in contemporary South Africa is, in the first place, to better understand **the interconnection between workplace and community struggles in the struggle for and building of socialism.**

Moreover, it helps to ground the particular **intersection of class, race and gender**—not just in a generalised formulation of “the triple oppression of women”, for instance—but in the specific (and shifting) forms that this takes in particular phases of capitalism and in our particular South African society, shaped as it has been by colonialism of a special type (CST). This characterisation of CST affirms that the fundamental problem in South Africa was that of economic exploitation through the capitalist form of production, which had both racial and patriarchal manifestations with an artificial imposition of inferiority upon indigenous populations, and particularly on black women, to justify the theft of land and mineral resources and the enforcement of slave-wage labour. The development of the capitalist core of South Africa at the expense of the periphery located in the bantustans and the migrant labour system that facilitated this created particular racial and patriarchal dimensions of social reproduction relations. So, while we correctly talk of the triple oppression of the majority of black South African women (race, class and gender), South African history has given unique characteristics to how the triple oppression manifests in our country. In this, the demeaning value assigned to black women and the resultant distorted power-relations are reflected and reproduced in society.

Understanding the crisis of social reproduction in our current reality and its connection to the systemic features of contemporary South African capitalism also provides a much stronger basis for a clear critique of the dominant discourses in our ANC-led movement for “women’s advancement”, or for “black advancement”. These are overwhelmingly couched in terms of elite economic and political advancement within the confines of the existing capitalist system in our country and fail to challenge and transform the fundamental

structural elements that underpin neither patriarchy nor the material realities of working-class women. For it is this capitalist system, shaped as it has been by colonialism of a special type, that is reproducing class, racial and gendered oppression that afflicts the majority of South Africans. Our analysis of the crisis of social reproduction must enable a **coherent discourse and practice on social empowerment in a non-capitalist, socialist oriented manner.**

Utilising a Marxist-Leninist Feminist tools of analysis also enables the location of the scientific complexity of sex identity, previously understood to be a binary male–female reality, and the social issue of sexuality and the choice of gender identity in our struggle for a system of social justice and societal progress. The analysis of lived experiences of South African LGBTQI+ community, the exclusionary ideology, and the physical and social oppression experienced must inform our strategy. To this end, our Marxist-Leninist Feminism calls us **to reject an exclusive binary approach to defining people’s gender, and to fully acknowledge the gender continuum.** This requires us to challenge the ideological norms of sexuality, to rethink our approach to socialisation of children, and to develop a strategy that is gender inclusive in its broadest sense.

Deepening our analysis of social reproduction also enables a basis for a left critique of the dominant approach to social development which effectively focuses on social welfare interventions in the lives of those deemed to be “at risk”. The SACP approach to social development must promote **a coherent programme for the transformation of social relations in our communities to enable the unleashing of human potential and promotion of the social health of all people.** This provides a solid platform for ensuring that our approach to building socialism is not an economic one but is driven by an understanding of socialism as a socio-economic and political system that develops resources for the benefit of the people of a society in a manner that addresses social needs and improvement of quality of life.

Developing a Marxist-Leninist Feminist analysis of social reproduction in our concrete reality also helps to better **anchor our critical contribution to the Battle of Ideas**. The terrain of ideology is a critical component of capitalist social reproduction, and the racist, sexist and homophobic ideologies are critical supports to the overarching capitalist ideology, and as such, the terrain of ideology is a key platform of socialist struggle to intensify the ideological contradictions between social forces.

Above all, an effective Marxist-Leninist Feminist analysis of the reality and current crisis of capitalist social reproduction helps to **connect diverse popular struggles, and importantly to bring the class content of popular struggles to the fore**.

The crisis of social reproduction in our townships and villages cannot be resolved simply through point of production struggles for improved wages, leaving the structures of and relations of social reproduction unchanged. Equally, it is impossible to advance social struggles without simultaneously driving the systemic transformation of the capitalist economy. And, nor can social or economic struggles be won with state power alone, if the key potential popular motive forces of transformation, the masses of our people, are exhausted or fragmented by daily struggles for survival.

Nor can these struggles be won simply by mobilising behind demands on the state to “deliver more”. Despite the 60 per cent of government expenditure that goes on social services, our current state has a still under-funded social reproduction mandate, as has been obvious in the fees must fall struggle, in the current discourse around the funding of the NHI, exacerbated by a situation where the surplus under the control of monopoly capital has absconded and not been collected into the revenue service. In some instances, the spend of social services, such as on health, almost half of the spend goes on the private health sector servicing only 16% of the population, while the other half of the health budget is stretched to serve the 84 per cent of the population.

But even if the fiscal crisis and the funding of the mandate were to be adequately addressed, the approach to social security systems while the working-class continues to be stressed on all fronts is neither sustainable nor emancipatory. While legislation and policy have created government-community structures such as school governing bodies, community policing forms, with an intent that these should serve as organs of people's power, the intent of community control, people driven programmes has often not materialised. Because of economic deprivation and the pervasive reinforcement of a materialistic mindset at the social level, our instruments for public participation in governance have become corrupted as a source for personal power and advancement rather than transformation and community-oriented development. What is required is an approach of communities and workers in the workplace creating the social and economic projects of a non-capitalist alternative model, the real building blocks of the socialism that is our future. Production is never individual production. The extraction of surplus from the surrounding environment to generate livelihoods requires collective action. Changes towards a more socially orientated mode of production, through collective activism also contributes to generating a more progressive value system, which includes caring, 'ubuntu', and inspires buy in and embeds development at local levels, setting a foundation for the reconfiguration of the social and ideological institutions or superstructure.

## **The social reproduction crisis and local government as a key site of socialist struggle**

The 2018/19 Red October Campaign on clean local government is focused on communist and community mobilisation to address the crisis of local governance that bedevils our country. The focus of this campaign is to address the many challenges facing local governance, with the twin foci being on fighting corruption, and on building the capacity for implementation of programmes that benefit (and actively involve) most local communities and their members.

This theme is even more relevant as we evaluate the lessons of the 2019 SACP independent election campaign in support of an ANC-led Alliance electoral victory, particularly regarding the “service delivery” or developmental weaknesses that voters reflected to us. The recent report on municipal audit findings provides a clear indication of the extent of non-compliance and mismanagement within this sphere of government. The money which has been misspent and misappropriated would largely have been used to ensure development in precisely those areas relating to social reproduction.

Much of the crisis of local governance is a symptom of deeper realities, acutely reflecting a more general crisis of social reproduction in South Africa and across the Southern African region.

The crisis of social reproduction in most working-class communities is manifest in many ways, including the continued reproduction of the apartheid spatial settlements in our country. The urban and rural divide has not transcended centre-periphery manifestations.

Racially stratified, unequal geographic spread of economic resources and opportunities remains. New urban settlements for the predominantly black poor communities continue to be built further and further away from the major economic centres of our country. Historical patterns where black persons, with women being affected most, continue to occupy the strata of lower paid jobs remain. Workers are compelled to leave home early and arrive late, leaving children unsupervised, vulnerable and responsible for household and parenting functions that should be residing with adults. The black professional strata too battles to escape the trap of indebtedness as the responsibility of caring for extended families, still burdened by unemployment or the reality of earning less than a living wage, dubbed “black tax”, remains. Family life and the general social fabric that is weaved around it is eroded.

The spatial settlement patterns, the lack of adequate social housing

close to places of economic activity also feed into the phenomenon of homelessness, of people living on the streets for a variety of diverse reasons. A deeper analysis of the growing population of homeless people in our cities is required.

Our working-class localities still principally remain labour reservoirs, for both a productive and increasingly large reserve army of labour (those who enter into and out of precarious employment), and as dumping grounds for what Marx described as the “passive reserve army of labour” (those who are simply excluded more or less entirely from the capitalist labour market). An aspect of the social composition of this ‘army of labour’ is the presence of large sections of labour drawn from the rest of the SADC region (a reflection of the Southern Africa-wide nature of the crisis of social reproduction). Not only are they sharing the same physical space with South Africans, but also access the same services—and this often leads to intra-working-class/poor confrontations and tensions.

The SACP has historically understood that the whole of Southern Africa was increasingly drawn, from the late 19th century, into the role of a labour reserve for mining monopoly capital in South Africa.

Notwithstanding political independence in our neighbouring states, in the second half of the twentieth century, apartheid-era destabilisation and active contra-wars (resulting in the deaths of one million), plus IMF-structural adjustment and neo-colonial compradorism, have deepened underdevelopment in our region. Today, much of the SADC region remains a labour reservoir for South African monopoly capital.

But the SADC region is no longer primarily a labour reservoir for mining monopoly capital, as it increasingly reproduces cheap labour for other economic sectors as well, including agriculture, the retail, hospitality, restaurants and services sectors, and household and domestic services. In fact, by way of example, South African (black and white) professionals and the middle classes are increasingly

employing Zimbabwean, Malawian, Mozambique, Lesotho nationals in their households for domestic and other household chores like gardening. These foreign nationals are in South Africa trying to find a solution to the social reproduction crises in their own countries, and in addition contributing to additional stress on the social reproduction burden in South Africa.

The concept of the crisis of social reproduction also provides an important basis for understanding the many micro-dynamics in our communities, and in that way anchoring our Party structures better to play their vanguard role. This vanguard role can only really be played if we deepen our understanding of the crises of social reproduction in our localities. This must include an understanding of people's and community attempts to build means of sustainable livelihoods.

The SACP approach to the many problems in local government must start from addressing some deep-going crises of social reproduction, and this requires that our work continues to be anchored on the Know and Act in Your Neighbourhood Campaign. This campaign provides a platform for our call for 'every communist to be a community activist'.

## **Top-down planning or planning for building communities' sustainable livelihoods?**

A related, but equally important, matter about our localities is the fights and tensions that often arise out of developmental projects and initiatives rolled out by government. The crisis of social reproduction often creates conditions for the reproduction of underdevelopment as a result of these development initiatives from government.

A key feature of virtually all development initiatives in most of our poor communities is that these originate, top-down, from outside those areas. It is precisely because these projects and initiatives emanate from outside, and with minimal or no participation by

communities in their planning, execution and even ongoing maintenance, that they become a source of tension and serious intra-community conflicts.

The SACP has deliberated on two interrelated but distinct examples that illustrate the above points, namely the government-led N2 Wild Coast Road and bridges project, and the Xolobeni sand-mining project by an Australian mining company. These projects are being blocked by local community activism and mobilisation. Of particular importance is the fact that this part of our country, Pondoland, was one of the epicentres for CST's social reproduction of hyper-exploited migrant labour. It has suffered a century of underdevelopment, and still remains a key sending area for the most exploited sector of the mining labour force—rock drill operators.

What should our strategic developmental approach be in this area currently largely reliant on social grants and remittances from absentee workers? Should the focus be on sustainable livelihoods with a focus on labour intensive small-holding agriculture and tourism? What government has been promoting is largely the N2 re-alignment and, more recently, with increased enthusiasm, the exploitation of the titanium rich sand dunes along the coast. The multi-billion-rand projects we are promoting appear not to talk to the developmental needs of the local communities, who, instead, have been mobilised by all manner of interests.

In Xolobeni, there are mining profit-maximising interests of an Australian mining company (Mineral Commodities Ltd.), that often acts to buy and co-opt local elite, some of them linked to the factions inside our own movement. Community members have been assassinated and there are allegations that the police are complicit. This company also has an extremely poor track-record in terms of environmental degradation, of illegally going beyond the area awarded for mining rights, and of neglecting its community development responsibilities (as extensively reported on the Koekenaap sand-mining operation on the West Coast).

In the case of the R1.62 billion Mtentu mega-bridge at Mbizana, the construction company (a joint venture between Aveng and the Austrian multi-national Strabag) has recently pulled out and declared “force majeure” against government, suing for loss of business as a result of persistent community protests.

Also active are donor-funded environmental groups and initiatives, often exploiting genuine community concerns (and alienated members) in communities

The ever-present threat of the NGO-isation of local community struggles, where sometimes even seemingly progressive NGOs, often separate and oppose mass participation and mass struggles and place narrow NGO funding interests above those of communities (e.g., Section 27, Equal Education, Unite Behind, Richard Spoor, etc). Typically, also, the external funders of these NGOs expect them to adopt an anti-government “watch-dog”, law-fare role, rather than an activist and developmental role.

The NGO-isation of mass and community struggles is not something unique to South Africa. Neither is it a new phenomenon in our country. At the height of mass and community struggles against apartheid, there was often a conflict between NGO fundraisers, on the one hand (and who were often not based in communities), and community-based leaders on priorities and leadership of local struggles.

The often-predatory behaviour of compradorial local BEE elite is also often linked to, and in turn fuels and funds factions inside our own movement. These are linked to tenderpreneurs within our own structures. These elite economic interests are also often closely connected to local traditional leadership and municipal official and political leaders.

In all the above, there are often genuine community interests and a progressive voice that normally gets buried in the toxic mix of

all these often-contradictory interests. It is this progressive voice that the SACP should at all times, and sometimes does, seek to organise, mobilise and represent. In the case of Xolobeni that, whilst opposed to imperialist and elite BEE interests, wants mining to take place but in a manner that would be beneficial to communities.

In addition to this toxic mix of local and external forces, the government also needs to be self-reflective about major projects like these. For instance, the Wild Coast N2 development is being promoted as a key pillar of the PICC's Strategic Infrastructure Programme 3 (along with the much delayed Mzimvubu Dam project—which, incidentally, is in a completely different location, and so the “strategic integration” between the two is not immediately apparent). The argument in favour of the multi-billion rands N2 development is that it shortens the East London to Durban road trip by some 67 kilometres and cuts out 2-hours of travel (it is not clear why 67 km = 2 hours?—presumably the topography of the current route, and the traffic congestion at Umthatha are factors).

But local communities in the area are NOT particularly travelling between East London and Durban. We are also telling these communities that they will get their produce to market more quickly—but do they have any produce? What, if any, land reform, agricultural development and public investment into small dams etc. is happening in the area? Not much. No wonder there is a sense of local alienation and the suspicion that this expensive project is basically being built for an Australian mining company, with the added insult of impending tolls. In fact, this illustrates the extent to which government interventions are often isolated and not carried in an integrated fashion involving a suite of mutually supportive interventions aimed at more holistic developmental goals. Often the building of a road can act as a catalyst for much broader developmental initiatives, were it to be combined with other initiatives and effective community participation.

While platforms to facilitate policy coherence as well as planning and

programmatic alignment across the three spheres of government exist, these platforms weakened as interests related to state capture gained dominance. This period of fiscal constraint necessitates optimal efficiency in public spend with maximum impact. For this to be achieved, inter-departmental and inter- sphere collaboration must be enforced and the 20:80 principle has to be applied. Our people must play a key role in determining which 20 percent of public projects will have 80 percent impact and ensure that these are reflected in the Integrated Development Plans. Community however, must transcend the mere prioritisation of municipal spend, to ensure local participation in implementation as well as governance oversight through platforms such as ward committees, with SACP members playing a leading role. The role of community police forums needs to be elevated to maintain peaceful and stable living environments.

## **The Burden of the Crisis of Social Reproduction on the Youth**

South Africa is essentially a young country in terms of its age demographics. The SACP itself has been a very young Party since its unbanning in 1990. The manner of the organisation of the youth into the Party structures has therefore been an important question since then, and of course right from the formation of our Party. The re-establishment of the Young Communist League in 2002 was also informed by the importance of the social layer of youth in the political economy of our country.

Our youth are a huge asset in the revolution, if properly organised, politically educated and guided. This should indeed be the point of departure for the SACP in handling what we can refer to as the 'Youth Question'. Indeed, the youth has played an important role in the entire history of our revolution thus far, and more especially in the struggle against apartheid from the late 1960s into the 1990s.

Why are we raising the issue of youth again? Other than women

who we know to be most personally impacted on by poverty, the youth are carrying the brunt of the crisis of capitalism and the crisis of its social reproduction. This is a task that South African capital has also displaced onto the shoulders and responsibility of the democratic government since 1994. It is a fact that our democratic government is burdened by the responsibility to tackle the socio-economic problems generated by capitalism and its multiple crises, complicated by the colonialism of a special type and patriarchy.

At the same time, some of the most regressive social tendencies caused primarily by the crisis of capitalism and that of social reproduction find expression amongst young people. The current values of young people focused on the fetishism of bodies and clothing, and consumerism has a significant impact on the consciousness of the youth. Much as we have embarked on many initiatives focusing on youth, particularly in the education sphere, but given the significant role that this generation plays in both defending the historical mission of our liberation struggle and championing a progressive socialist cultural revolution, our efforts are far from enough to address the scale of the problem we face. The youth is at the heart of our quadruple challenges: unemployment, inequality, poverty and societal dysfunctionality and violence.

Drugs, alcohol and violence are ravaging our young people. We cannot deal with the challenge of youth development and empowerment unless we decisively confront the issue of drugs and alcohol abuse, as well as gangsterism. Use of drugs and alcohol is often the escape route to increasing numbers of young people who are caught in a deep cycle of poverty and unemployment. Of course, addressing this problem is deeply interlinked with the struggle against the capitalist system itself and driving a second, more radical phase of our democratic revolution.

Every revolution has a chance of success and consolidating if it also takes responsibility for the mass conscientisation of its young people. Even legitimate struggles by organised and progressive

sections of youth are likely to falter on lack of proper social and political conscientisation of young people.

The regressive tendencies that also accompany struggles for access to education show a lack of this kind of attention to our young people. How do we inspire and redirect youth energies and give space and progress for young people, without allowing that to become a struggle and anger against the old in society? How do we combine the energy and aspirations of the youth and the much-needed experience of the older generation? How do we direct the often understandable anger of young people towards positive energies to build a better society and prevent this anger from degenerating easily into violence and unnecessary confrontation? It is these regressions and frustrations that populist and demagogic organisations have exploited and hope to use to seek power through anger, anarchy and resentment generated by socio-economic conditions of the young. How do we guide the anger of young black women towards dismantling patriarchy, building non-racialism, as integral dimensions to building a better and socialist future, as opposed to much of the elitist identity politics that informs much of the current women's agenda? How do we guide the LGBTQI+ youth to locate their struggles against oppression, violence and marginalisation as part of a struggle for a social system that is social need and humanity driven, a socialist future?

Indeed, it is the youth from working-class and poor backgrounds that are facing most of these challenges. Many societies have programmes to support and guide youth in society and assist them in taking responsibility for their future. Under apartheid, for entirely reactionary objectives of course, it was military cadets at public schools and conscription for white male youth which started in mid-1960s. In Cuba, there are social skill programmes from childhood and there is a kind of conscription and mass education for young people. By citing this apartheid example, and the Cuba example, we are by no means suggesting that we should simply copy

these. But they emphasise the importance of answering how we effectively engage with all the platforms where the young people are organised, and organise them where they are not organised?

A close study of the **#fees must fall** struggle showed some capitulation to all the demands and actions of the students, both progressive and regressive, as well as a failure to connect effectively with student struggles by the rest of society. Poorer parents supported all that the students were demanding so that they are relieved from university and college fees, but this support was in a manner that did not provide guidance and engagement. This even buried many important questions and realities about schooling and higher education. The fact is, many students in university today should not be there, or at the very least should not have started there. Also, the challenge posed by stratification within the student movement (missing middle) was not addressed appropriately. The extent of destruction of university and college property by students was completely unprecedented in modern South Africa, even compared with the apartheid period. A billion-rand worth of destruction in two years! What is this telling us? It is easy to blame the students, but at the same time it is important to teach our young people to take responsibility for the resources needed for education—but if the conduct of much of the personnel in the state itself and of non-youth in our movement is self-seeking, are we not “teaching” a very different lesson to the youth?

The conduct of sectors of the student movement is not qualitatively different from the general pattern of “service delivery protests”. This conduct is a symptom of the post-apartheid state having **manoeuvred itself into a “delivery state” (with an under-funded constitutional mandate) rather than a developmental state**. Instead of advancing a perspective of the co-production of transformation, in other words, not just a people-centred, but critically a people-driven approach to the NDR, the “delivery” state promises to provide top-down to citizen-customers in exchange for their votes.

The potential motive forces of the NDR (including working-class young women and men and working-class communities) do not feel a collective responsibility for a solidarity struggle for transformation or for looking after their communities, sites of study, etc. Instead, there are narrow sectoral struggles, and even within these, there are competing elite seeking to out-radicalise each other in rhetoric and senseless and often destructive actions.

How does the SACP foster a greater sense of the co-production of social assets and services in general and particularly among an increasingly alienated young women and men?

One (not the only) approach is to greatly increase unemployed youth participation in our various public employment programmes (EPWP, CWP, etc.). SA (after India) has the second largest public employment programme in the world, which has been sustained for over 15 years. Every year nearly half-a-million youth are active in these programmes—but this only represents 47 per cent of EPWP participants, and our target of youth participation in EPWP type programmes should be closer to 60 per cent. But this will also require developing programmes that are more attractive to young people, and to the full spectrum of interest groups within the youth. Among the most successful youth oriented EPWP programmes are Working on Fire, programmes that involve sports and culture activities (like Soccer4Youth and Netball4Youth), as well as programmes that involve IT—like geo-mapping for informal settlement upgrades. Other youth programmes that can be scaled up are those that involve homework supervision, sports coaching at schools, and childcare provision.

The importance of creatively involving young people in campaigns and activities they are likely to be attracted to must especially be emphasised. For example, huge mobilisation is needed for resources to be poured into sports, recreation, cultural and artistic activities in all our educational institutions to meaningfully engage young people. Sports, arts and cultural activities are practically

dead in most of our schools, especially in townships and villages. The experience of organising and politically conscientising the youth through cultural groups in the 1980s even at the height of the apartheid repression should not be lost on us in this period. Campaigns to clean our dirty localities, is another important initiative to engage, conscientise and educate young people, while also contributing to the environmental sustainability of our future.

The question does arise as to who are the main motive forces that should be mobilised to lead this enormous effort to organise, mobilise, educate and conscientise our young people. For the purposes of organisation building, the YCL has identified young workers and students as the core of its constituency and the ranks from which it should draw its leadership core.

## **Tackling the Question that is too close to Home: Marxism on the Family**

The Party must engage with an appropriate analysis of the waves of feminism, and the ideological trends within each wave of feminism. The first wave of feminism was a period of feminist activity and thought during the 19th and early 20th century that focused on legal issues, primarily on gaining the right to vote and which in South Africa also engaged in the debate about the right to vote for black South Africans as well as for women. Flowing out of what has been called the second wave of feminism of the 1960s and 1970s, there has been extensive analysis of the family, much from a left psycho-analytical perspective, but with considerable attention to the relationship between the capitalist state and the family, and neo-liberal policy and its impact on the working-class family. To this extent, the early contributions of Engels on the origin of the family, private property and the state and the contributions of early socialist state approaches have been built on by Marxist feminist analyses.

The oft quoted “Educate a man and you educate an individual. Educate a woman and you educate a nation” focuses us on the **role**

**of women in social reproduction which manifests in “women’s double day”**, their role in the family, and the ideology of the private sphere of the home which serve as obstacles to women’s full participation in social, economic and political life.

Marxist feminists have debated the double day, the responsibilities of women to be economically active and to carry the major burden of work in the home, and some have argued that the oppression of women in capitalism resides in the contradiction between their roles as wage labourers and as domestic labourers/housewives, much as the South African ruling class outsources much of the housework to black working-class and often now foreign national domestic workers. They argue that the definition of class cannot be based merely on the individual’s direct relation to the means of production but must also take into consideration dependency on those who have a direct relationship to the means of production by selling of their labour power. They put forward a notion that women have a dual relationship to the class structure through the wage relation and through the family, and hence identify both the economic relations and the familial relations as requiring transformation.

Nancy Fraser, an American critical theorist, feminist and philosopher writing in this decade, and reflecting on Engels’ writing, has neatly expressed that socialism cannot simply mean socialised ownership of the means of production; it also must mean the collectivisation of housework and social reproduction. This position has echoes reaching across the past century to the early days of the Soviet Union, the Marxist Feminist movements of the 1960s and 70s, through to current analysis. Fraser has taken this approach of the centrality of housework and social reproduction more broadly into our current time, stating that with the cutbacks to the public sector on the one hand, and recruitment of massive numbers of women into waged work on the other hand, there is a new class division in the primary locations of social reproduction.

For both wealthy and working-class households in the advanced

capitalist countries, and with the rolling-back of the welfare state, much care-work and broader social reproduction work has been privatised. But for the relatively wealthy, this takes the form of an enhanced commodified provision (private health-care, private community security, private schooling, fee-paying tertiary education, a ballooning private housing market, etc). For many working-class families, the rolling back of the welfare state has required taking on increasing and often unsupportable household debt in order to access these commodified services. Or, for the working-class household, there is another form of “privatisation”, public provision is rolled back—the return of the burden of social reproduction once more into the private domain of the household.

In a country like South Africa, with conservative and traditional cultural approaches to marriage, the family and to divorce, is this thinking that household functions can and should be socialised a challenge too far? In a society where the mindset of the man as the ‘provider’ head of household, the justification of unemployment and low wages for women deemed primarily to be housewives despite its impact on the household income, and the perceived notion of ownership of women and children, it is not surprising that domestic violence and abuse and gender based violence are as prevalent as they are in South Africa. The discourse on alternative approaches to family and household divisions of labour certainly is not an area of socialist discourse that has gained prevalence in democratic South Africa. While the racially discriminatory and religiously discriminatory aspects of marriage law have been removed, and divorce law has been significantly liberalised, the approach has been to embed the diversity of family forms into law and regulation, with little space for or tolerance of personal choice in love-relationships and family forms. The approach to family and marriage law has not been radically challenged by the acceptance of civil unions, but rather the form of civil unions has tended to reproduce the conventional marriage forms.

The patchwork of cultural forms of marriage and families and the

development of law regulating customary law into the statute books in South Africa is an undeveloped area of Marxist analysis, and perhaps in the developing world in general. Many of the prevalent forms of family and marriage are pre- or non-capitalist and yet through the incorporation of them into the rigidity of the statute book, do they not become an element of control and limitation of family forms appropriate to the future? Moreover, in their pre-capitalist form, are they not at odds with the advanced and modern society of this century?

The history of the South African trade union movement in organising women workers into unions and through unions addressing working and living conditions specific to women has laid strong traditions that must always be defended and deepened.

The SACP adopted a particular approach to the double day and to the organisation of women into the trade unions in the 1940s, in order to ensure that since women were increasingly employed in industry and agriculture the strength of the working-class and trade union movement would not be weakened by having a section of the workers unorganised. The key issue was how to organise women workers.

In the 1940s and 50s, in particular, the SACP identified the provision of childcare to working-class communities as a critical intervention to enable women to join the economy while providing socialised services to what had previously been a private family responsibility, carried out by the women and girl children in the family. This was evidenced in the establishing of crèches in working-class communities, such as Dora Tamana's work in starting the Blaauvlei crèche, and in the fighting for the rights of women workers to have childcare facilities at work, and in particular enabling breastfeeding during the working day, and demand won by Food and Canning Workers Union in the 1950s, particularly in the Western Cape where the union was very strong.

In the 1990s, the Alliance, ANC, COSATU and SACP, established a crèche for the children of the employees of the Alliance formations, and once in Parliament, a similar approach was adopted to establish a childcare facility for all of the MPs and all of the employees in Parliament. Neither of these latter two projects has been sustained. The gains of the COSATU unions in the 1980s and 1990s in relation to workplace-based child-care have not been sustained in the democratic era, and this aspect of social reproduction is one in which neo-liberal approaches have rolled back the gains of the working-class. Family form, or socialisation of productive activities historically done in the privacy of the home, is an important site of socialist struggle and one that is particularly important for the emancipation of women.

The provision of or development of socialised facilities that replace functions currently performed in the home by women is a critical liberator of women, and necessary to prevent the emancipation of some women through the exploitation of other women as domestic workers in their home. It also must be addressed by a political and cultural process that transforms the politics of housework, household power relations and patriarchy in the home, and this entails the development of a socialist morality about our private lives and issues of a personal nature such as domestic violence which transforms cultural and ideological practices that entrench gender subordination.

The SACP has identified that the capitalist system is dependent “for the reproduction of cheap labour on the “invisible” and unpaid labour of millions of women - as child minders, as carers for the sick and old, as subsistence farmers, and as general family and household managers. This is work worth billions of rand, but which never features in the calculations of our gross national product.” A socialist perspective on the family and on social reproduction must rethink this completely so that the socialist family empowers and liberates women. What do we mean by a socialist family? It is not defined by being nuclear, or extended, or patriarchal, but it

is possible to identify certain aspects of relations within the family that are essential for it to be socialist. Amongst those would be democratic, equitable, non-gender driven division of labour, shared housework amongst adult members. But in addition, certain functions that are under capitalism seen as family responsibilities can be socialised - such as childcare facilities, eating facilities, laundry facilities, cleaning facilities. It will be through struggle around the crisis of social reproduction and around the non-formal and solidarity economy that we will determine how specifically these issues are addressed in our building of socialism.

The family is a key instrument and site of socialisation of the next generation, in relation not only to class consciousness but also attitudes towards racism, patriarchy, and conventionalism. What are the dimensions of family life that the Party should identify as key dimensions of transformation of the class, race and gender content of family form and life? Equality in gender roles and tasks within the family, the absence of violence in the family between spouses, between genders and between generations, active encouragement of cultural, sport and educational hobbies and choices, are perhaps key dimensions of building for a socialist approach to maximising the human potential of individuals, that the SACP should strive to ensure that part of all family life.

The organisation and support for girls and young women remains an important focus within the overall context on focusing on our youth. However, much as the focus on the girl-child for instance, has achieved some important notches on empowerment of women and gender equality, it is also high time that we also focus on the boy child. In fact, the 'take a girl child to work' campaign now needs to be extended to becoming 'take a girl and a boy child to work'. The neglect of boys seems to be having the unintended consequences of sometimes generating resentment amongst boys and laying some foundation for gender-based violence. The socialisation of our children to become anti-racist, anti-sexist, anti-corruption, and constructive members of society is a key dimension to the

establishment of an alternative non-capitalist and socialist society. To this end the role that the family plays in socialising our children, in shaping relations within our communities cannot be off the radar of the Communist Party.

The normal burden that capitalism places on the working-class family for social reproduction is exacerbated for those families in which a family member has chronic illness, or disability. The care and support for the elderly, the chronically ill and people with disabilities is located in the family, the community and the state. The SACP has a responsibility to ensure appropriate mobilisation of society around the social needs and protection of the disabled community, particularly the working-class and urban and rural poor with disabilities, as well as to explore with the people with disability community how socialist society should address their needs and aspirations.

## **Non-formal and solidarity economy as a counter to the capitalist crisis and the crisis of social reproduction**

The crisis of capitalism and the crisis of social reproduction is having a profound and impact on the non-formal economy. Globally left forces are organising in the non-formal economy and innovative social models are emerging, as reflected by Pat Horn in her article on Nicaragua in *African Communist* in 2007.

In the South African context, social reproduction has historically and in part relied on the migrant labour system, with elements of social reproduction taking place in the rural areas. It has relied extensively on the use of privately employed domestic workers in wealthy, predominantly white household, although the racial demography has been changing in this segment in the recent period. It has relied on the high levels of unemployment, on children out of schooling, and on the elderly in the working-class and poor urban and rural communities for provision of care work and social reproductive functions.

Surplus value is critical for sustaining production and for social progress. The key difference between the capitalist surplus value production and socialist surplus value production is how it is accumulated, how it is appropriated and how it is used - private accumulation for the comfort, luxury needs of the rich, versus social/collective accumulation that ensures that the surplus is used for social needs for the benefit of the entire collective

The scope for alternative non-capitalist forms of social reproduction through co-operatives and the social economy is beginning to emerge as an area of thought in the South African discourse, but rigorous analysis and theorisation of this approach must be undertaken.

The complexity of women's relative inclusion or exclusion from the formal capitalist economy has changed over time and is often ideologically justified by the ruling class through the "motherhood and apple pie" or perhaps "motherhood and pap" approach to women's role as the primary household manager, and even through religious approaches to women's status as wives. The issue of women's unpaid labour in the household has been a focus in Marxist Feminist literature in the 1970s and 1980s, with intense intellectual and theoretical work done in "The Domestic Labour Debate" carried amongst others in the pages of *The New Left Review*. This body of work focused our attention on the double day of working-class women—paid work in the economy (even if the least skilled and worst paid and most casualised) and unpaid work in the home.

The current focus of the United Nations in relation to unpaid work, is not only looking at unpaid work in the home, but the extent to which women and in particular working-class women are involved in productive labour of a variety of forms that are not recognised in the GDP or the National Statement of Accounts.

In the context of the under-development of the South, and the Marxist analysis of women's oppression and exploitation in

the context of under-development, the focus has been less on the issue of domestic labour, and more on the undervaluing of women's economic activity in the formal economy, and the relative marginalisation of women into the informal economy. Gita Sen and Carol Grown (1988) argue that:

“.... women's contributions - as workers and as managers of human welfare - are central to the ability of households, communities, and nations to tackle the current crisis of survival. Even as resources to strengthen poor women's economic opportunities are shrinking, women have begun to mobilise themselves, both individually and collectively, in creative ways. It is only by reinforcing and building upon their efforts in such vital sectors as food production, commerce, and trade that the needed long-term transformation to more self-reliant national development strategies can be achieved.”

Left development feminists have long debated the links between the eradication of gender subordination and of other forms of social and economic oppression based on nation, class, or ethnicity, and acknowledged that the women's movement is challenged by facing such a broad range of issues, goals, and strategies, based on the political expression of the concerns and interests of women from different regions, classes, nationalities, and ethnic backgrounds. A rigid concept of universality of women's oppression negates the wide variation in women's experience and undermines the dynamism of women's mobilisation, which makes it such a potentially powerful challenge to the status quo, as our own South African women activists have so vividly shown.

In South Africa, the location of women within the informal economy has been the focus of both analysis and organisation, with, for example, Pat Horn and Judy Mulqueeny contributing to our understanding of this reality. They have argued that labour market changes resulting from globalisation are reducing the number

of those in secure, permanent, full-time employment and that what used to be called ‘a-typical’ work, namely part-time, casual, temporary, seasonal, contract, home-based, piecework and unpaid family labour, is becoming increasingly typical. They alert us to the risk that the size of the in-formalised working-class continues to be underestimated and remind us that it is predominantly women who dominate in the non-formal economy.

Mulqueeny draws out the impact of this on the trade union movement, given that unions have traditionally not organised self-employed workers or own account workers, and the vulnerability of workers in the non-formal economy largely unprotected by legislation.

The Party has argued that our approach should be multi-fold. We must take up the struggle to mainstream socially necessary work in the public sector (much of it historically involving most women). Here we are referring to many things, including areas of work that the “1996 class project” and neo-liberalism actively denigrated as “unproductive”—health-workers, teachers, social workers, librarians, community policing. From a socialist perspective, we need to move beyond temporary measures to understand the centrality of mainstreaming these areas of productive work.

Our approach to the entire so-called “second economy” must be completely different. Land reform and restitution that simply lift households and communities into a ruthless, monopoly dominated market will deepen poverty and underdevelopment, not transform it. The same applies to endless small, medium and micro enterprises (SMME) promotion endeavours. Re- capitalising the minibus industry without transforming public transport will simply increase stratification in the sector to the detriment of most small-owners, drivers and other workers, while deepening the subordination of the sector to the banks and multi- national minibus manufacturers and their local dealerships. Critical to the transformation of the “second economy”, or township and village economy, is local democracy, municipal power working together with mobilised communities. To

transform the minibus sector, municipalities must re-claim public space—roads, parking, ranks—and regulate on a continuous daily basis, public transport operations.

Breaking with a capitalist logic also helps us to understand the potentially transformative nature of the struggle to build sustainable communities and sustainable households. Sustainability can be built through all the above, through an effective and comprehensive social security system, through well-supported and networked co-operatives, and many other initiatives. The strategic objective of building sustainable communities and households is to break the dependence of working-class communities on the dominant capitalist mode—for consumer goods, for wages, for services. Clearly, a complete de-linking from the dominant capitalist system is unlikely in any short-term scenario—however, degrees of relative de-linking help to build progressive working-class power and hegemony within households and communities.

It is precisely this kind of programmatic strategic approach—guided by our critique of patriarchy—that will help to roll-back patriarchal oppression, particularly as it impacts on working-class communities and households.

## **Building the SACP to be an appropriate vanguard in local development**

It is amid all these realities, that our local Party structures, together with strategic assistance from SACP provincial and national structures, should organise and seek to provide leadership and play their vanguard role.

Pursuing our Red October Campaign served as a platform for participating in the 2019 election campaign and serves as the platform for contesting elections in modalities to be determined through the Special National Congress. The strength of the SACP structures in our localities will principally derive from their ability to

take up the above campaigns and issues. Similarly, as we have always done in the past, we used our election campaigning to strengthen Party structures and build their capacity to deal with these problems and challenges in localities.

Over the past 25 years, especially over the last 20 years, we have significantly grown the membership of our Party and re-established the YCLSA to become a powerful political force that is acknowledged, albeit grudgingly even by our detractors and enemies. This growth has also been integrally linked to the waging of many campaigns that have caught the imagination of the workers and poor of our country.

However, our growth has also had a negative side, that of not having enough capacity and resources to simultaneously grow a solid layer of cadreship able to politically and organisationally lead our Party structures and members on the ground throughout the length and breadth of our country.

Recognising the above weakness of growing a large SACP without an adequate number of cadres, should not lead us to being dismissive about the importance of numbers and size of the Party in the many struggles that lie ahead. Already the massive onslaught by the 1996 Class Project against our Party was largely defended through our numbers on the ground, of course together with a strong layer of cadres in provinces and in a number of our districts. But most importantly, our ability to counter the fight back, the retrenchments and jobless growth crisis, and the social reproduction crisis depends on the ability of the Party to lead the class and its allies.

The key challenge is to grow a solid cadre that will also be able to guide the rest of our membership and also to understand the manner in which our numbers should be used strategically to build the capacity of the Party to be in all key sites of power and struggle, and to mobilise the working-class and its allies. The Organisational

Renewal of the SACP is critical to enable the Party to deliver on the expectations of working-class communities as they face the burden of the social reproduction crises.

## **What is To Be Done?**

The Party has in the 29 years since our unbanning, repeatedly focused Party campaign work on dimensions of the social reproduction crisis. It has informed our Triple-H Campaign, **H**ealthcare, **H**uman Settlement Integrated Development and **H**unger Eradication. It has informed much of our financial sector campaign and particularly the struggle against eviction from homes by banks. Our Red October campaign against gender-based violence and our current campaign for good governance and participatory delivery in local government are both critical dimensions of struggle against the crisis of capitalist social reproduction.

It is time that the Party work provides a basis for mass mobilisation of communities, own account workers, unemployed and employed workers to build sustainable livelihoods and ensure the safety and health of our communities. The ongoing Red October campaign against gender-based violence should be taken forward through SACP partnerships to train women in self-defence and to train trainers who are able to initiate a mass self-defence programme.

Building Party co-operatives to collectivise childcare on an events basis, at places of work and in the community can roll back the pressure of social reproduction, can provide income generation for families involved, and contribute to funding of the Party districts. In this respect, the Party should develop a model for Party co-operatives that ensures a governance framework in which these dimensions can be supported.

Life in all its forms is dependent on water, a scarce resource in South Africa, and one on which families and communities are seriously dependent. The inadequacy of water services, the quality of water, and the reticulation to working-class communities' places

additional burdens, particularly on black working-class women. Moreover, the state inadequacy in the provision of water is resulting in commodification of water and profit making through the sale of this life requirement. The mobilisation of communities around access to quality water, water reticulation to taps within the house, and the provision of essential water at no cost to the household should be taken up at District level, to ensure that the District Implementation Model being introduced by the President addresses and provides relief from the burdens of social reproduction.

It is through ensuring that every Communist is a community activist, through deepening the Know Your Neighbourhood and Act programme of the SACP, through deepening organisation of own account workers and of Party work in the non-formal sector and through struggling for participatory local government that the emerging forms of organisation around social reproduction can build the socialist future.

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