

IN MEMORIAM: CHRIS 'CHE' MATLHAKO
CHRIS HANI MONTH OF ACTION

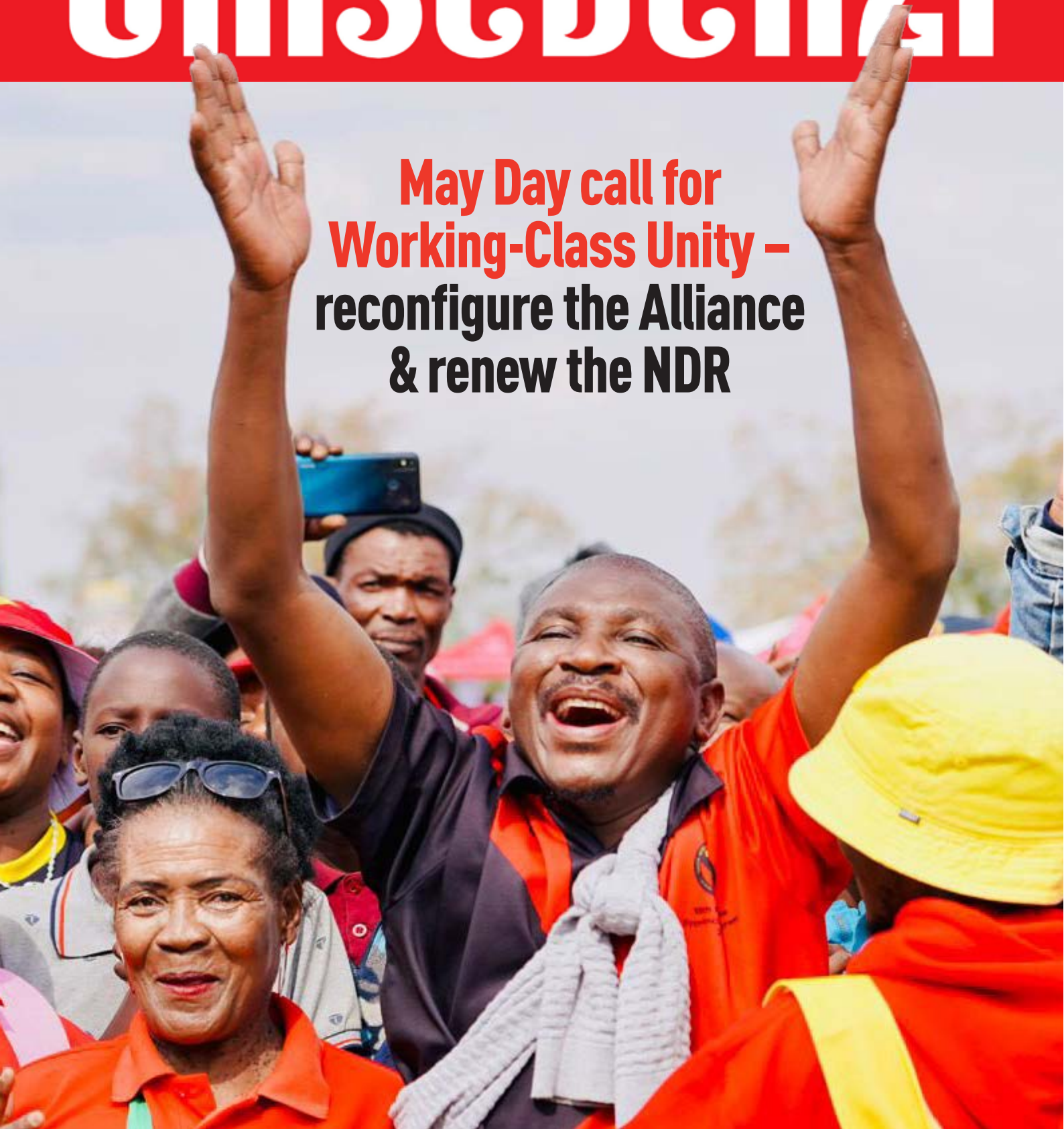
May 2023

Voice of the South African Communist Party



Umsebenzi

**May Day call for
Working-Class Unity –
reconfigure the Alliance
& renew the NDR**



MAY DAY

Unite the working class and reconfigure the Alliance

This address was given by SACP General Secretary Solly Mapaila at the national May Day rally held in Bethlehem, Free State

On this May Day, the SACP salutes the workers who stood up in the history of our country to organise themselves into progressive trade unions, to wage the historic struggle against the exploitative system of capitalist production, its racist and sexist articulations and its forms of oppression and domination, notably colonialism, apartheid imperialism.

May Day originates from the general strikes by militant workers in Chicago in the US, in 1886. This month marks the 137th anniversary of that historic struggle, which notably included the battle for the reduction of the ordinary working-day to eight hours. Today, we pay tribute to those workers to whom the imperialist regime of the US reacted violently and by legislative means to cripple May Day.

In the history of our country, the role played by the Communist Party in building the progressive trade union movement, and in supporting and in taking part in the struggles that the progressive trade union movement led, is unmatched. For example, African mine-workers embarked on a widespread strike in 1946, unseen in the history of our country, with the active involvement of communist cadres at the core. Nearly 100,000 workers took part in the strike, which brought down operations at 13 mines either completely or in part.

We therefore take this opportunity to pay tribute to the countless communist leaders and grassroots activists who took part in workers' organisations and just struggles in the history of our country.

The apartheid oppressors reacted by imposing the Suppression of Communism Act in 1950, banning the Communist Party and any communist activity

in our country. This made our party the first political organisation to be banned in South Africa.

The oppressors went further, widening the scope of their bloody enforcement of the draconian law.

Armed with the support of the capitalist bosses who stood to benefit, the oppressors strengthened their decades-long prohibition of the organisation of black workers into trade unions, continuing with racial segregation. They also used the Suppression of Communism Act to suppress our wider liberation struggle.

As a result, many worker activists and stalwarts of our liberation struggle were arrested. Others were detained without trial. Others were sentenced to prison. Others were executed on the gallows. Others were assassinated inside and outside our country. To this day, we still have families who do not know what happened to their loved ones, whose whereabouts remain unknown.

Strengthen and broaden worker unity, defend our hard-won gains and deepen the emancipatory struggle

As the history of our country makes clear, the recognition in our Constitution and the elaboration in our labour law of workers' rights did not come as a favour.

The workers had to organise themselves into progressive trade unions, build their own power base, wage the

struggle for the recognition of the workers' rights on a non-racial and non-sexist basis, and form part of our broader political struggle for liberation and social emancipation.

Today, perhaps more than in the past, we need the unity of organised workers and the working class at large. This is our core message today.

It is through organising the unorganised and forging the maximum unity of organised workers and the working-class at large, that we can successfully roll back the neoliberal agenda that undermines collective bargaining.

The SACP takes this opportunity to reiterate its solidarity with the workers who were dismissed by Makro, with their union Saccawu, and with all the workers who are engaged in collective bargaining and their trade unions across the economy, in both the public and private sectors. We cannot overemphasise the importance of unity as the weapon of victory.

As the SACP, we have committed ourselves to strengthen our efforts to deepen and widen working-class organisation, unity and power, including through forging a popular left front. This has become necessary to move the national democratic revolution into a second, more radical phase, and to advance, deepen and defend the revolution towards the desired outcomes.

The working class needs to strengthen its independence at all times, including in situations where it finds itself having to enter into alliances or broad fronts with others.

Reconfiguration of the Alliance

A policy change is critical if South Africa is to overcome the high levels of unem-

Our effort to reconfigure the Alliance aims to reassert the aspirations of the working class



SACP General Secretary Solly Mapaila, third from left, with President Cyril Ramaphosa and Cosatu President Zingiswa Losi, on the podium at the national May Day rally, held this year in Bethlehem, Free State. With them (partly out of shot) is Free State Premier Mxolisi Dukwana

ployment, poverty and inequality affecting the working class, and if we are to build new public electric power generation capacity — to make the provision of electricity uninterruptedly available to the people on a developmental basis.

Entering into alliances or fronts with others should not be a compromise, but should serve as part of the means to achieve the aims of the working class.

Our effort to secure the reconfiguration of the Alliance therefore aims to reassert the aspirations of the working class.

The change in policy direction that we seek to achieve, having no interests of our own apart from the interests of the working class, is essential as part of the reconfiguration of the Alliance. To highlight a few principles:

- The reconfiguration must make neo-liberal policy prescripts, including austerity, as well as state capture and other forms of corruption, a thing of the past;
- There must be thoroughly democratic, consensus-seeking consultation on

both policy and the selection of those who should be chosen to implement it in the state at all levels, with Alliance inclusivity a key criterion in both;

- Instead of accountability only to one Alliance component, there must be accountability to the Alliance under the principle of collective leadership, with common discipline;
- The Alliance must truly function as a political centre of our shared strategy, the National Democratic Revolution, towards the attainment of all the goals of the Freedom Charter, and not least its economic goals.

Gender-based violence and criminality

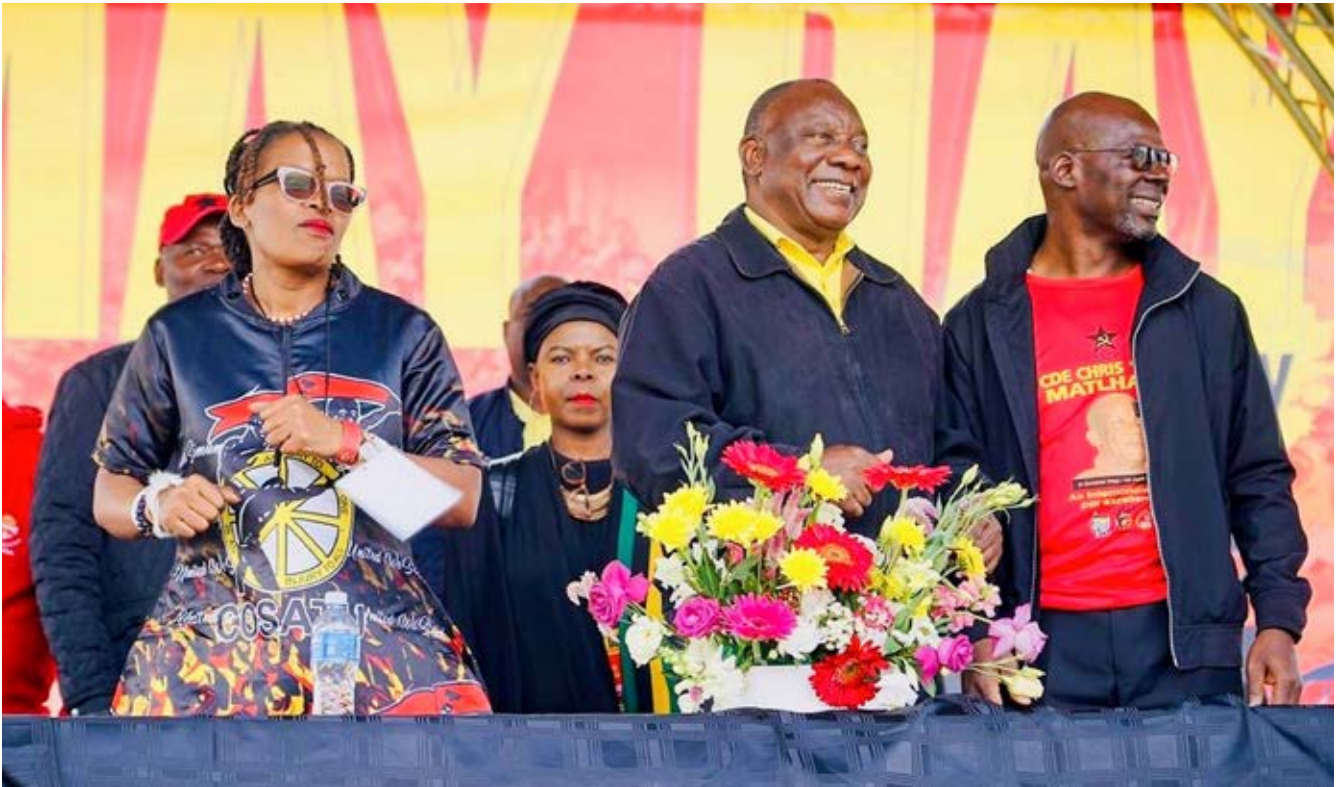
Gender-based violence and criminal-

Women in the workplace and the economy still face different forms of gender discrimination and abuse

ity in general are among the stubborn challenges that the working class needs to confront through maximum unity.

Women in the workplace and the economy still face different forms of gender discrimination and abuse, including gender-based violence, as it is still the case in other areas of societal activity. This must come to an end through the common effort of women and men as workers, as sisters and brothers and united as a class in pursuit of a non-sexist society.

In the community and elsewhere across society, general criminality has become the order of the day. This has reached a point where criminality is destroying existing investment and discouraging new investment, affecting employment creation for unemployed workers in a society ravaged by an unemployment crisis. We cannot overemphasise the importance of united action by the working class to fight crime and for a decisive state action against criminality. ★



Cosatu President Zingiswa Losi, left, called for the ANC to return to its roots as a force of the left and the working class

MAY DAY

Workers are angry

*From the address by Cosatu President Zingiswa Losi
at the national May Day rally held in Bethlehem, Free State*

We are gathered today as Cosatu and workers here in Bethlehem and at venues across South Africa to remember those workers who have paid the ultimate price in the struggle to improve the lives of the working class

We are here in our numbers from unions across all sectors of the economy, to rededicate ourselves to serve workers and to remind all employers that workers deserve, demand and expect better.

It is fitting that we are gathered here in Bethlehem on the 20th anniversary of the Saulspoort Dam tragedy, where we lost 51 members of Cosatu and SAMWU from the Northern Cape en route to celebrating May Day. We have met their families over the past few months to re-

mind ourselves that we remain as one.

Whilst mourning the painful death of these foot soldiers of the working class, we are inspired by the compassion and care that Leonard Slabbert, amongst others, showed on that fateful day to rescue the survivors. This is the solidarity that has and will make South Africa once again a nation that we can all be at home in.

April has become a month of sorrows

**The radical reconfiguration
of the Alliance must
happen now, not in the
distant future**

and heroes for South Africa. We recently commemorated the 30th anniversaries of the assassination of our beloved Chris Hani, General Secretary of the SACP and Chief of Staff of Umkhonto we Sizwe and the passing of OR Tambo, the giant of the liberation struggle and President of the ANC.

Whilst we mourn such heroes, we can only do justice to their memories if we uphold their principles in all we do. We must live by their examples in action, not slogans.

All too often we read about the domestic worker in Johannesburg who is attacked by her employer's pit bull and then struggles to access compensation or worse, dies from her injuries. Every week from Klerksdorp to Barberton we

lose a mine worker in an accident, every week from Manenberg to KwaMashu we lose a police officer in the line of duty. What then happens to their families without their breadwinners? Every day we women workers, from bank cashiers to call centre employees, are subjected to sexual harassment and gender-based violence.

As State Owned Enterprises bleed, we have seen workers at the Post Office and Petro SA being threatened with retrenchments and their salaries being slashed. Every year we see our musicians and actors die in poverty whilst we enjoy their music and movies.

During the course of Covid-19 we celebrated our essential workers, yet often these words are meaningless. Our nurses are forced to cover unfilled vacancies, our doctors are working 48-hour shifts, our prison wardens are attacked by gangs in overcrowded prisons, paramedics are threatened at gun point, our cleaners and security guards are paid little more than slave wages, our farm workers are threatened with eviction from their homes when they demand to be paid the national minimum wage.

Our economy remains fragile. Unemployment has decreased but is still too high at 42%. Load shedding, cable theft, the vandalism of railways, the deterioration of basic services, rising inflation, corruption and criminality, continue to cripple the economy and threaten the ability of workers to improve their lives and take care of their families.

Every five years workers have responded to Cosatu's call and come out in their numbers to return the ANC to office, not because they are sentimental but because they expect state power to be used to advance the interests of the working class.

Workers are angry at the deterioration of public services due to state capture and corruption. They are angry at essential services like hospitals, schools, the police and home affairs being starved of the resources and staffing they need to serve the public.

Workers are appalled by the 27-and-rising number of municipalities that routinely fail to pay their employees what is due to them.

It is unacceptable that when government is struggling to pay its employees an inflation-linked increase, a 3.8% increase is recommended for the executive.

It is beyond shameful that we have witnessed the NPA, SAPS, State Security and other law enforcement organs fail to

take the war against corruption seriously. The Guptas were allowed to disappear, as was Thabo Bester, and now we have seen the Estina corruption case dismissed by the courts. It is workers who are paying the price for corruption and yet those tasked to deal with such criminality are not fit for purpose.

This is why we say to government retain, extend and increase the SRD [Social Relief of Distress] Grant for all unemployed persons, as it is the foundation for a Basic Income Grant and one of the largest sources of relief for the poor.

This is why we expect government to reverse the ill-considered cuts to the Presidential Employment Stimulus. It needs to be increased to accommodate a million active participants by October. We cannot afford to lead an army of the unemployed.

Government and Parliament must move with speed to pass the pension amendment laws to allow struggling workers access to their pension funds by 1 March 2024. This will provide relief to millions of indebted workers.

Parliament must ensure that it passes the National Health Insurance Bill to provide access to quality healthcare for all, and the Expropriation Bill to accelerate the redistribution of land, by November 2023.

Parliament must repeal the Municipal Systems Amendment Act that denies 350 000 municipal workers their constitutional right to hold positions in a political party.

Workers have always insisted that



Rallying for victory

their struggles be advanced on all fronts and have been clear that working class struggles must be waged on the political front, in the Alliance, at Nedlac, in Parliament and in the streets.

We will not surrender the state or the Alliance to tenderpreneurs or the elite. We will insist that the ANC return to its roots as the force for the left and biased towards the working class. We will continue to support the call for the renewal of the ANC. The ANC needs to intensify the cleansing of its ranks.

We remain firm in our support of the vanguard party, the SACP, and the militant call for the building of socialism not in the future, but now. We must continue to swell the ranks of the SACP and the ANC.

The radical reconfiguration of the Alliance must happen now, not sometime in the distant future. The Alliance must be the centre of progressive change in society.

We must go to the elections in 2024, our most difficult since 1994, united and determined to defend the many gains workers have won since 1994, committed to tackle the failures and setbacks, geared to accelerate the struggles to improve the lives of the poor and ready to deliver a resounding victory for the Alliance.

We cannot afford to abandon workers when they are vulnerable to political parties that are determined to scrap our labour laws, privatise our State-Owned Enterprises and treat the state like a slush fund for their self-enrichment.

We cannot be happy when workers complain to Cosatu that their shop steward is not servicing their needs. We cannot be proud when unions ignore their own constitutions and are put under administration. We must be ashamed when we see unions destroyed by corruption and infighting.

Workers are under siege. Their only defence is Cosatu and their weapon is unity.

We must work as one as the trade union movement, irrespective of the colour of our t-shirts or where we mark our ballot papers. We must remember at all times that workers and unions are not our opponents; the employer is. We must remember that our allies are not the enemy; poverty, unemployment, exploitation and corruption are.

Our tasks are many, comrades. The challenges are daunting. The odds are great. But if we are united, determined and on the ground, then no one can stop us. Victory lies in our hands. ★

MAY DAY

Difficult times require unity

*From the message of ANC President Cyril Ramaphosa
at the national May Day rally in Bethlehem, Free State*

Workers in our country and across the world have fought over many years for the right to gather to celebrate the achievement of workers and to honour those who have championed the interests of the working class. Workers Day is also the day on which workers demonstrate their determination to take forward the struggle against exploitation and oppression.

This Workers Day is taking place at a difficult time for the country and for the working class in particular. In addition to the legacy of apartheid – of poverty and inequality – we are also confronted by the effects of a worldwide pandemic and rising fuel and food costs as a result of the Ukraine-Russia conflict.

We are still feeling the effects of a decade of state capture and under-investment in electricity, water and rail infrastructure.

Our economy, like other economies across the globe, is not performing well. The cost of living is rising and unemployment remains stubbornly high.

As a result, many of our people live in poverty and many people go to bed hungry.

Rebuilding the Alliance

Times of difficulty, almost inevitably, test the unity of our movement and it is up to us to build and preserve that unity.

Our words and deeds must strengthen the movement and the ANC commits to build and renew the Alliance, as mandated by our 55th National Conference.

We know how easy it would be to derail the National Democratic Revolution and the transformation of our nation without a strong, vibrant and functioning Alliance, working as a progressive bulwark.

We cannot achieve progress if we do not build a broader democratic movement that is rooted in communities, and that drives programmes about the issues that most affect and concern them.

The Alliance must therefore accelerate our work to ground its structures and cadres in the communities. The ANC is intensifying our Letsema campaign.

The ANC will work with its Alliance partners to develop and implement a common Alliance programme of action to address the challenges facing the people. Our common programme, based on the objectives of the NDR, will help to strengthen the Alliance relationship and advance and defend the gains of democracy and freedom broadly.

Addressing the electricity crisis

There is much to celebrate about our progress over the last 29 years. We have achieved much progress and bettered the lives of millions of people.

However, much more remains to be done.

The most pressing issue facing our country is load shedding and ensuring security of energy supply.

The electricity crisis affects the economy, safety and security, and our overall quality of life. As with most things, load shedding has the greatest impact on the poor.

We are implementing several strategies to address the electricity crisis,

**The most pressing issue
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security of energy supply**

which include improving performance at Eskom's power stations, improving the quality of coal supplied to power stations and ensuring appropriate skills, adequate funding and effective planning are put in place for maintenance.

Progress is also being made in adding new generation capacity to the grid, buying power from neighbouring countries, fast-tracking renewable projects and other measures to cover the deficit of about 6,000 MW.

Winter is almost upon us and Eskom is undertaking planned maintenance to deal with the increased demand during winter. The Alliance must support such measures by participating in a massive public awareness campaign to encourage industries and households to reduce electricity.

Eradicating poverty and creating jobs

Figures from Statistics SA show that that nearly 7.8-million people were unemployed at the end of last year. This excludes those people who had given up looking for work.

Government will therefore continue our efforts to directly and indirectly contribute to creating more and sustainable employment.

Last month, we held the 5th South Africa Investment Conference, which saw further investment commitments from South African and international companies. Over the last five years, investments have amounted to over R1.5-trillion. Much of this money has already been invested into the economy, establishing new factories, expanding production lines, building new infrastructure and creating new jobs.

The inefficient operation of South Africa's ports and railways is also holding



President Cyril Ramaphosa speaking at the national May Day rally in Bethlehem, Free State

us back.

Government is working with all stakeholders, including organised labour, to improve the overall performance of the freight logistics sector. We are establishing a National Logistics Crisis Committee to implement a comprehensive roadmap to fix the freight logistics sector.

South Africa has a very big system of social assistance and our social grants reach over 18-million people today. It is estimated that more than 2-million households receive free basic water, basic electricity and solid waste removal services.

They also act as a stimulus for the economy as a whole, increase spending in townships and rural areas and improve employment outcomes.

As per the mandate of the 55th National Conference, we are looking at options to provide basic income support for the unemployed within our fiscal constraints.

One of the most crucial tasks is to conclude our work on ensuring access to quality health care. We therefore urge public representatives to pass the National Health Insurance Bill.

Fighting crime and corruption

We have identified the fight against crime and corruption as one of the key priorities for 2023. A society is not really free if its citizens live in fear of crime and corruption or if its economic development is being held back by economic sabotage, organised crime and corruption.

Strengthening local government

Local government remains both our greatest challenge and the site where we can do the most to transform the lives of the people. The ANC is committed to professionalising the public service.

Our conduct will not contribute to the chaos and instability that loose and opportunistic coalitions have hitherto brought onto the people. Such chaos and instability undermine service delivery and effective management.

We are therefore looking at a range of measures to bring certainty and stability to municipalities affected by coalitions. Some of these measures would ideally be enacted into legislation and apply to all coalitions regardless of the parties involved, whilst others would involve internal guidelines regulating the conduct of ANC representatives entering into coalition agreements.

2024 national and provincial elections

We will be going to elections in about a year's time. We will be asking the people to once again put their trust in the ANC.

This will be an election unlike any other since the advent of democracy. It will require great effort, dedication and dis-

cipline. It will require unity within our movement and within the Alliance. This unity must be based on respect, democratic practice and an agreed programme of action.

A better Africa and a better world

We remain committed to fostering peace and stability on our continent. We call on the African Union (AU) to urgently encourage the establishment of civilian transitional structures that must work towards establishing institutions of democratic civilian rule.

South Africa and other countries in Africa and the Global South have come under pressure to take a particular view on the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Like many other countries, we have taken a non-aligned position and have consistently called for a peaceful resolution of the conflict through dialogue.

South Africa will continue to assert its right to freely conduct our international relations according to our own principles and interests.

South Africa will be hosting the BRICS Summit. We will use this important platform to advance our developmental objectives as a country and a continent.

At all important moments in our history, workers have been at the forefront. Now, we once again look to the workers of South Africa to provide leadership, and to unite all our people in building a just society, an inclusive economy and a better life for all. ★

**The fight against
crime and corruption
is one of the key
priorities for 2023**



May Day shouldn't just be about celebrating labour rights but building a socialist movement of workers and the poor

MAY DAY

May Day must better the lives of workers and society

Workers in South Africa face a growing erosion of their democratic gains. We must intensify the fightback to defend jobs and rights, writes Solly Phetoe



On May Day the working class and working people reflect on the revolutionary path that we have travelled in the struggle for a National Democratic Revolution (NDR). In 1986, Cosatu organised a May Day stay-away across the country as part of the international centenary celebration of Workers' Day. The campaign had more than one and a half million workers and community activists participating.

Some of Cosatu's key demands included the recognition of May Day as an official day of workers and the adoption

of international conventions on worker standards and rights. That campaign was also supported by several organisations – ranging from faith-based, civics, students, shopkeepers, retail vendors and taxi drivers organisations – all heeding the call for the stay-away.

May Day became a rallying campaign

The demands of workers are the demands of society

for the liberation struggle against apartheid. It heightened the mobilisation of workers. 1994 was a victory for workers and the oppressed. A democratic gain was the recognition of 1 May as an official Workers' Day. 1995 saw the promulgation of the 1995 Labour Relations Act (LRA) – a victory for the struggle of the working class.

On this day we remember our fallen heroes who sacrificed their lives for our freedom. On 31 March 2023, workers gathered at Curries Fountain, Durban, to celebrate 50 years since the 1973 Durban Workers' Strikes. The strikes had spread across the entire province, with more

than 100000 workers taking part, affecting more than 100 factories.

We must remember that this federation comes from this revolutionary history of workers' struggles. We must commemorate the 52 municipal worker who died during workers day in 2003, when their bus crashed at Saoulspoort Dam, near Bethlehem.

We must also recall that 32,7% of economically active South Africans are without work. A growing number of working-class households are losing their properties due to the increase in the repo rate by the South African Reserve Bank (SARB). The country is locked in an unprecedented crisis of load shedding, seemingly with no end in sight. The energy transition agenda is taking an unjust trajectory.

The National Treasury is in cahoots with capital invested in so-called 'renewables' and Independent Power Producers (IPPS), pushing a private sector-led unjust transition. The proposed Just Energy Transition Investment Plan (JET-IP) wants government and the people of South Africa to take all the debt risks associated with the transition, while private sector renewable players take all the profits.

Workers in South Africa face a growing erosion of our democratic gains, since 2020 employers and government have consistently been undermining the collective bargaining in the Public Service Co-ordinating Bargaining Council (PSCBC) and the private sector. The intransigence of the Department of Public Service as an employer has emboldened private sector employers, with Makro (owned by Walmart) utilising arm-twisting tactics, refusing wage negotiations with workers and dismissing more than 600 workers, who participated in a protected strike.

This happens in the midst of significant declines in trade union density, with only between 24-26% of workers in formal employment being organised into trade unions.

Cosatu, at its 14th National Congress, resolved to build the federation and its affiliates. The congress also resolved to build unity among workers, which means working with trade unions and workers, even outside of our federation. These resolutions correspond with the programme of the SACP adopted at its 15th National Congress, which is for "building a powerful socialist movement of workers and the poor."

We have committed to building our

federation and our affiliates through strengthening worker education, building the capacity of our shop stewards to be effective in representing our members.

The unity of Cosatu and our affiliates is sacrosanct. If we are to advance struggles for the benefit of workers, a united Cosatu and the unity of all our affiliates cannot be compromised. We have made some progress: workers increasingly demand unity in action, as employers, both in the private sector and lately even the public sector increasingly undermine the democratic labour relations regime, collective bargaining and even workers' rights to organise.

The demands of workers are the demands of society. The majority of workers, through their wages, support extended household and family networks, especially with such high levels of unemployment. Our struggle for better wages and safer working conditions must also resonate with working-class community struggles for services. That is why Cosatu must work with the SACP to strengthen the links between the factory floor and

the community. We must utilise the Party more for political and worker education to ensure cadre development among all our members, especially our shop stewards.

This May Day must be used to track the record of history of celebrations of Workers' Day in South Africa and how we can use May Day to change the lives and better the conditions of workers. Can we say that since 1994 workers lives with their families have improved? Can we say our laws that govern workplace are improving? Is the NDR changing the lives of the working class or is it continuing to oppress and exploit workers and the poor?

The building of a socialist movement of workers and the poor can ensure the improvement of their lives.

Our struggles are not only limited to the workplace. Our members and shop stewards must lead campaigns to hold elected officials accountable in our communities. We must mobilise communities to support the social economy programmes of the SACP, such as the financial sector campaign, as well as a cooperative economy. We must intensify our struggles in defence of jobs, our rights to collective bargaining and to advance the struggle for a living wage. ★

Cde Phetoe is the General Secretary of the Congress of South African Trade Unions

Mobilise communities to support the social economy programmes of the SACP

Umsebenzi

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Workers' Day 2023



Workers across the country rallied on 1 May, combining celebration with robust protest against efforts to erode hard-won labour rights, including collective bargaining. Right: ANC Secretary-General Fikile Mbalula (centre) joins Cosatu General Secretary Solly Phetoe (right) at Lily Mine, Barberton, Mpumalanga, where three miners lost their lives in 2016 due to lax safety conditions.





Battle ready: workers have had enough of austerity, retrenchments and mounting pressure by capital to privatise State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs). May Day saw intensified calls for unity to fight the government's neoliberal macroeconomic fiscal and monetary policies that have left many struggling to survive



ALL MAY DAY PHOTOS IN THIS ISSUE COURTESY OF COSATU

CHRIS MATLHAKO

SACP mourns the loss of our former Deputy General Secretary, Chris “Che” Matlhako

*From the tribute paid to Cde Chris at his funeral
by SACP General Secretary Solly Mapaila*

Greetings and condolences to the family of our late comrade Chris Companero Che Matlhako, especially to his mother, brothers, children and wife; the entire Matlhako, Sebeela and Masoleng families and all their relatives; and the people of Galeshewe who shaped his character and resolve.

Cde Chris refused to be granted any honours from the province and the democratic government that he fought so hard to bring about because he feared the ANC would sully the name of the Party and contaminate his humble revolutionary track record. He was unhappy with many things, particularly here in the province. Please do find time to reflect on his concerns and constructive criticisms.

To the international community that he served so well with diligence and courage: thank you for your messages of solidarity and support. We are especially touched by the many comrades abroad, the Communist Party of China, and the Communist Party of Cuba with whom Chris shared a special relation and hold their award through ICAP. He was the General Secretary of the Friends of Cuba Society (FOCUS).

Cde Che had a special bond with the youth – he always felt that the youth especially those from the YCL would have “to fasten the first button correctly” in order to cultivate core socialist values early in life and give better service to humanity. He believed that the values of the youth today will determine the kind of the future society we will live in. He feared the youth being forever lost in the spiralling vortex of capitalist greed, selfishness and consumerism. Please make sure that his legacy never dies.

Special gratitude to his caregivers

To his mother and family for giving him selflessly to the people of South Africa and our liberation movement.

First his health care provider Ms Mahumapelo – re a leboga mme.

Let me thank Ausi Molieli (Mosadi) for taking care of our comrade during his most vulnerable period. For providing selfless love and devotion. We are very thankful for the massive support you gave to him. As you know he was deeply affected by not being able to fully help you when you lost your dear mother.

Professor Brian Nakedi – your friendship and intellectual partnership with comrade Chris was immeasurable. Thank you for your humanity and for being there right up to the end.

Comrade Vuyiswa Lwana, from our head office, for her special devotion to all our comrades and for being an example of caring for others.

Comrade Norman Shushu for his care and devoted friendship until the end.

Cde Che not only received care from others, he provided many comrades with mentorship and even counselling. He led the career pathing of comrades, some now working in government. He was entrusted with people’s problems because he was trustworthy and did not take kindly to betrayal. Sometimes he came across as unforgiving – but only because he disdained dishonesty.

A people’s hero

Cde Chris was humble, the epitome of a selfless servant of the



"A humble servant of the people, a courageous communist to the end, a devoted internationalist"

people, a people's hero who gallantly confronted the apartheid regime and its surrogates in the struggle for freedom, a communist to the end and a devoted internationalist par excellence, a people's hero and man of the grassroots masses. He was a disciplined cadre who avoided conflict when necessary and yet was never ambivalent on adherence to Party discipline. He never held grudges but was clear and very firm against truancy and deceitfulness.

He was a comrade of higher ethics and of communist morale and values. He always carried the lofty ideas of communism in the midst of social and economic inequalities and promoted an example of selflessness as a weapon of ideology against decadence and greed. His main weakness was his love of Cuban cigars.

I met comrade Chris in 1996 when working at the SACP headquarters and assisting the province towards its relaunch. He was responsible for my well being and abode. I worked

with him for over 25 years. During this time I never heard him insult or undermine a comrade. He was a peacemaker and a builder.

After the relaunch of the Northern Cape structure he was elected the Provincial Secretary and later elected to the SACP Central Committee at the 10th Party Congress and soon joined the SACP Head Office as a full time member of the CC with responsibility for international relations.

Chris the internationalist

He was building FOCUS as a critical tool of solidarity with the people of Cuba and against the inhumane American economic blockade of Cuba.

He was nicknamed "Che" by his comrades for taking forward the heavy mantle of perhaps the greatest internationalist of our time, Ernesto Che Guevara de la Sana. He took this name seriously and never disappointed – he was our own Compañero Che, as the former Cuban Ambassador Comrade Marcus would always call him.

Fighting against capitalism and for socialism

Chris understood that today's dominant form of capitalism, neoliberalism, cannot be the solution to the crisis facing humanity. So government must ditch this rotten system that has become a disease afflicting the liberation forces.

He understood that whilst capitalism has rapidly increased the development of productive forces and the rate of profit, it has not decreased the rate of poverty and human exploitation. On the contrary, these have increased leading to more misery, deprivation and desperation amongst the majority in society whilst the minority who have captured the the state continue to exploit the majority.

The capitalists today have embarked on an investment crisis and are hoarding huge resources in the midst of a catastrophic human crisis of poverty, starvation and high cost of living – what we call the living crisis.

New types of financial firms have taken centre stage in capitalist accumulation and control like the hedge funds, for example, Bridgewater Associates and private equity funds like BlackRock. They do not intervene in the world crisis except to protect their so-called markets.

Private equity firms like BlackRock and their private markets controlled \$9.8-trillion worth of assets in 2022. The derivatives funds – a form of fictitious and speculative capital are now worth \$183-trillion in 'market' value but have a \$632-trillion notional value – more than five times higher than total global GDP.

Why should the world be poor with such huge resources circulating to make more billionaires and now soon trillionaires when billions of people are suffering? This is one reason capitalism sucks.

World Peace Council, IMCWP and Africa Left Network Forum

Cde Chris devoted himself to work for world peace and against imperialist wars driven by the US and its European allies. He fought against their military tools used to oppress other countries, cause wars and destabilise the world and exploit the mineral and other resources of controlled countries. He fought against these merchants of death his whole life.

To respond to this he was instrumental in forming the Africa Left Network Forum, together with comrade Lucian →

Segame who became its first coordinator.

He was anti-xenophobic. He served in the World Peace Council and the working group of the International Meeting of Communists and Workers Parties (IMCWP) to deal with the challenges facing the working class of the world and against capitalist domination and imperialism.

To sum up his internationalism we may to him and to his family say that here lies a man who gave his youth and entire adult life to the sick people of the world who had no medicines and access to doctors in a world that has commodified health services, he devoted his precious life to the children of the world who suffer malnutrition whilst the rich die of over-eating and cholesterol and throw away food in order to fix prices to increase their profits, he committed his only dearest possession – his life to the poor so they can live in dignity with access to social security, nutritious food, decent housing, clean running water, free and compulsory quality education for their children and electricity to meet the demands of modern life and improve the quality of their lives.

He taught us that true revolution cannot succeed unless it has achieved decolonisation, is anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist.

Our tasks to remember his role as we pick up his fighting spear:

- We should renew our commitment and devotion to serve the people wholeheartedly and selflessly without expecting anything in return like Cde Chris did;
- We should recommit ourselves to build an all-round independent Communist Party of the working class, committed to strengthen its ties and joint work with its allies to achieve the main tasks of the revolution today – to end hunger and poverty amongst the people, to end homelessness, lack of water and sanitation and to end load shedding and stop unnecessary and unacceptable lame excuses.

es. But be aware that that we are not a party of the ANC or the Alliance, important as the ANC and the Alliance are;

- The Party cannot be a vassal of bourgeois factions dominating the ANC who typically only embrace and value its usefulness and ideas when in crisis but denigrate and turn it into nothingness after every victory. That time is over;
- So we should reject with disdain the inference that we are a league of the ANC, though with due respect to the leagues because they derive their existence from the ANC, but we derive our existence from the working class. We should reject blackmail and outright lies and innuendo about us;
- We must build grassroots mass organisations and movements of the working class to build organs of people’s power and advance alternative ideas of solidarity, empathy and humanism, not of capitalist greed, hatred and exploitation;
- Let’s build a strong anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist revolutionary Party of the working class as a living tribute to our dear Cde Chris ‘Che’ Matlhako. As Fidel Castro would say “All and everything for the revolution and nothing against it”;
- We need to drive a radical and unapologetic revolutionary agenda to rapidly transform our country for the better – no excuses.

To comrade Chris we wish to quote Nikolai Ostrovsky summarising a life well lived: “Man’s dearest possession is life, it is given to him to live only but once. He must live it to the fullest so as not to suffer torturing regrets of petty past that one day when dying he might say, all my life all my strength was given to the greatest cause in the world, the liberation of mankind”.

You have fulfilled the true meaning of life. Hamba Kahle Mkhonto!

May his undying fighting spirit live long!
Forward to socialism !



Cde Chris Matlhako: A brief struggle history

Cde Christopher Tshepo Matlhako was born on 21 October 1965. He grew up in area Number 5 in Galeshewe, Kimberley.

He became politically active at school in the mid-1980s. He was expelled from his school and enrolled at another. He was active in the Galeshewe Student Organisation (GASO) and Galeshewe Youth Organisation (GAYO).

He was seen by the security police as a regular “misfit and trouble maker” and was often arrested by them. When in detention with others, he often led political debates.

He studied at Fort Hare and the University of Western Cape and received an MA in Political Studies. He was active in the South African National Students Congress (SANSCO) and other structures.

He also became active in the United Democratic Front (UDF) area committee for the Northern Cape and was a delegate to the first National General Council of the UDF in April 1985.

He was also active the Release Mandela Campaign, the One Million Signature Campaign, civic and other organisations.

When the ANC and SACP were unbanned, he became

active in them. He was the first provincial secretary of the Northern Cape SACP and was elected to the SACP Central Committee in 2002 and served as the SACP 2nd Deputy General Secretary from 2017 to 2022 and was the Secretary for International Relations. He continued to serve in that role as a Central Committee member.

Cde Chris played a major role in many international solidarity structures and campaigns, including the Swaziland Solidarity Network (SSN), Friends of Cuba Society (FOCUS), Zimbabwe Solidarity Forum (ZSF), Free Burma Campaign (FBC), the Palestine solidarity movement, the Kurdish struggle and the Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela. He helped build the Western Sahara Solidarity Forum.

He represented the SACP at many international forums, often serving in their executive structures. He was particularly active in the International Meeting of Communist and Workers’ Parties.

In 2019, a collection of his articles entitled *Thinking Che* was published.

Cde Chris will be missed by the SACP and many progressive organisations in South African and globally.



CHRIS MATLHAKO

A revolutionary internationalist for our times

Lehlohonolo Kennedy Mahlatsi pays tribute to the internationalism and outstanding example of Chris Matlahko



I first met Cde Chris 33 years ago. He was a disciplined and dedicated student activist at the University of the Western Cape. For Cde Chris no work was small, no work was unimportant. His death is a tragic loss to the entire liberation movement in South Africa and the progressive Left forces the world over. He belongs to the generation of death-defying young lions who heeded the call by the then ANC President Cde OR Tambo to render apartheid ungovernable and unworkable. It was this generation that gave rise to infinite hope as the creators of a bright future.

This generation of young lions deepened their political grasp of the situation in our country, the continent and internationally. They understood that they were a part of a huge and invincible army of the anti-imperialist world, dedicated to peace, freedom, and social justice. This made Cde Matlahko to grasp that the situation in the world today is disturbed and fraught with great danger due to the aggressive, expansionist and war-mongering policy of imperialism. To honour the living memory of Cde Matlahko, the youth must follow the course of international events carefully, based on internationalism, make a correct assessment of the situation, draw conclusions and tasks, know how to cope intelligently and skilfully with the plots of US imperialism.

Comrade Chris contributed immensely to the struggle for socialism and international solidarity. This includes, inter alia: the campaign to end the blockade against Cuba, solidarity with the struggling masses of Palestine, Eswatini and Western Sahara. For Cde Chris, internationalism is the need to combine the national and international struggles — each as the basis for the other. In him was personified the indispensable unity of national and international forces which characterises our struggle for a better world.

The basis of Cde Matlahko's internationalism was the Communist Manifesto where Marx and Engels declared that workers have nothing to lose but their chains, they have a world to win – “Workers of all Countries, Unite!” His commitment

IN LOVING MEMORY

CDE CHRIS "Che" MATLHAKO

MEMORIAL SERVICE

Date : Friday 28th April 2023
Time : 12:00pm (CAT)
Venue : Northern Cape Theatre, Kimberley, South Africa

FUNERAL SERVICE

Date : Sunday 30th April 2023
Time : 06:30am
(Family Home - No. 4138 Ncoco Street, Galeshewe, Kimberley)
<https://maps.google.com/?q=28°42'20.31524°43'19.81E>
07:00am - Mithah Seperepere
Convention Centre, Kimberley
07:00am - Mithah Seperepere Convention Centre, Kimberley
<https://maps.google.com/?q=28.715395,24.738678>
The service will proceed to the Westend private cemetery at 11h00.
Communist regards

HAMBA KAHLE MKHONTO

to internationalism was inspired by Lenin's *The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution*, in which he observed: “There is one, and only one, kind of real internationalism, and this is—working wholeheartedly for the development of the revolutionary movement and the revolutionary struggle in one's own country, and supporting (by propaganda, sympathy, and material aid) this struggle, this, and only this, line, in every country without exception.”

Comrade Matlhako's outstanding qualities epitomised what Lenin cogently observed that "it is not easy to be an internationalist in deeds during a frightful imperialist war. Such people are few; but it is on such people alone that the future of socialism depends. They alone are the leaders of the masses, and not the corrupters of the masses."

Cde Chris left a body of work and thought. Some of them culminated in the compilation of his work - *Thinking Che*. The idea was also partly inspired by El Comandant Fidel Castro's 'Reflections' - which are much more engaging. In his writings, Cde Matlhako sought to express his opinions about the construction of socialism and a better world, drawing from his work in the Party and various roles and tasks he undertook both locally and internationally.

He observed that the urban and rural masses of our continent must play a leading role if the objectives of the African Revolution are to be realised: sustainable development, defence of sovereignty and independence, unity, an end to poverty and underdevelopment, and an alternative equitable economic system.

He called on peace-loving anti-imperialists to fight to unravel the lies and distortions and mobilise for genuine world peace and respect for international law and multilateralism. He abhorred political thuggery and disruptive behaviour as

a strategy designed to advance desired objectives. He also warned against the danger of Trotskyism and ultra-leftist tendencies, which border on abstract formulas and pseudo-revolutionary concepts.

His acute understanding of working class internationalism was informed by his subscription to the laws of dialectics which provide the necessary principles for materialist understanding of the real world. Cde Che will be sorely missed. Throughout his life he took the path of serving people where they needed him most.

We are deeply grieved over his death. Now we are all commemorating him, which shows how profoundly his spirit inspires everyone. We must all learn the spirit of absolute selflessness from him. A man's ability may be great or small, but if he has this spirit, he is already noble-minded and pure, a man of moral integrity and above vulgar interests, a man who is of value to the people.

That is why today, when we remember Cde Chris Matlhako, his memory gives us greater enthusiasm and firm resolution to bring victory for socialism and world peace near. We must pursue national and class aspects of our struggle, as he did, in the true spirit of internationalism. ★

Cde Mahlatsi is an SACP PEC member



Cdes Solly Mapaila and Norman Shushu laying wreaths at the grave of Cde Chris Matlhako

CHE MATLHAKO

A brother, a friend, a revolutionary

This is a shortened version of Cde Norman Shushu's speech at Cde Matlhako's funeral

It is indeed a very sad moment to say good bye to Cde Che Matlhako. We once more express our heartfelt condolences to the Matlhako, Sebeela and Masoleng families, his children and relatives .

When comrade Che became sick we all thought that he was soon going to recover. We never thought in our wildest dreams that he would not be with us today.

We say with pride and admiration: fare thee well, companero Che, you have made a huge and significant yet humble contribution to the lives of ordinary people – the working class and the poor, in particular. You are among the brightest stars in the galaxy of the revolution, you are part of the motor that propelled the revolution to move in this protracted struggle for socialism.

We can proudly declare for the world to know that this son of the African soil selflessly dedicated his whole life to the struggle of the people of the whole world to bring about a better and more humane world order.

He pioneered the establishment of the Galeshwewe students organisation and the Galeshwewe youth organisation.

Through these formations which were affiliated to the UDF (United Democratic Front), Cde Chris and other young activists responded to the clarion call in 1985 by the President of the ANC in exile, Cde Oliver Tambo, to make South Africa ungovernable.

He believed in building a strong people's organisation, the Alliance and all progressive organisations

He taught us that the Party must be intimately linked to the masses and be guided by the masses – absorbing from them the great ideas that will serve as a loadstar for the advancement of the national democratic revolution.

Cde Che taught us to build a party that has the capacity to strictly apply its discipline in keeping with democratic centralism - not a lacklustre free for all organisation

A party that is permanently open to constructive criticism and self-criticism.

And in building the organisation of the Party in this prov-



Cde Norman Shushu addressing mourners at the funeral of Cde Chris 'Che' Matlhako

ince, companero Che prioritised the building of a repository of cadreship, informed by the analysis of the concrete material conditions peculiar to the Northern Cape.

He impressed upon us that cadres of the party must carry out our dynamic tasks of being in contact with the people at all times, transmitting concrete guidelines and marching in the front ranks "Communist cadres to the front!"

He emphasised that party cadres must be first in study, first in work, first in revolutionary enthusiasm and first in sacrifice; and that party cadres must be purer and more humane than others at all material times.

Just like companero Che Guevara, companero Che Matlhako understood that revolutionaries are guided by great feelings of love.

It was love of humanity, the desire to combat the distress of the proletariat, the desire to fight poverty, injustice, suffering and all the exploitation of the proletariat that gave rise to Marxism.

Cde Chris, like other revolutionaries, believed that a Marxist must be the best, the fullest, the most complete of human beings.

He gave up his hours of rest, his personal tranquillity and comfort, his family, but was never a stranger to the warmth of human touch!

I think it would not be an exaggeration to say his international solidarity work was unparalleled, linking with all solidarity groups across the globe.

In his memory let us build a strong SACP, COSATU and ANC. Let us also build a strong socialist movement of the working class and the poor as well as a strong pro-peace and anti-imperialist international movement .

May the revolutionary spirit of Cde Chris 'Che' Matlhako, the radical anti-imperialist intellectual, the proletarian internationalist, the grassroots activist live on! ★

Cde Shushu is an SACP Central Committee member and former Northern Cape SACP Provincial Secretary

CHRIS HANI

Remembering Chris Hani – still waiting for the truth after 30 years!

Tinyiko Ngobeni details the wide range of activities and events to mark Chris Hani Month this year, the 30th anniversary of the assassination of the SACP leader



2023 was not going to be just another year, as it marks 30 years since the brutal assassination of the former SACP General Secretary and uMkhonto we Sizwe's chief of Staff, Cde Chris Hani. Following the ConCourt ruling on the release of Chris Hani's assassin, Janus Walusz, we launched 135 days of activism towards 10 April 2023.

Our provinces were expected to roll-out mass campaigns in responding to the judgement and further consolidate the ground. The Alliance was able to launch the campaign through the national people's march to Kgosi Mampuru II Prison, where Walusz was kept prior to being paroled.

Provinces then managed to take forward the campaign whilst during Chris Hani month, in April, the programme was intensified around the need to:

- Strengthen and renew the Alliance;
- Better the lives of the people through radical interventions;
- Defend, deepen, and advance the National Democratic Revolution in the interests of the working class;
- Intensify the independent voice of the Party in our communities in our strive for socialism;

- In line with what comrade Chris Hani represented and stood for, affirm the Alliance as a political centre of power in advancing our revolutionary agenda;
- Enhance the reconfiguration and renewal of the Alliance through activism on the ground;
- Mobilise and coordinate progressive forces to defend the revolution towards the 2024 general elections through a reconfigured alliance;
- Drive the struggle against the rising cost of living, for the introduction of the NHI, to address housing backlogs and ensure safety in our communities, the struggle for land, food and

work as envisaged by the Red October Campaign;

- The right to life for communists campaign. The ongoing discussion on the SACP, state, popular power and electoral options may escalate attacks on communists.

Chris Hani month was launched on 2 April. On 6 April, we established an online petition to muster support in calling for the Ministry of justice to reopen the inquest into Hani's death.

Noting the response from the public, many South Africans have not found closure on this matter. Taking highlights or key message from Mama Limpho Hani,

during the 30th commemorative event held in Ekurhuleni she said, "I will not stop mourning my husband as long as the truth has not been told".

There is no doubt that the family has yet to find closure and unfortunately the erroneous judgement delivered by Chief Justice Raymond Zondo has not only reopened the wounds but has seemed to kill Chris Hani again.

The Chris Hani Inquest Signature Campaign does not mean





Communist activists Hlengiwe Nkonyne (left) and Tenanile Mngomezula (centre) at the Chris Hani 30th anniversary commemoration, held on 10 April at the Thomas Nkobi memorial cemetery, Boksburg.

that we are not considering the legal route to demand the inquest. Our provinces and Alliance structures have since the main activity held various events in honour and memory of comrade Chris. Some of the key activities included but not limited to:

- Community Service Campaign - Fighting crime and violence in our communities;
- Campaign against abuse of the courts to pursue class interests against the majority of South Africans. All our districts managed to organise pickets at various magistrate courts across the country;
- Fighting hunger through seed planting campaigns and the establishment of local food gardens. We call this the 30/30 concept, where our structures were expected to at least plant and donate about 30 food gardens.;
- Through engagements with and lobbying of other structures, NEHAWU launched the Public Service Cam-

paign, which included fighting against corruption, maladministration, and mismanagement of state resources, taking the fight against privatisation and outsourcing of services and advocating for the full implementation of the NHI;

- Dealing with service delivery problems that bedevil working-class communities. This included campaigns on the provision of water, cleaning our townships and towns, and other related basic services to our people;
- Right to Work Campaign - elevating the fight against retrenchments;
- Reaching out to a broad range of organisations and progressive forces as

part of building a powerful socialist movement of the workers and poor.

The SACP owes the people of this country and the working class in particular a selfless attitude to better their lives and conditions. Just like the historical popular Zulu song, that said, *uHani a'ngalila uma esibona sinje*, meaning Cde Hani can cry if he sees us in this way. The neo-liberal offensive and abject poverty our people find themselves in, was a living reality of a need to take a paradigm shift in how we are dealing with working class struggles.

In honour of Cde Chris Hani, let us reconfigure our Alliance and together, build a powerful socialist movement of the workers and poor. ★

We owe the people of this country a selfless attitude to better their lives and conditions

Cde Ngobeni is a full-time SACP Central Committee member, Assistant Secretary for Organising and Campaigns and a former National Secretary of the Young Communist League of South Africa

DATA EXPLOITATION

How can we stop surveillance capitalism?

Thabile Lenkwane surveys the murky world of big business manipulation of our personal data



We all require certain types of social interaction, such as talking about our lives and learning about others' lives, exchanging information and gossip, making new friends, keeping in touch with family members, conducting business transactions, organising social events and being invited to them, buying and selling, and organising and attending social gatherings. It would be impossible to meet these needs without the use of platforms such as Facebook, Google or Microsoft.

Surveillance capitalists run the most popular messaging and email services, as well as the most popular platforms for sharing images, videos, and personal news, as well as the most popular internet browsers and phone and computer operating systems. If you don't use Facebook, others won't invite you to as many events as they might otherwise. You haven't seen the funny video that everyone else is raving about if you don't use YouTube, which is owned by Google. We would be unable to meet our social needs if we didn't have access to these sites.

For commercial advantage, surveillance capitalism analyses individuals' online use, location, and social media use. Then, huge monopolies create vast

user profiles, which they sell to marketers and others for targeted marketing and other objectives. We are no longer persons under capitalism, but rather valuable data suppliers.

Surveillance capitalism has been exacerbated by the internet and digital technology. Facebook, Google and Amazon are experts at collecting and analysing user data in order to generate more targeted and successful advertising campaigns than earlier methods. Surveillance capitalism infringes on privacy and liberty. These monopolies obtain enormous amounts of user data without authorisation and exploit it to violate privacy rights and influence public opinion. Businesses profit from our opinions because they may sell our personal information.

Surveillance capitalism affects South Africa as well as many other countries. South Africa has a high and rising percentage of internet users. According to research, 41.19-million South Africans will be regular internet users by 2022, compared to 3.6-million in 2010.

Facebook boldly proclaims that it is "free and always will be", and the majority of other social networking platforms, internet browsers, email programs, and search engines are likewise free. Surveillance capitalists do not pay individuals to use their services in the same way that



industrial capitalists do. Yet, the absence of monetary payment does not imply the absence of a transaction. Users exchange their personal data for access.

Users cannot use the services and platforms they require unless they give up crucial rights to their own data, just as employees cannot be paid unless they labour. Surveillance capitalists exploit user data to create "user profile information" (UPI). "The product of this process likewise belongs to [the capitalist], just like the wine that derives from the fermenting process that took place in his cellar," as Marx famously wrote in Volume 1 of *Capital*.

How much does it cost Google to send one extra email from a Gmail address? How much does it cost Facebook to create a new account? Almost nothing. Surveillance capitalists, on the other hand, can create more accurate forecasts with each new user and piece of data, making their behavioural future goods more lucrative to offer. Furthermore, when more individuals use a platform, the network effect makes it more interesting to others. This provides surveillance capitalists with additional consumers, data,



and market power. As a result, the value that surveillance capitalists derive from a new user is likely to exceed the cost of providing platforms to them. This means that surveillance capitalism enterprises are likely to profit handsomely.

Marx argues that workers are cut off from their ability to work meaningfully (alienation), the things they make, and their bosses. Under surveillance capitalism, people are cut off from their actions, the results of those actions and the people on whom they depend. Just like workers have to sell their ability to work as a commodity (labour power), users turn their actions (every click, like, message, and movement) into the commodity of data. As commodities, both labour power and data are valued by the market and not by what workers and users think of them. But both the ability to work and social behaviour are filled with meaning and closely tied to the self.

Surveillance capitalism violates identity theft laws by violating privacy. Users may not know or consent to the exploitation of their personal data.

Another way for the government to help would be to force surveillance capi-

talists to let users choose not to have their data collected, without making any services dependent on the user choosing to participate. This would solve the problem of users “voluntarily” handing over their data, even though they have little choice if their needs are to be met. In fact, it seems like they would have no reason to do so at all.

In the case of South Africa, the government has put in place two procedures to safeguard personal data from being acquired by massive monopolies like Google and Facebook. The Protection of Personal Information Act (PoPI) is a good example. Its main goal is to make individuals aware of data privacy and to require them to sign consent forms before their personal information is disclosed. Yet, we may still ask whether corporations or people are abiding by these regulations and whether there are any penalties that these monopolies may face if they do not.

How can we stop surveillance capitalism if privacy laws won't stop it? Users could use the same tactics as workers in industrial capitalism by forming “data unions” like trade unions, bargaining

together for better treatment and being ready to “strike” from using platforms to get it. The “data as labour” movement as coined by Arrietina Ibarra in 2017, which wants something like wages for the data we produce online, shows how this could be done.

But there are limits to this plan. The best it can do is give people a better deal under surveillance capitalism, with less exploitation alienation and accumulation. Also, seeing a person's data as something they own, like property or work, hides the social nature of the process by which it creates value and could lead to unfair redistribution.

All of this will require the Party to teach South Africans more about its ideas and make sure that all kinds of exploitation are stopped. This is because capital is always reinventing them. Because of this, the Party should also be at the forefront of fighting all the places where capital drives exploitation and tries to make money by using the poor and working class against their will. ★

Cde Lenkwane is a member of the YCLSA National Committee

MOVEMENT-BUILDING

A better world is possible

The will for renewal and to forge a new front for progressive change exists, but much more needs to be done, writes Oupa Bodibe



As memories of the worst of apartheid and colonialism recede and as the weight of the current challenges hangs heavily, tomorrow might seem not only distant but a hollow promise. Opponents of the National Democratic Revolution want us to believe that the legacy of uneven development in South Africa is nothing but the product of the ANC's misrule over the past 30 years. We are daily bombarded by a narrative that things were working until the ANC stuffed up everything! Not far is the sublime message that blacks cannot be trusted to run a modern, complex society such as South Africa.

To suggest that all is well is to deny the daily reality of load shedding, mass unemployment, poverty and the widening gap between the rich and the poor. It is also to deny that poverty and unemployment disproportionately affect black people, African women and black youth.

Faced with these two competing narratives how are we to assess Freedom Day in 2023? Should we accept the doomsday analysis that all is lost and we are just in a long memorial service to put to rest the last vestiges of the promise of what was once a promising ANC-led project? Or should we construct a narrative that both accepts the momentous challenges facing South Africa, some caused by strategic errors on the part of the ANC-led movement, while forging new ways of doing that can turn the situation around? Revolutionaries accept the latter approach – to fully accept the truth, dissect the causes and forge a new direction under the new conditions.

It is the latter that revolutionaries should try to do as honestly as possible,

accepting that there are no clear-cut answers or easy solutions. This requires a new link with the masses of our people to tap into their creative energies as real participants in their own liberation rather than as mere recipients of services. It cannot also be a return to restoring the ANC's hegemony without a change in policy direction, political practice and leadership accountability. It is about fashioning a political ethos of solidarity across race, class, gender and other divides and shift the balance of power in favour of people-centred, people-driven developmental practices.

A measured appraisal of the past 29 years of democracy will recognise both the achievements and the enduring legacy of the past. It was always a difficult proposition that the legacy of colonialism and apartheid could be eradicated in one generation. The 1994 moment did not terminate the struggle but qualitatively changed the conditions for the execution of the struggle.

A democratically elected government was put in place to set the building blocks for a democratic, non-racial and non-sexist South Africa. Creating a unified country on the basis of non-racialism, non-sexism and equality before the law was a momentous victory over the balkanisation wrought by colonial and apartheid government.

To redistribute assets, incomes and opportunities to give millions a dignified existence was nothing short of remarkable. The frontiers of freedom have been expanded and South Africa is a vibrant, often chaotic but still open society. This political space ought to be defended and further widened to benefit not only the elites but a broader section of our society.

However, corruption has undermined the capacity and sovereignty of the state to drive a pro-poor developmental agenda. Corruption has its roots in the 1990s but became worse in the recent past. Corruption explains only some of the factors that have weakened the state and slowed down progress.

Untransformed and brutal capitalism in South Africa has also militated against far-reaching reindustrialisation and economic development. A narrow pursuit of a market-centred policies have left the entrenched power of capital unchallenged. This was built on the false logic that South Africa has a thriving free enterprise system rather than a highly concentrated economy in which a few big companies leverage their inherited power to extract profit with minimum reinvestment in productive activities. Unless this economic reality is reconfigured the system will continue to reproduce albeit under conditions of formal but meaningless equality.

The inclination and the will to birth a renewal exists but deserves more work. Renewal will have to be fought for, worked for and built from below and above. The multiple crises of capitalism open new vistas for thinking about alternatives for South Africa and the world. A new alliance of grassroots, mass-based organisations, the progressive intelligentsia, political parties and governments can be marshalled in the same manner that the anti-apartheid movement was forged. ★

Cde Bodibe is a long standing activist of the ANC-led mass movement, a socialist and community activist and is currently a Chief Director at the Gauteng Department of Education