

- Why we need internationalism now
- Using liberation values to beat corruption



February 2020

Voice of the South African Communist Party

Umsebenzi



SNC Declaration:
**REBUILD OUR
MOVEMENT!**



SPECIAL NATIONAL CONGRESS

Declaration of the 4th SNC

This is the full declaration by 500-plus SACP delegates to the fourth SNC held in December 2019 in Ekurhuleni in Gauteng

We, delegates of the Fourth Special National Congress (SNC) of the South African Communist Party (SACP), representing 319 000 Party members, carrying on our shoulders the aspirations and hopes of the working class of our country, convened from 9 to 12 December 2019 in Ekurhuleni. Guided by the theme, Rebuild our movement: Socialism is the future, build it now. We evaluated the progress made since our 14th National Congress in July 2017, the challenges experienced by the Party and our people, especially the working class and poor. We received Central Committee reports, held robust deliberations, and adopted resolutions and this declaration in our continuing struggle to place the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) on to a second radical phase and advance to socialism.

The SNC took place against the background of deep crisis, particularly affecting the working class and poor of our country. The crisis is typified by a stagnant economy that is continuing to shed jobs in the context of a persistently high unemployment rate, entrenched poverty, widening inequality and an unresolved legacy of uneven development. There are at least four major historical factors underpinning the crisis:

- The structuring of the economy of South Africa is based on the capitalist regime of economic exploitation and systemic underdevelopment driven by an oppressive domestic ruling class and its external imperialist superiors. Internally, the social engineering of our country's economy was forged in a colonial relationship between a supremacist, white minority bloc and a

brutally dispossessed and proletarianised black majority. The oppressed were marginalised into 'native' reserves and later urban townships as a huge pool of the under-employed and unemployed forced to sell their labour to a distant capitalist market. Externally, the structuring of the emergent capitalist economy that was to prevail in our country established South Africa's semi-peripheral positioning. Our country was incorporated into, but subordinated within, the global imperialist accumulation regime essentially as an exporter of primary commodities, mainly minerals, produced on the basis of super-exploited and oppressed black labour;

- There was lack of structural transformation after our 1994 democratic breakthrough, to root out our country's economy of colonial features and embark on a path of full development towards collective prosperity. This prevailed as a result of the rise of the neoliberal 1996 Gear class project to dominance. Key state owned enterprises that should have been transformed to thrive were not recapitalised, ignoring the fact that they now had to serve all the people on a non-racial basis, rather than just a minority. This is the context in which there was no additional power generation capacity built for Eskom, a decision made in favour of an intended in-

Without structural transformation after 1994, our economy retained colonial features, subordinated to global imperialism



roduction of private profiteering participation and competition in the electricity generation sector. As a result Eskom finds itself today with ageing power stations that are increasingly unreliable and the country is frequently plunged into load shedding. The 1996 Gear class project also carried out the privatisation of state-owned enterprises, which started in the last decades of the apartheid regime, and pushed neoliberal shock therapy. This in various ways deprived our country of the resources it needed to build domestic productive capacity and thus support economic and broader social development.;

- The global capitalist meltdown in 2008 remains persistent globally. This is the context in which growth, even in a number of major economies, is subdued or stagnantly low; and

- The state was tenderised and within this context public resources were looted, particularly in the era of state capture. Widespread corruption was accompanied by governance decay and mismanagement. State institutions, including Parliament, as the Constitutional Court found in at least one case, failed to play their role. They were weakened and others were co-opted to either turn a blind eye to the rot or assist it.

The SNC noted that neoliberal economic policies and the structural stagnation of our economy exacerbate the crisis of social reproduction resulting from ine-



Delegates to the fourth SNC take their seats for the first plenary session

quality, unemployment and poverty. The crisis is reflected in the increasing inability of households and communities to make ends meet. This burden is mostly carried by women, who form the leading detachment of community-based organisational efforts directed towards sustainable livelihoods for social reproduction through unpaid labour and other social activities. The burden of the social reproduction crisis is also carried by the youth, the majority of the unemployed, in community protests, and hooked into drugs, substance and alcohol abuse, as well as facing the harsh realities of the HIV-Aids pandemic.

The answer to the economic and social reproduction crises that South Africa finds itself in is neither a return to the neo-liberal economic policy regime nor laxity to allow any quarter for state capture networks to re-assert themselves. The answer does not lie in austeritisation of transformation and development. By austeritisation we do not mean that exorbitant perks for politicians, public officials and executives in the economy, and wasteful, fruitless and irregular expenditure should be tolerated or that there should be no measures to curb expenditure that is not going to productive purposes. We mean a conservative fiscal policy stance involving cuts in budgets or financial support affecting programmes

that are important to stimulating the economy and meeting the needs of the working class and poor. Austeritisation includes increased taxes negatively affecting the working people while the rich laugh all the way to the bank.

The solution to the economic and social reproduction crises lies in the pursuit of a democratic developmental path and state. Understanding the combined nature of the crises, we call upon government to address the plight of the working people and poor by adopting measures that will turn our economy around. To this end the SNC adopted the following programmatic measures to achieving employment creation and systematic reduction of poverty, inequality and uneven development.

Financial sector transformation

- Financial sector transformation, including low cost banking and financial services and thus systematic elimination

Our answer to the economic and social reproduction crises is not a return to neo-liberal policies

of financial exploitation;

- Building a publicly controlled, developmental banking and financial sector;
- Building a co-operatively-owned banking and broader financial sector;
- Strict regulation and management of the capital account;
- Prescribed assets for productive and developmental purpose;
- A sovereign wealth fund to support and increase the levels of public investment; and
- Expansion of the mandate of the South African Reserve Bank to explicitly target employment growth and a balanced and sustainable inclusive high growth target.

Broader economic transformation

- A high impact, comprehensive industrial policy, including digital industrial and innovation strategies, aimed at developing our domestic productive capacity;
- A comprehensive socio-economic policy approach, and thus a development oriented poverty eradication strategy, with emphasis placed on support for productive activities and building sustainable livelihoods;
- Revitalisation and systematic expansion of the publicly-owned sector of our economy, in particular but not exclusively the turnaround of our state-owned enterprises;
- Combating state capture and other

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forms of corruption in the public sector as well as across the economy on a more intensified basis;

- Acceleration of land redistribution and support for productive land use, especially for the poor and the working class – to this end the SNC called upon Parliament to complete the process of amending section 25 of the Constitution to make land expropriation without compensation categorical;
- Increased economic and social infrastructure spend, and therefore a stimulus package focusing on developing our domestic productive capacity and turning around our economy;
- Review of the fiscal policy framework to boost state revenue to support industrialisation and development – this should include the introduction of a wealth tax;
- A state-owned pharmaceutical company; and
- In line with the commitment made by the Alliance in the ANC May 2019 general election manifesto, overall alignment of our macro-economy policy framework to support the above, the objectives of the second radical phase of our democratic transition, the other commitments made in the manifesto, and the measures that follow.

Sustainable livelihoods and social protection

- Adequate social protection, including social grants that are sensitive to inflation pressures and responsive to the already exiting economic and social reproduction crises;
- An economic empowerment programme directly linked to production development support for the broad masses, including a targeted focus on fostering a thriving co-operatives sector in townships and villages to build sustainable livelihoods;
- Promulgation of a local economic development eco-system as an integral part of social protection and alternative development models;
- Land and agrarian reform, with focus on but not exclusively women and youth empowerment;
- Transformation of the public and community works programmes to make them the employer of last resort on the basis of the decent work agenda and a training space for the unskilled;
- More decisive measures to bring an end to gender-based violence – to this end the SACP will continue to deepen its activism; and
- Forging ahead with the introduction of



Delegates open the SNC with song

the National Health Insurance to ensure quality health care for all, especially the poor and working people.

South African Airways

The SNC called upon government to adopt a compressive aviation industrial policy, anchored in turning around SAA and repositioning it as a state-owned enterprise to serve as the mainstay of our domestic aviation sector and tourism, with thriving domestic and international flight routes. The strategy should include technical and professional airline capacity-building through education and training programmes.

As part of its rescue plan, which should have been a proactive state-led process, procurement conduct and therefore every contract entered into and every tender awarded by SAA must be thoroughly scrutinised through a forensic investigation process. The investigation must focus on the contribution that outsourced functions and services

The SNC calls on all trade unions at SAA to close ranks and work towards saving the airline – and jobs



played in plunging SAA into crisis, and on value for money, irregularities, and on fruitless and wasteful expenditure.

Key executive appointments, including but not limited to the chief restructuring officer appointed in 2017, interim chief financial officer, SAA technical chief executive officer, and chief commercial officer, must also be investigated. SAA was placed in the hands of these ‘airline turnaround experts’, including several from abroad, who have evidently failed. The SNC called for accountability on the work of these ‘airline turnaround experts’ and value for the money that they were paid while SAA continued to fall deeper into crisis instead of turning around. The investigation must also include possible conflicts of interests.

The SNC calls upon all the trade unions organising at SAA to close ranks and work towards saving the airline, while at the same time saving jobs.

Eskom

The SNC strongly condemned the sabotage at Eskom, which has led to our people being without electricity. The SACP identifies with the painful situation that our people are experiencing from load shedding. The SNC mandated the CC to closely follow the investigation and ensure that saboteurs are identified and held to account.

The SACP calls on the state to regu-



General Secretary Blade Nzimande during his opening SNC address



CC member Lechesa Tsenoli chaired the second session

late mining and the trade of coal in the interest of national energy security. At the same time, the SNC called upon government to move more decisively in pursuing a just transition to cleaner and renewable energy. Eskom, in a turned around form, must serve as the mainstay of reliable, cleaner, renewable and affordable energy production.

Alliance reconfiguration and state and popular power

The SNC reaffirmed the resolution of by the SACP 14th National Congress on the Party and state and popular power, and accepted the progress made towards the reconfiguration of the Alliance. We endorsed the Alliance Political Council-approved paper on reconfiguration, based on the framework presented in the CC's Political Report and State of the Organisation Report to the 14th congress. We placed emphasis on implementation and further engagements at all levels.

The SNC mandated lower structures of the SACP to submit reports to the CC if in the course of preparations for the forthcoming 2021 local government elections the letter and spirit of the reconfiguration of the Alliance are being undermined. The CC will evaluate the reports and adopt the way forward. The options available to the CC include allowing elec-

toral contestation in the affected areas within the framework of the 14th congress resolution on the Party and state and popular power, and based on criteria to be finalised by the CC in 2020.

The SNC emphasised the principles articulated in the Political Report and the Alliance reconfiguration paper. These include consensus-seeking consultation on the manifesto, policy direction for our shared strategy of struggle and democratic transformation, and deployments and accountability, including recall, as well as Alliance inclusivity and representations in electoral lists. In this regard, the SACP will not support corrupt candidates or candidates emerging from processes that were not Alliance-inclusive, candidates imposed by factions or not supported by the community.

On our part, as the SACP, we will deepen our programme to build working class power and hegemony in all key

**We reaffirm
our support for the people
of Cuba, Venezuela,
Nicaragua, Bolivia,
Palestine and Eritrea**

sites of struggle and significant centres of power. The SNC reaffirmed the SACP Political Programme, the South African road to socialism, emphasising again that the Party seeks to achieve democratic working class hegemony over the state and society. The immediate tasks of the SACP are to build working class unity and forge a popular Left front as mandated by the 14th .

The unity of our Party remains sacrosanct. Our resolutions call upon us to deepen and defend the unity of the SACP and its vanguard discipline and cohesion, including through institutionalising and intensifying structured political education within the ranks of our Party. We will also intensify mass political education and campaigning, both independently and in joint programmes with our allies.

International solidarity

The SNC strongly condemns the United States-driven imperialist destabilisation in parts of Africa, Latin America and the Middle East. The SACP reaffirms its support for the national sovereignty of the people of Cuba, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Bolivia, Palestine and Eritrea. We pledge our revolutionary solidarity with the national democratic struggles of the people of Swaziland, South Cameroon, Sudan and Western Sahara. ●

Guests at the fourth SNC –



Delegates welcome guests to the SNC



SNC guests Mpho Hani, wife of slain former GS Chris Hani, and Gauteng Premier David Makhura



YCLSA's Tinyiko Ntini delivers the YCLSA's message to the SNC

Ekurhuleni, Gauteng



GS Blade Nzimande greets Rivonia Trialist Andrew Mlangeni, with CC member Gwede Mantashe looking on



ANC Deputy President DD Mabuza delivers the ANC's solidarity message



Cosatu GS Bheki Ntshalintshali delivers the federation's message of support

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SACP General Secretary Blade Nzimande in discussion with Ri Yong Hun, Charge d'Affaires of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, during a break in the SNC



Internationalist SNC response: Delegates wrapped in Palestinian solidarity flags as international guests are introduced



Greetings from revolutionary Cuba: Liliam Tápanes, 3rd Secretary at the Cuban embassy, addresses SNC delegates



Venezuelan ambassador Mairin Moreno delivers a message of support to the SNC from the Republic of Venezuela and its people



Lesotho's Katse Dam on the Malibamat'so River - centre-piece of the Lesotho Hlhighlands Water Project

WATER & SANITATION

Water master plan hinges on implementation

Barbara Schreiner outlines the government's hugely ambitious plan for overhauling the water and sanitation sector



In the third week of January, residents of QwaQwa in the eastern Free State took to the streets, demanding reliable water supplies in QwaQwa, Kestell and Harrismith. A municipal vehicle was set alight, several shops looted and roads barricaded. Police used rubber bullets on the protesters and arrested a number of them. The anger was sparked by the death of eight-year-old Mosa Mbele who drowned while fetching water from a local river due to the failure of water services in the area. This is only the latest in a number of recent protests across South Africa sparked by water and sanitation

challenges.

A few months earlier, in late 2019, the Minister of Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation, Cde Lindiwe Sisulu, launched a national master plan for water and sanitation that sets out the key challenges she aims to tackle to restore functionality to a currently poorly performing water sector.

South Africa is a water scarce country, prone to multi-year droughts and to floods. Careful management of water is critical to ensuring that key economic sectors have sufficient water of an appropriate quality for use. Also, effective management of water services is needed to ensure that everyone in the

country has access to good quality water for household purposes, and to decent sanitation facilities. The South African Constitution recognises water as a human right, and guarantees that everyone must have access to sufficient water. The Constitution assigned the management of water resources (water in rivers, dams, wetlands, and underground) to the national government, while the provision of water services and sanitation is the constitutional responsibility of local government.

Despite good strides being made in extending services to all post-1994, more recent shockingly poor management of water services, exacerbated by corrup-

tion, has seen the proportion of people with access to reliable water supplies decreasing to around 65%. Failures to plan and budget for proper maintenance have caused water and sanitation systems to collapse.

Corruption and mismanagement have plagued the sector: for example, allegations have been made of councillors and officials allowing (or causing) supply infrastructure to fail to win lucrative water tanker tenders; a major water supply pipeline from Nandoni Dam to Giyani is still not complete after more than 10 years, and corruption and mismanagement have driven the price up to over 10 times the original estimate. A number of court cases and newspaper articles have exposed the extent of the corruption. It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that a high number of service delivery protests in South Africa are driven by water issues.

At the same time, water pollution by mines, agriculture, industry and municipalities has left many rivers in South Africa in an appalling state and have polluted groundwater. Delays in constructing the necessary water infrastructure have put the economy at risk – the impacts of the Cape Town drought, at least in part due to the failure to construct appropriate infrastructure for 20 years, have been estimated at R5,9-billion for the agricultural sector alone, with the loss of 30 000 agricultural jobs. Delays in the construction of Phase II of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project have put Gauteng at risk should there be a severe drought between now and 2026, when completion is due. And delays in raising of the ClanWilliam Dam have prevented the creation of up to 4 000 new agricultural jobs. Climate change makes the situation more complicated, changing rainfall patterns and increasing temperatures around the country.

It is in this context that Minister Sisulu released the master plan, developed in a consultative process over several years.

The water sector is complex, resulting in the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) performing a variety of tasks, including:

- Planning, developing and operating the major infrastructure (dams, canals and pipelines) that provide reliable bulk water supply to the large urban and industrial areas of the country;
- Regulating the use and protection of water resources in rivers, dams and underground;
- Supporting municipalities to enable

them to perform their constitutional responsibility of providing water supply and sanitation services; and

- Overseeing and supporting a range of organisations including the water boards, the Trans Caledon Tunnel Authority (TCTA) – a specialist financial agency dedicated to raising finance for large, economically viable, water resource developments – and the Water Research Commission.

The plan covers four aspects: institutions, investment and infrastructure, information, and transformation. It outlines what must be done to turn the sector around. It also, critically in view of the systemic corruption in the water sector, commits to ethical leadership.

The first leg of the plan is institutional change to get the sector back on track.



Municipal officials allegedly allow water infrastructure to fail – then secure lucrative water tanker tenders

It has been difficult for DWS to successfully implement its activities. So the legislation allows for the establishment of catchment management agencies that will take on a number of these functions. The plan is to create seven catchment management agencies in addition to the two already established, within the next five years.

The functions of water boards will increase to enable them to take over some infrastructure management functions from DWS, and provide better support to struggling municipalities. And a National Water Resources and Services Authority (NWRSA) that will finance, develop, manage and operate national water resource infrastructure and sanitation will be established.

A major challenge in the water sector is the failure of municipalities in delivery of water services and sanitation.

Communities need to hold municipalities accountable for effective delivery of services.

The second leg of the master plan is focused on infrastructure planning and investment. Long term planning for water infrastructure requirements is critical if a water scarce country like South Africa is to achieve water security, particularly in the face of climate change. It can be 10 to 15 years from the beginning of planning of a major dam before it actually delivers water. Water security is critical to economic investment and growth, as well as to household well-being and dignity.

There are a number of planned infrastructure projects that will be expedited, including the Lesotho Highland Water Project Phase 2, the uMkhomazi Water Project and the Berg River Voëlvei Augmentation Scheme. Other critical infrastructure projects include the Mokolo-Crocodile (West) Water Augmentation Project, Mzimvubu Water Project, Nwamitwa / Tzaneen Augmentation Project, Vioolsdrift Dam, and Vaal Gamagara Water Augmentation Project. The Minister has committed to inviting the office of the Chief Procurement Officer and the Auditor General to provide ongoing assessments of these infrastructure processes and to make sure that there is no corruption and wastage.

Given the limited public funding available through government's budget, financially viable projects will need to be financed using private sector funding. This will build on the success to date of the TCTA and water boards which, together, have mobilised over R50-billion in loan finance to undertake infrastructure development to supply urban and industrial use. Public funds will be focused on social and transformation projects.

DWS will have to work closely with National Treasury and sector entities to strengthen financial arrangements to optimise revenue collection in the sector, mobilise private sector funding for sector investments, and work with both the Department Of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs and National Treasury to ensure the design of conditional grants is guided by the objectives of access and equity.

The third leg is focused on information, to improve performance and support sustained, inclusive development. Water can only be successfully managed with the cooperation of water users and the public. This requires improvements to DWS' information systems so water

users and the public can evaluate the performance of the sector. Access to water and sanitation information is critical if civil society is to be able to hold government accountable for its actions.

In terms of water services, the department will reinstate the Blue Green and No-Drop monitoring programmes to enable regular reporting on the performance of municipalities in their delivery of safe water and sanitation services – this information will be made publicly available. These reports form an important resource for communities wanting to hold their municipalities accountable for the delivery of services.

The final leg is focused on transforming water access and use. Over the past 20 years, DWS has failed to deliver on its mandate for the reallocation of water to black water users. This, along with land reform, remains a major challenge. The plan outlines the intentions for a joint land, water and agrarian reform programme to be led by the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development to ensure that the reallocation of both land and water are aligned and take place within a framework of agrarian reform and effective rural

development.

DWS and its agencies aim to identify alternative sources of water and water that is not utilised; opportunities where more water can be made available in government water schemes; implement pilot projects on voluntary contributions from farmers for water reallocation in prioritised catchments; and identify areas where small dams or groundwater development can provide water for small scale black farmers to support the transformation of the sector.

In parallel with these priority actions, there is a need for legislative amendments, not least to ensure clarification of the arrangements for the ownership of different elements of water and sanitation infrastructure by different institutions, and to strengthen the ability of the

Minister to regulate the water supply and sanitation sector effectively.

Enabling the sector to function effectively will require the right mix of skills and expertise. A structured approach will identify the long-term numerical requirements of persons and specific skills expressed by qualification and experience, institute a long-term capacity development programme with water sector and higher education and training institutions, and involve young professionals in a structured manner to develop their capacity.

The master plan is ambitious, and achieving it will require focus, dedication and courage. But successful implementation is needed in order to provide water and sanitation to those who don't have such services, or who are poorly served, and to ensure that there is sufficient water to support economic growth and job creation. Effective implementation is also dependent on active engagement from civil society, and concerted action to hold government accountable to its promises. ●

Cde Schreiner is the Executive Director of Water Integrity Network, based in Berlin

**For 20 years,
the government
has failed to deliver
reallocation of water
to black water users**

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Among the award recipients: Forgotten revolutionary Dimtri Tsafendas (posthumous Special Recognition award), and Buzile Nzima Branch officials (Best Performing Branch award)

Umsebenzi Awards Special Edition

Coming Soon: A Special Edition with all the details of the awards made by our Party at the SNC

SA IN CRISIS

Reasserting liberation values to beat the malaise

Chris Mathhako surveys the impact of corruption and lawlessness in the country and argues for a return to solidarity values

*Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
— W. B Butler Yeats,
(The Second Coming, 1919)*



The malaise of lawlessness and socio-political decay enveloping South Africa can arguably be traced to the post-1996 period. With advent of the black economic empowerment (BEE) project and its neoliberal prescriptions, a wave of banal criminality, political decay, rampant looting – including the debasing of the very values of national liberation – became the norm. A race to the bottom gained momentum as private accumulation, aggrandisement, and conspicuous consumption became the new normal. The phenomenon of blatant corruption, wanton looting and compradorial rent-seeking of unprecedented proportions, reared its ugly head, unleashing a series of negative outcomes, with the country, but particularly the poor and marginalised sections of the population bearing the brunt.

The *Uzo ithola kanjani u hlele* dictum became vogue (supposedly indicating the ‘hustle and scramble’). In a bitter struggle to accrue as much from the spoils of democracy as possible, various schemes of blatant lawlessness flourished (such as inflating prices when billing the state). Obtuse criminality, manipulation, deviousness and generally the malaise of lawlessness characterise the period we’re in. The inevitable decaying intersections of the political-economic and social have catalysed deeper inequality, poverty, social insecurity and the overriding burden of unemployment on the majority of the



State Capture Commission Chair Raymond Zondo

poor and working people.

Though there are various endeavours to claw back the rule of law, among other things through various commissions of inquiry, the malaise of lawlessness runs deep and will probably take much longer to uproot. Lessons on corruption in China’s anti-corruption drive: ‘... catching tigers and flies’ are often fleetingly invoked but not taken to the next level. In its endeavour to entrench the rule of law in China, the Communist Party of China (CPC), has outlined the following: the “... Chinese judicial and procuratorial organs have maintained high pressure on law violations, to safeguard justice, social stability and development, and based their work on peoples’ increasing demands for democracy, the rule of

law, fairness and justice, security, and a better environment in a new era. Remarkable progress achievements have been made on anti-corruption, cracking down on organised crimes, enhancing the enforcement of punishment on environment and intellectual property related crimes,” reports CGTN (China Central Television).

Many South Africans have placed their faith in the judiciary and judicial processes as the ultimate saviour. But these too may come up against huge vested interests in various forms and at different levels – those on the wrong side of the law will not go down without a fight. We are not yet at the point where we’ve arrested the threats that continue to loom large. We are told about the rating agencies and their opinions, but not much has been said about the ratings and opinions of the broad majority of ordinary South Africans, who find themselves at the receiving end of the most dire consequences of the outcomes of these debilitating practices.

Social decay manifest in the most violent anti-social relations, has resulted in higher levels of abuse and murder of women, children and the vulnerable in a society that has lost, or is on verge of losing, its most basic humane values. Those who felt left out of the BEE-project sprang into action and in the most brute and unsophisticated manner and pushed for their share of the spoils of democracy. “I didn’t join the struggle to be poor” (Smuts Ngonyama) became both a mantra for and against, as the factionalism took on new dimensions across society.

Political parties became intense battlegrounds for control, membership and structures the extension of the aspirations of those in control, for the sole purpose of controlling the levers of patronage and the state coffers. Splits and floor-crossing

Corruption has catalysed deeper inequality, poverty, social insecurity and the burden of unemployment



Cape Town residents protest state capture corruption in 2018

were in the main occasioned by the allure of private accretion and this increased strife in the polity generally. Bargaining for this or that share of the spoils of democracy meant courting the leading cadres in political formations and in the state. Family ties and other relationships became platforms through which to loot the state. Corrupting networks and ties burgeoned as these became significant in protecting and creating veritable grounds for cover-up and thwarting judicial and other woes that might follow. Factionalism became the most potent form and platform of and for primitive accumulation and distorted both the state and the ruling party.

Some sections in the prosecutorial and other arms of the state were hollowed out and corrupted to effectively validate the corrupt and looting brigade that are dominant in society. At the core of all of this is the drowning out of rational voices, and pushing aside of everything that agitates for the rule of law. The counter-accusations of the manipulations and abuse of the courts, for this or that factional goal has also become a regular feature of such rhetoric. One perspective argues strongly for an 'interim report' of the Zondo State Capture Commission be released to allow for at least the possibility of some early prosecutions or considerations of prosecutions. The commission's suggestion of an extension

of its term has strengthened this case.

The economic and material spoils of national liberation have become the coveted prize and battleground.

It has literally become a life-and-death struggle: intra-organisational political killings have spiked, with the lives of whistleblowers and others snubbed out. Those who had managed to find themselves in the boardrooms of capital were unrelenting in seeking to push for maximum profit and ensure that state policy and contracts benefit their enterprises, developing very interesting ways of unlocking positive decisions from state policy decision-makers, through dispensing lucrative benefits, high-end luxurious holidaying, game reserves jaunts, etc.

Fierce fights for the control of the levers and instruments of state power, in particular mutated into open violent pitched battles, smear campaigns, spying and counter-spying as comrade-vs-comrade took virulent turns in the battle for control of the ruling party, sections of its

**Corruption and efforts
towards its eradication
have literally become
a life-and-death
struggle**

Alliance partners' and the media. Almost everything was perverted and it became difficult to distinguish fact from fiction, smear and lies from the truth. Not even the judiciary was spared as those entrusted with protecting the constitution and dispensing justice were targets of the various factions.

The polity was not spared as those who had taken oaths to uphold the law were frequently found to have been the very individuals responsible for perpetuating wrongdoing, leading the corroding lawlessness project and abusing their positions in the state and state-owned institutions. If the public revelations at the state capture and other commissions are anything to go by, the pervasive nature of lawlessness in the country is indeed deep and entrenched.

In their positions of powerlessness and hopelessness communities resorted to what they've come to characterise as the 'attention-seeking' and destructive protests of wanton destruction of private and public property, as a meaningful political tactic to get their issues attended to urgently. In Khuma township outside Stilfontein in the North West, at least six ANC councillors' houses were burned down during a violent service delivery protest. More and more of these protests are now being directed at private individuals, seen or perceived to be (alleged) beneficiaries of these unlawful (state

tenderpreneurship) activities, which has brought unexplained material wealth in many a political leader's life lately.

Unlike elsewhere on the Continent, where the increase of these types of political tactics have led to proliferation of small arms and bandit armies, we've not reached that point but not far off that road if the phenomenon of the amadlakufa in KZN and these mushrooming quasi 'business forums' – (serving as gate-keepers of business interests in some areas), are anything to go by.

Scenes of pitched violent battles in downtown Johannesburg between the law enforcement and foreign nationals was the last straw that demonstrated the decline of the rule of law and rise of lawlessness in the clearest vision for all to see. Law enforcement was forced to retreat as wanton violent destruction of property and lawlessness reared its ugly head in the most epic manner yet in democratic South Africa.

The rule of law has become the greatest victim of the prevailing condition of democratisation in the country. For any significant move forward along the road of reclaiming the law, there are going to be serious efforts and decisiveness that will have to be undertaken without veering towards authoritarianism or any of that sort. That critical balance between the intensification and supreme basis of the rule of law and democratic right would have to be found and traversed. The inherent challenges of corruption and looting in the state structures tasked to promote the rule of law must be addressed urgently and restore the faith in them.

The related challenges of persistent crisis of social reproduction would have to be tackled in earnest and sets of grounded values cultivated - from progressive patriotism, solidarity and empathy in pursuance of the goals of a better life for all, will key. All of this can only be achieved in an environment in which the conditions of the majority are addressed for the better. These would have to be achieved with and through various forms with should include the active progressive agency of the populace, attending to the challenges of the law enforcement agencies and the strengthening the judicial and procuratorial arms of the state. Returning the to the traditions that underpinned the basis of and for national liberation is indeed crucial in this endeavour. ●

Cde Matlhako is SACP Second Deputy General Secretary

SUSTAINABLE ECONOMICS

Circular economy is the key to sustainable growth in the future

*South Africa urgently needs economic growth to support its people, write **Lebogang Mulaisi** and **Sandra Khoza**. But it cannot be economic growth that destroys the environment in which they live*

Mulaisi



Khoza



A circular economy is a systemic approach to economic development designed to benefit businesses, society, and the environment. It aims to redefine growth, focusing on positive society-wide benefits. It entails gradually de-coupling economic activity from the consumption of finite resources, and designing waste out of the system. Underpinned by a transition to renewable energy sources, the circular model builds economic, natural, and social capital.

Transitioning to a circular economy does not only amount to adjustments aimed at reducing the negative impacts of the linear economy. Rather, it represents a systemic shift that builds long-term resilience, generates business and economic opportunities, and provides environmental and societal benefits.

Why a circular economy is important for the labour movement?

Cosatu's 2010 *Growth path towards full employment* already provides a framework for the redistribution and creation of decent work. At the same time, various

resolutions adopted by Cosatu on climate change and a just transition commit to an environmentally sustainable future. It is now time to put the two arguments together. This means that every time we think of economic expansion, we must think about how the activity can either contribute positively to the environment or how it can contribute to managing the consequences of climate change.

The circular economy is the appropriate economic model to address both arguments. Below is a list of the benefits of the circular economy:

- Reduces waste;
- Drives greater resource productivity;
- Delivers a more competitive South African economy;
- Positions South Africa to better address emerging resource security/scarcity issues in the future; and

A circular economy redefines growth, focusing on positive society-wide benefits



- Helps reduce the environmental impacts of our production and consumption in both South Africa and abroad.

The circular economy model is based on minimising the extraction of raw materials and replacing it with resources locked up and forgotten in our waste. Combined with the use of renewable energy, reduced emissions, and greater industry efficiency, a circular economy provides our best chance to live within the bounds of the earth's capacity.

Several studies confirm that the circular economy can generate jobs for a range of skill types.¹ The literature found that the recycling and waste management sector offers a larger proportion of low and intermediate skilled employment in the area of collection, handling and processing materials. Remanufacturing, in common with original manufacturing, tends to require more skilled workers. Indeed, supporting the growth of remanufacturing is likely to require significant investment in training to develop the right skills for the workforce.

South Africa's economy is having a tough time. The country is struggling to escape the effects of the global financial crisis, and mining companies – mining remains one of South Africa's key economic sectors – are laying off workers

in response to falling commodity prices. While the country has invested in new infrastructure to deliver better public services, latest figures show a 29% unemployment rate, with significant job losses in the manufacturing, finance and utilities industries. Those finding it hardest to secure jobs are young people generally, but above all Africans, women, the less educated and those with no prior work experience. Unemployment remains our single greatest economic and social challenge. The creation of green enterprises linked to the circular economy offers a real opportunity to help reverse this.

The circular economy is an economic model that minimises resource input and waste generation. The value of the resources used in products is retained by returning them into the product cycle at the end of their use. By doing so, the circular economy imitates nature, where nothing is wasted.

**Combined with
renewable energy,
a circular economy is our
best chance to live within
the earth's capacity**

Opportunities for job creation exist in moving waste away from landfills towards alternative waste treatment across the entire waste hierarchy. This can be achieved through cleaner production, industrial efficiency, dismantling, refurbishment and re-use, as well as new methods of collection, sorting, reprocessing and manufacturing. The circular economy is a trillion-dollar opportunity with huge potential for innovation, job creation and economic growth. The wealth to be found in waste could generate a host of jobs and viable enterprises, helping to counter any country's unemployment rates, thus contributing to economic growth. ●

Cde Mulaisi is the Social Development Policy Co-ordinator of the Congress of South African Trade Unions' Policy Unit. Cde Khoza is an intern with the Cosatu Policy Unit

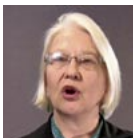
Endnotes

1 EEA, 2011, *Earnings, jobs and innovation: the role of recycling in a green economy*, EEA report no 8/2011; ILO, 2011, *Skills for green jobs: a global view*; All Party Parliamentary Sustainable Resource Group, 2014, *Remanufacturing – towards a resource efficient economy*; SITA UK, 2012, *Driving green growth*

INTERNATIONALISM

Why it matters to SA's working class

Jenny Schreiner outlines the increased importance of working class internationalism in the era of globalisation, and argues for greater coordination of international solidarity by progressive South Africans



The experiences of the world working class and the working class of the South have much in common. Socialist internationalism is a key principle of the ideology and policy of the working class and Marxist-Leninist parties. It is expressed in the solidarity with the working class, its communist vanguard, and the working people of all nations, in the unity and coordination of their actions, their assistance to each other and their mutual support and aid. Internationalism is an important component of socialist political theory, based on the principle that working-class people of all countries must unite across national boundaries and actively oppose nationalism and war to overthrow capitalism. The slogan that has bound workers across the world in travails against capitalist exploitation **Workers of the world unite – you have nothing but your chains to lose!** is the most direct expression of internationalism. In South Africa, our revolutionary slogan. **An injury to one is an injury to all**, expresses the same commitment¹.

The principle of internationalism also reminds us of the ongoing debates about how the socialist revolution unfolds and how the transition to socialism is shaped. The early socialist and communist movement reflected a variety of different positions on whether socialism could be established in one country or whether socialism could only be built through simultaneous world revolution. The reality of vastly different levels of social and economic development, and the underdeveloped colonised part of the world show us the complexity of revolutionary

struggle, leading to our Party's *Black Republic* thesis in 1927 and the later concept of the national democratic revolution (NDR).

It is imperative that we never lose sight of the principle of internationalism within our NDR. The colonial boundaries imposed on the people of Africa and the South serve as an imposed division of the working class, and unless organised against, serves to weaken the strength of revolutionary struggle against the global capitalist system.

Internationalism is a response to worldwide imperialism and colonialism, and in the era of intense globalisation, made even more effective through the digital industrial revolution, making socialist internationalism is even more relevant. We have seen workers in the developed world lose their jobs as capital exported productive activity to the South where cheap and unorganised labour could enable profit maximisation. In essence, we have seen the gross exploitation of the working class of South while the labour aristocracy of the North lost jobs.

We can anticipate in the current digital industrial revolution the possibility that job losses and retrenchment will cripple the economies of the South as

robotics takes production back home to the developed world. Decisions are driven by cost minimisation and profit maximisation; the impact on human beings is seldom a priority.

As we talk of the importance of internationalism and of international solidarity, it is vital for us also to understand its opposite, the chauvinism which is shouted so loudly by the populist and neo-fascist leaders emerging in the developed world – the USA's Donald Trump is the ugliest manifestation. It is this chauvinism; this exaggerated patriotism; this blind support for and identification with one's own cause or group; this superiority syndrome must be countered by the spirit and practice of internationalism. It is this chauvinism that leads to narrow nationalism, tribalism and other exclusionary cultures and attitudes.

It is here that revolutionary trade unionism across the world and the vanguard parties of the world must craft and drive a coherent programme of internationalist analysis and international solidarity.

It is important to recognise that imperialism and its domestic allies that create the material conditions of the underdeveloped South, which is manifest in unemployment (capitalism does not need full employment), inequality as a result of the pattern of ownership of the means of production by the minority, and poverty, a manifestation of the crisis of capitalist social reproduction. Importantly, capitalism needs the buying power of the people to generate the profit that capital will privately accumulate – globalisation, the internet of things, the system of e-commerce mean that capital is no longer de-

**Globalisation and
the digital revolution
make socialist
internationalism more
relevant than ever**



Struggle veterans Ahmed Kathrada and Isu Chiba (second and third from left) at a 2014 Palestine solidarity protest outside the Israeli Trade Office, Sandton

pendent on the buying power of national working classes. The buying power of the global citizenry, the global consumer is exercised increasingly on the e-commerce and e-finance world stage.

Internationalism in era of the global crisis of capitalist social reproduction manifests in the migration patterns, social dysfunction, the drug and substance abuse, in human trafficking, in gender based and interpersonal violence. These require that the trade union movement build partnerships with community organisations and organisation of workers in the non-formal economy. South Africa has a strong history of solidarity between organised workers, students, women and community. In the 1980s there was no strike that did not involve solidarity action, be it material support to striking families, boycott of products made by the industry or forms of political solidarity.

Equally there was no student action or action by women's organisations in which workers stood back. As Cosatu met to hold its international relations seminar on 14 November 2019, only half an hour away the Africa Region of the World Democratic Federation of Youth was discussing how the youth of Africa should join forces to mobilise, among others, against the burden of the social

reproduction and capitalist crisis that most acutely affects young people and women.

The socialist principle of internationalism leads us to the action of international solidarity that is in interests of the working class. This form of solidarity stands in the face of the international solidarity of capital: much as capital competes within itself, it has a collective common interest in sustaining and developing of the capitalist system. So up against global class interests, we need to explore what forms of international solidarity are appropriate.

Interestingly, parallel to the Cosatu international relations seminar, in Rivonia at Liliesleaf Museum there was a workshop on establishing a Centre for International Solidarity. It is important that Cosatu and the SACP work hand in hand with Liliesleaf in the conceptualising and establishing such an important

centre. Apart from the forms of solidarity protests outside the US, Turkish, Israeli embassies, it is important to ensure that solidarity that reaches the individual trade unionists who are locked up in prisons and journalists who are persecuted across the globe. It is important that we continue to travel to countries across this globe where the working class is under siege. It is important for South Africa, with a rich tradition of internationalism, as recipients of global solidarity in our struggle, as a country that has witnessed other countries suffering negative consequences for their solidarity with our struggle, to explore how best to create space for taking international solidarity forward. What better place can there be for this than Lilliesleaf, the first headquarters of the SACP, and the location from which our armed struggle was launched? ●

Cde Schreiner is an SACP Politburo member, Deputy Editor of Umsebenzi, former MK combatant and political prisoner

Endnote

¹ The slogan was first coined in the 19th century by the US labour federation the Knights of Labor

**Trump is the ugliest
manifestation of
international solidarity's
direct opposite
– nationalist populism**

SYRIA

In war, workers are as important as soldiers

Syrian trade union congress acknowledges the role of workers in keeping the country's economy alive during the century's second deadliest conflict, writes Reneva Fourie



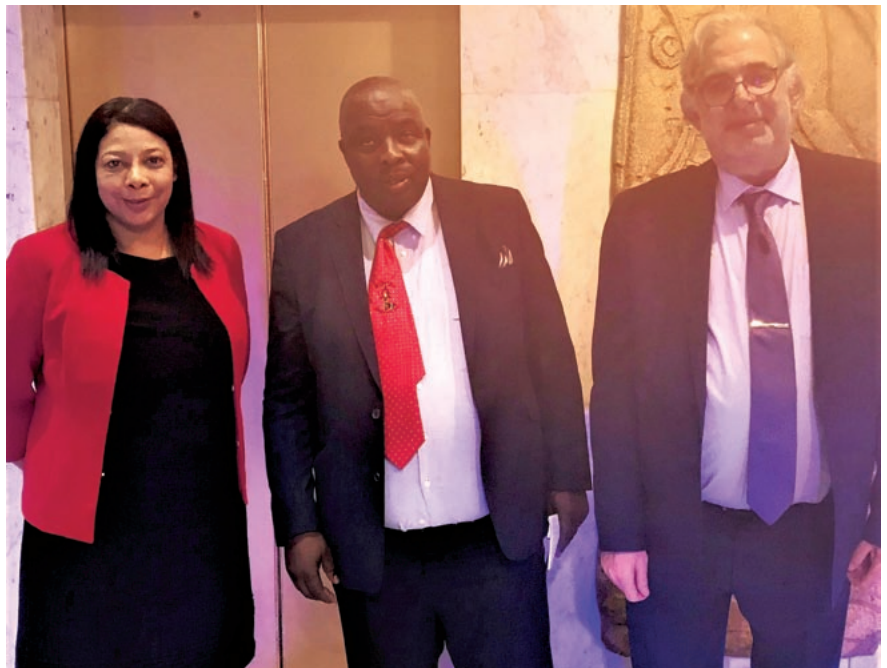
With only Aleppo and Idlib still outside of government control, the end of the decade-long Syrian war is in sight, and a taste of victory is in the air despite the hundreds of lives lost since January 2020. When celebrating the end of war, it the role of the soldiers that usually gets most attention.

The 27th General Congress of the General Federation of Trade Unions of Syria (GFTU), in Damascus from 13-16 February 2020, honoured the contribution of workers.

A video clip, supported by a phenomenal artistic collage of dance, 3-D laser display and powerful narration, succinctly show-cased the unselfish contribution of workers who braved missiles, bombs, bullets and torture to keep the Syrian economy going during the war in which more than 100 000 civilians and 200 000 soldiers were killed.

A sophisticated and highly organised opening ceremony attended by 479 worker delegates, some with head coverings of white scarves or yellow, blue or white helmets, and representatives from other Arab states and the diplomatic community, gathered at al-Faihaa Sport Hall to receive messages of support from Assistant Regional Secretary General of al-Baath Arab Socialist Party, Cde Hilal al-Hilal, on behalf of President Bashar al-Assad, and Cde Mike Makwayiba, President the World Federation of Trade Unions. The spirit of patriotism was high and the mood intense, and the degree of solidarity overwhelming, as Syrian flags were waved by many in the hall.

Cde Makwayiba capitalised on the electric atmosphere to congratulate work-



Honoured guests: The SACP's Reneva Fourie, WFTU President Mzwandile Makwayiba of Nehawu, and South African Ambassador Barry Gilder

ers on their role in keeping Syria united and for contributing to the successful defeat of the powerful military invasion by the US and its proxy rebel groups. He called on other Arab states present to support Syria and to strengthen unity in the West Asian region, emphasising that this is the only way in which imperialist aggression will be defeated.

Cde Hilal al-Hilal, expressed President al-Assad's appreciation for the contribution of workers in sustaining the economy despite the war and sanctions, and for assisting in the post-war reconstruction of the country. He commended workers for their strong, complementary support given to the Syrian Arab army in

enabling domestic security and stability and urged them to sustain their bravery and continue to defend their homeland. He also emphasised the importance of Pan-Arab solidarity, particularly in defiance of the US-Israeli "Deal of the Century" around the question of Palestine. He wished the conference well in its deliberations.

The 27th General Conference will review the programmes and policies of the GFTU and develop resolutions for its new administration to take forward. ●

Cde Fourie is a member of the SACP Central Committee, currently based in Syria