

CHINA – NO LONGER THE WEST'S CHEAP LABOUR HUB

November 2022 Voice of the South African Communist Party

Umsebenzi

Red October



LAND, FOOD AND WORK!

RED OCTOBER

Land, food and work! Militant struggle for shared prosperity

SACP General Secretary Solly Mapaila addressed the main rally of the Red October campaign, attended by more than 1 200 people in Umzimkhulu, KwaZulu Natal. This is a shortened version of his speech

Last month, the Minister of Finance, Enoch Godongwana, delivered the Medium Term Budget Policy Statement (MTBPS), covering the next three financial years.

In identifying long-standing impediments to economic development, the statement was narrowed to growth, as in Gross Domestic Product (GDP), limiting the focus to some microeconomic supply side issues. This approach ignores the long-term macroeconomic policy failure as an overarching impediment towards turning the tide against de-industrialisation.

Under the neoliberal macroeconomic paradigm, which the government imposed in 1996 through Growth, Employment and Redistribution (Gear), South Africa failed to roll back de-industrialisation and industrialise the economy.

Industrialisation is a critical pillar for building, diversifying, and expanding national production. This is essential to giving practical effect to a key goal of the Freedom Charter. In our democracy, our liberation struggle aimed to achieve a key demand: “The state shall recognise the right and duty of all to work.” This is what we aim to achieve when we refer to “work” in the theme of this Red October Campaign, Land, Food and Work.

Under the macroeconomic framework that the government has been following since it imposed Gear and the as-

sumptions that underpin the paradigm of recognising the Freedom Charter’s “Right and Duty of all Work” and giving practical effect to it has not happened.

It is not by accident that the minister left out the failures of the macroeconomic framework to support economic development, not just growth but structural transformation, including industrialisation towards giving practical effect to the “Right and Duty of all to Work”, poverty eradication, and a radical reduction of inequality.

The South African economy started de-industrialising in the 1980s. This was not a result only of the class struggles to end apartheid but also the domestication by the apartheid regime of neoliberal measures known the world over to be driven by imperialist controlled institutions and capital.

Instead of rolling back neoliberalism after our April 1994 democratic breakthrough, the government chose Gear. Instead of upholding democracy, the government introduced Gear as “non-negotiable” and “cast in stone”.

**South Africa
has failed to overcome
its crisis-level
unemployment**

South Africa has failed to overcome the crisis-high levels of unemployment, poverty and inequality under the macroeconomic paradigm that the government has intransigently been following. How many more years of this monumental economic policy failures does the government want to see before it is convinced to shift to a new framework and move towards shared prosperity?

While dialogue is important, including within the Alliance, which must be reconfigured, it is essential for the SACP and other working-class and worker organisations to campaign for the change in policy content and direction by intensifying class struggle.

In this Red October Campaign, we attach great importance to food production and agro-processing, among other productive activities. This is in line with the objective of drawing attention to by the word Food in the theme of this campaign.

Food production and land are inextricably interlinked. The people need access to arable land and support in line with the Freedom Charter. This is what we mean when we talk about Land in the theme of this Red October Campaign. Besides land for integrated human settlement in both rural and urban areas, rural development and ensuring equitable access to the country’s natural resources are also important.



General Secretary Solly Mapaila addresses main Red October rally in Umzimkhulu

Pic: Sifiso Gwala

Through this Red October Campaign, we have showed our potential to mobilise people in our communities to use the meagre portions of land available in their hands to produce food. As we transition from the Red October Campaign Month 2022 to focus on institutionalising its theme as the “Land, Food and Work Campaign”, we need to deepen food production mobilisation in our communities across the country.

We need to build a movement of people who work the land, in line with the Freedom Charter, outside the exploitative capitalist relations involving capitalist bosses on the one hand and wage labourers on the other hand. This should form part of our road not only towards sustainable livelihoods but also social emancipation.

As we deepen food production mobilisation, we must intensify the struggle for accelerated land redistribution, which we equally importantly mean when we talk about Land in the theme of this campaign. Expropriation must expedite land redistribution. By expropriation, we are not referring to an exchange relation involving money on the one hand and land transfer on the other hand. We are referring to expropriation proper. This does not involve compensation.

South Africa needs a macroeconomic

framework, fiscal as well as monetary policy, that decisively favours and robustly supports industrialisation, including food production and agro-processing. This requires a high impact, comprehensive industrial policy, which must guide the content, direction and conduct of macro policy. In the same way, international trade policy must decisively support industrialisation, as opposed to dependency on exports of unprocessed minerals and imports of finished products.

The minister indicated that “revenue collection has exceeded projections, and the gross tax revenue estimate for 2022/23 has been revised up, by R83,5-billion, to R1,68-trillion”. Outlining the priorities to which the additional R83,5 billion will be allocated, above all else the Minister doubled down on “fiscal consolidation”, debt-GDP reduction and a primary fiscal surplus.

How can this be a caring choice in the context where the unemployed popula-

tion numbers over 12-million active and discouraged work-seekers? 49,2%, and more than half women, 52,2%, subsist on incomes below the Upper Bound Poverty Level. In terms of both unemployment and poverty, black people are the overwhelming majority of the affected.

Income and wealth also continue to reflect the legacy of racial oppression: 10% of the population owns 80% of wealth in South Africa. They are overwhelmingly white and bourgeois.

The country’s economic policy choices and direction, not to mention the macroeconomic framework, cannot ignore these unpleasant realities.

We warn the government against using the MTBPS to undermine collective bargaining. The decision by the government, led by the National Treasury, to renege on implementing the three-year public service collective bargaining agreement of 2018, depriving public servants of their wage increases in the outer year of the agreement, is completely unacceptable. It also has far-reaching implications, including political and social reproduction implications in the households of the affected workers. It is a developing situation with negative outcomes.

Instead of unilaterally implementing below-inflation wage increases, the government must engage in the consensus-seeking collective bargaining process for an acceptable settlement with the trade unions representing public service workers.

Towards a full social security system

In intensifying the class struggle for fundamental change, we must press on with the campaign to move towards a comprehensive social security system, including through a universal basic income grant.

The government’s extension of the Social Relief of Distress Grant is important. However, the extension must go beyond the end of March 2024. The government must improve the Social Relief of Distress Grant and convert it into a universal basic income grant.

It is important to highlight that social policy, such as the need for a universal basic income grant and a comprehensive social security for all, is a macroeconomic issue. The fiscal framework, including the tax structure and budgetary allocation, has to respond positively to this imperative, as it should, together with monetary policy, actively support industrialisation. These imperatives are inter-related and mutually supportive. ●

**We need to build
a movement of
people who work
the land**

RED OCTOBER

Land, food and work – an anti-capitalist struggle

We must build a broad and powerful socialist movement to end inequality, poverty, unemployment and hunger, writes Jenny Schreiner



Inspired by the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia in 1917, the SACP annually launches a Red October Campaign to intensify the struggle to meet the needs of the people, of whom the majority are the workers and poor. This year our focus is on Land, Food and Work – three factors that burden the lives of the working class and the poor.

This campaign takes place in a context of a hostile international situation, underpinned by imperialist insecurity and a hegemony in crisis. The cost of living is escalating globally, in a world characterised by a deepening threat to a multi-polar system based on co-operation for peace and human development equality. The imperialist axis seeks to impose its worldview, using the institutions it controls – the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and its military bloc, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) – to force other states to follow its neoliberal policy prescriptions. The imperialist regimes use neoliberalism to subordinate, exploit, and dominate other countries. The US-dominated NATO's eastwards expansion in Europe, aimed at Russia, with China as another key target, provoked and started the war in Ukraine. The US has also directly been provoking China, including in the Taiwan Strait and on various platforms, such as multilateral bodies.

The provocations against Russia and China by the US, directly or through NATO, have

inevitably caused serious problems, including the global cost-of-living crisis characterised by rapid price increases, affecting the goods and services that the workers and poor need. The workers and poor in South Africa are affected. This will worsen should the US and its allies continue with their imperialist aggression.

We live in an era of war. We shall only know peace once war is permanently abolished. As Lenin observed, war cannot be abolished unless humanity overcomes the capitalist system, to replace it with a socialist system towards ultimately abolishing classes and their structures and relations of inequality, exploitation and other forms of oppression.

The inequality that Lenin cited is most patently obvious in access to land, food and work. Millions of our people do not have land to grow food and build sustainable livelihoods for their families in their townships and villages. Access to land for farm workers and labour tenants on farms is precarious, with evictions from farms phenomenally high. The working-class in our country exists in deep levels of inequality, poverty, unemployment and hunger.

We live in a society where capitalists are chasing maximum profits. They make their profits by keeping wages low, restructuring the workplace to produce more output using fewer workers, and retrenching the affected workers, saying they have become “redundant”.

The imperialist regimes controlled by the capitalists as their ruling class engage in acts of aggression to conquer the world-economy, subordinate and rule everybody. This drives up prices, as we said, affecting the goods and services that the workers and poor need.

All this makes it difficult for the working-class to have food, or to have equipment for farming, or to make products that the workers and poor can sell to make a living.

The capitalist greed for profit means they will not spend on technology that can protect our environment and the people from the damage of pollution, caused by their factories.



SACP Joe Slovo district secretary Cde Sivuyile Ntamehlo (second left) and YCLSA provincial secretary Cde Johnny Seleke distributing implements to Komaggas residents at solidarity food gardens

Pix: Allister Jack



SACP Basil February district secretary, Cde Helen Jack (left), district treasurer Cde Iris Overmeyer and YCLSA provincial secretary Cde Johnny Seleke (centre) leading team distributing nappies and sanitary pads to residents of Komaggas

This drive to maximise profit shapes how the capitalists deploy land, money and equipment.

The capitalists do not deploy land, capital and technology to serve humanity. It is this that we must change through the broader struggle to replace the capitalist system with a socialist society in which we put people before profit and use the resources of our country for the benefit of humanity.

The Party has identified land, food and work as key demands that the workers and the poor should be mobilised around. We are committed to building a broad and powerful socialist movement of the workers and the poor to win our demands around land, food and work.

In October, we have seen Party provinces and districts taking up the campaign. In the Northern Cape, Basil February District had a Red October event in Komaggas Municipal Hall, and visited residents at home as part of the SACP membership recruitment drive, *Know and act in your neighbourhood* campaign, combined with Operation Khula from YCLSA's Basil February branch.

Rooting Red October in community struggles

The SACP District Secretary explained the history of the Party, the Red Octo-

ber Campaign and spoke about possible community projects such as agriculture, artisanal mining, needlework/ sewing projects, knitting and crochet projects, solidarity food gardens. This included both backyard and community gardens, as well as the NUM Namakwa Corridor Project. Sanitary towels were distributed to the women present, and the rest were to be distributed by the ward councillor, Cde Kathlolo, at the school. Disposable nappies, as well as sanitary towels were distributed during the house visits. The district signed up new members and enrolled a contributor to our Endowment Fund to make the Party sustainable over the long term. In the next week, the Dora Tamana District held a Red October Launch in Paballelo, Upington.

In Gauteng, the Josiah Gumede VD branch in the Tembisa Kempton Park Sub-district worked in its food gardens programme. Four food gardens have been established.

In Mpumalanga the districts had vari-

The inequality that Lenin cited is most patently obvious in access to land, food and work

ous activities building up to the Provincial Rally, addressed by SACP General Secretary, Cde Solly Mapaila. On the day of the launch of the SACP Mpumalanga Red October programme in Siyabuswa at JS Moroka District Municipality, the Party engaged with lodge owners to understand their challenges. After meeting with the guest house owners, comrades went to meet BoMama who are running very successful food gardens. They have a big problem of water – this was raised by the general secretary with the mayor who took part in the programme. The women sell their products to communities. They do not believe in “I can’t.” BoMama call themselves business people.

Other provinces and districts will continue to organise rallies to explain to communities and organisations why they should join the campaign for land, food and work for all, and will be involved in activities in the communities to build food gardens, to get communal access to land and clear land for productive use, and build cooperatives and communal stores and through this create work. ●

Cde Schreiner is an SACP Politburo member, head of the SACP secretariat and a former MK combatant and political prisoner

COSATU

Cosatu Congress unites to defend workers' gains

Pat Horn reports on the revamped resolve shown by the recent Cosatu National Congress to build working class unity and solidarity



Cosatu's 14th National Congress had its high-visibility moments and those other interactions and networking among delegates and invited allies which are no less important, but did not grab the attention of the media.

The defining feature of this congress was the strong consensus which emerged between the affiliates about the importance of intensifying struggles to defend the gains of the workers and to fight for their common class interests. Zero tolerance was repeatedly voiced for continuing poor state governance, failure to manage state-owned enterprises properly, corruption and patronage, resulting from poor leadership or lack of leadership of the ANC.

There was a welcome unanimous consensus about the need to build stronger working class solidarity with other trade unions and trade union federations. Workers were united in their demand that government be accountable to workers. This saw the congress delegates refuse to be addressed by Minister Gwede Mantashe instead of President Cyril Ramaphosa as scheduled – something which dominated the news for two full days.

For the SACP, the high point of the congress came on the second day, starting with an important address by newly-elected SACP General Secretary, Solly Mapaila. This came fresh from the resolutions of the SACP's July 2022 15th National Congress.

Cde Mapaila conveyed the readiness of the SACP to contest elections in 2024, which was extremely well-received by congress delegates. He further stressed that “we need to change the manner that

we do things” and pointed to the need for “our revolution to undergo some deep introspection”.

This call for united working class action to take the lead in working for a socialist future set a positive tone for the congress. This led to robust debates about the revolutionary agenda on the relationship of the working class with the SACP as a working class party, resulting in the adoption of a resolution in support of Cosatu working with the SACP on electoral contestation.

This resolution was passed by a clear majority after a vote was taken. Some saw this (the fact that there was a vote) as divisive. Others saw it as progressive, considering that the difference between the two resolutions voted on was not a difference between two diametrically opposing views, but rather a difference between those affiliates who felt ready to pass this resolution immediately, and those who agreed in principle but wanted to first consult their members and hold a consultative conference in September 2023 before announcing it.

This debate took place against the background of the related critical questions of the necessity to reconfigure the Tripartite Alliance and renew and unite our movement. The effective reconfiguration of the Alliance will be the key to the meaningful implementation of such

Zero tolerance for continuing poor state governance, failure to manage state-owned enterprises properly, corruption and patronage

a resolution. The SACP intends to engage and work together with Cosatu to articulate the implementation of the resolution and build wider trade union and working-class unity towards socialism.

The congress documentation included political resolutions on the National Democratic Revolution, on the state and popular power, on the reconfiguration of the Alliance, extensive research and discussion papers for future planning. There were constitutional amendments, which had to be finalised at the congress itself. There was also a raft of socio-economic resolutions on, including:

- Outsourcing and insourcing;
- Independent power producers;
- Low cost medical assistance for vulnerable workers;
- ICT industry regulation;
- Spectrum allocation;
- Data must fall;
- The land question;
- Public servants and the spirit of volunteerism
- the “thuma mina” philosophy;
- National health insurance;
- Safety of public servants;
- Jobs and co-operatives;
- The future of work and the 4th industrial revolution; and
- Capacity building training & development.

International policy considerations for discussion included draft resolutions on

- Africa Continental Free Trade Area (ACFTA);
- A legally binding global treaty on business and human rights with special regard to multinational companies;
- Brics' Trade Union Forum (BTUF) as a forum for social justice, decent work



Welcome leadership! Delegates cheer Cosatu's newly elected top six - president Zingiswa Losi, first deputy president Mike Shingage, second deputy president Duncan Luvuno, treasury general Freda Oosthuizen, secretary general Solly Phetoe and deputy secretary general Gerald Thwala

and inclusive development;

- Peace building in Africa – the Eritrea-Ethiopia and South Sudan peace processes and their concrete meaning for the whole continent; and
- Migration and the crisis of under-development in Africa.

There was insufficient time for all this to be discussed, and most of it had to be referred to the Central Executive Committee to process. This meant that there was also not enough time to discuss the crucial revolutionary organisational tasks of organising the unorganised, including new forms of work that are emerging in the changing world of work which is characterised by increasingly vulnerable workers.

Workers in isolated situations like domestic workers, farm workers and workers in very small companies, or are self-employed such as most street vendors and waste pickers, are extra vulnerable. Big changes have taken place in the formal workplace. We now often have more than one employer in one workplace because of outsourcing, sub-contracting and the use of labour brokers. And a large number of workers are no longer on permanent full time contracts.

Migrant workers from other countries are very vulnerable as they often do not know their rights and are exploited by

employers. Young women in all sectors are vulnerable because they are exposed to high levels of sexual harassment and abuse in the workplace.

As a result of the way globalisation has changed the labour market, “atypical” employment relationships have increasingly become the norm – instead of exceptions to the norm. The category of own-account (self-employed) workers was taken into official consideration at the 90th session of the annual International Labour Conference of the ILO in June 2002 for the first time in Clause 4 of the Conclusions on Decent Work and the Informal Economy, which states: “Workers in the informal economy include both wage workers and own-account workers. Most own-account workers are as insecure and vulnerable as wage workers and move from one situation to the other. Because they lack protection, rights and representation, these workers often remain trapped in poverty”.

The 4th industrial revolution is giving rise to further new forms of work, such as platform work based on internet platforms and easily-accessible popular apps – which is increasingly common in the services sector – and which are often called “the new informal”. This is due to the fact that these new forms of work are being informalised as soon as they appear.

This is in the context of the descrip-

tion of the informal economy in Clause 3 of the ILO’s seminal 2002 Resolution on decent work and the informal economy: “The term ‘informal economy’ refers to all economic activities by workers and economic units that are – in law or in practice – not covered or insufficiently covered by formal arrangements” – and the fact that governments seem to be generally very slow to integrate the emerging new forms of work into their regulatory systems (and where they do, it is often to criminalise them).

One result of this is that many of the workers engaged in these new forms of work have become own-account workers, and the work they do has become own-account work undertaken at the initiative of currently officially unemployed or under-employed workers who cannot find employers to sell the labour power to, nor can they succeed as entrepreneurs in small enterprises. So they are joining the growing reservoir of de facto own-account workers (irrespective of how the system labels them).

The growth in all these new forms of work, and decrease or limited growth in formal jobs, has produced an increasingly vulnerable global workforce – which faces challenges at work, and challenges to the exercise of their fundamental rights to organise and collectively represent their interests.

As a result of a decision of the 2012 Cosatu Congress, a Vulnerable Workers Task Team (VWTT) was established by Cosatu. The VWTT consisted of Cosatu affiliates as well as workers' organisations outside of Cosatu, including membership-based organisations (MBOs) of workers in the informal economy – whose mutual aim was to intensify efforts to organise, among others:

- Farm workers
- Workers in shops, restaurants & hotels
- All sub-contracted workers
- Contract cleaning workers
- Call centre workers
- All young workers, especially young women
- All migrant workers regardless of legal status
- All workers enslaved by labour brokers
- Street traders
- Home-based workers
- Construction workers
- Petrol station workers
- EPWP workers
- Taxi workers
- Security guards
- Domestic workers

This was a good start but was interrupted by splits and divisions which have occurred in Cosatu since that time, and has not been sustained or accumulated momentum. The SACP delegation at the congress intervened from the floor that the VWTT should be revived to extend the scope of organised workers and intensify workers' organization for socialism. This intervention was well received and followed up by congress delegates in discussion with the SACP delegation. As SACP we need to live up to the challenge of working with Cosatu and its affiliates, in alliance with other trade unions, federations and MBOs of workers in the informal economy, to intensify the organisation of workers in all sectors of the informal economy and new forms of work. ●

Cde Horn is an SACP PB member, International Coordinator of StreetNet International and a former trade unionist.

IN MEMORIAM

Farewell to Comrade Vuyani Tyhali

Solly Mapaila looks back on the life of a fearless activist, a socialist and internationalist who contributed massively to the South African struggle against apartheid and the progressive struggle in Lesotho



The SACP mourns the loss of Vuyani Tyhali, a Lesotho national who worked selflessly for the liberation of South Africa through the ANC and SACP. He was attached to the Island (Lesotho) machinery underground unit servicing Gilbert Hani – father to our late General Secretary, Chris Hani – and Elizabeth Mafekeng, who was President of African Food and Canning Workers' Union, and founder member of the Federation of South African Women and Deputy President of the ANCWL. She had been exiled in Lesotho. Cde Vuyani assisted Cdes Hani, Lambert Moloi, Joe Modise and others. He fulfilled several missions in Lesotho and elsewhere.

At the time of his passing, he was in the process of writing a memoir about Chris Hani. He had already written a history of the Lesotho Teachers Trade Union, of which he was a leader. He had been decisive in building the union into a progressive, militant force in the country.

Tyhali also continued the underground struggle of the banned Communist Party of Lesotho.

For some time, he worked with the Popular Front for Democracy (Khoetsa ya Sechaba) led by Cde Lekhetho Rakuane as the left voice that won a seat in several Lesotho parliamentary elections and continued to harness progressive forces to launch a joint front against bourgeoisie parties.

With Mokhafisi Kena – the Old Man,

as he called him – he translated into Sesotho the SACP election message and pamphlets in the 2009 election campaign.

Through SACP requests, he helped our struggling exiled comrades from Swaziland and Sudan's liberated zones to settle in Lesotho without hesitation.

He was a brilliant cadre who knew no borders. He always acknowledged the role of the SACP in the establishment of the Communist Party of Lesotho with funding through Cdes Joe Matthews and Eric Mtshali, who helped to set up the machinery and remained deployed in Lesotho for some time to oversee the new party.

Overall, Tyhali was an outstanding communist revolutionary, an unmatched internationalist, a devoted trade unionist, a powerful strategist, a people's teacher and a socialist theoretician of

note, who debated until the cows came home, when necessary, especially about challenges facing the working class in Lesotho. He was a very rare breed, a very decent human being.

His unflinching trust in the future of socialism will inspire us to carry on the great working class battle forward.

His death is a major blow for communists and the people of Lesotho and elsewhere, a sad loss indeed.

May his fighting spirit live on!

Hamba Kahle Mkhonto. Aluta! ●

Cde Mapaila is SACP General Secretary and a former MK combatant



YCLSA CENTENARY

100 years of youth struggle for a socialist society

Tinyiko Ntini examines the pioneering revolutionary work of young communists in South Africa and the YCLSA's current struggles to improve the lives of youth



The 100th anniversary of the founding of the Young Communist League (YCLSA) was celebrated on 25 May 2022. Known internationally in the early 1920s as the South African Young Communist League, the YCLSA is the oldest existing youth formation to be founded in our country's struggle for national liberation and socialism. The YCLSA was in the struggle for the radical democratic breakthrough of our liberation achieved in April 1994 through the first ever one-person, one-vote general elections.

The formation of the YCLSA signified a new breath for the Communist Party of South Africa, a construction of a radical voice for socialist ideas addressed to the youth as a stratum. This presented a new way to deal with present and future class contradictions in the quest of a liberated South Africa. This fits well with Lenin's characterisation in 1903 of the revolutionary youth as "the most responsive section of the intelligentsia ... most accurately reflects and express the development of class interests and political groupings in society".

To name all the leaders and members of the YCLSA and their contribution to our interrelated class, national, gender and international struggles since 1922 would amount to excluding many others and their contributions. We will therefore not take that risk.

However, there is one leader who was born in May 1925 who we

wish to mention, Cde Ruth First, former National Secretary. Cde First symbolises many aspects of the contribution and influence of the YCLSA on our struggle for non-racialism, gender equality and uneven development. Through her we can tell a brief story about these struggles.

The story of Cde First and the process of struggle she took part in, to achieve an end to colonial and apartheid oppression, racism, sexism, capitalist exploitation and imperialism, is the story of many cadres of YCLSA and a summary

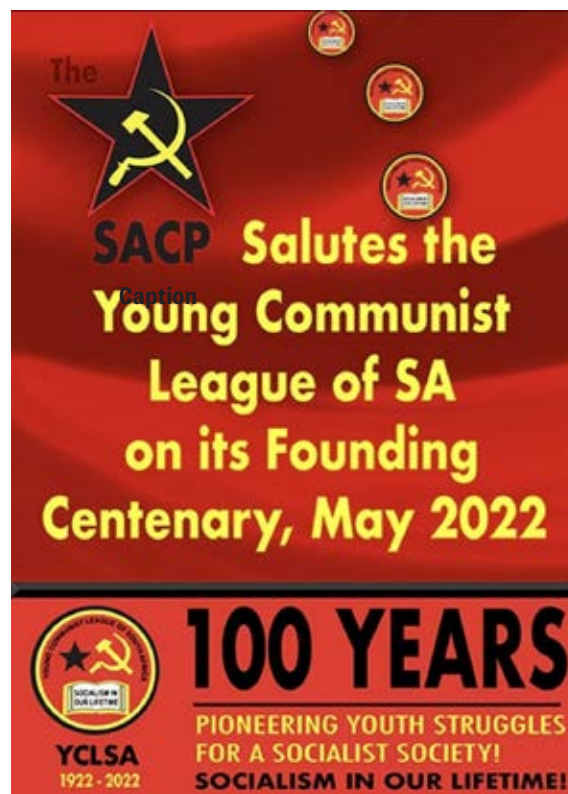
of only a section of our contribution on road to South African freedom.

We salute each one of the young communists, also known as ufasimba or Young Reds, who contributed to our struggle for liberation and social emancipation and dedicating their entire adult lives of communist activism to the realisation of the goals of our struggle freedom. It is not by mistake for us to celebrate the centenary through the theme 100 years of pioneering youth struggles for a socialist society.

The Communist Party was seen as the number one threat to colonial oppression and apartheid and was banned under the Suppression of Communist Act in 1950.

The first ever political organisation to be banned in our land by the apartheid regime, applied to the YCLSA with equal force, as it did to all communist activities and literature and undermined freedom of association, freedom of expression, and political life. When the Communist Party set up small teams of well-trained cadres to coordinate its underground reconstitution immediately after its banning, it could not reconstitute the YCLSA. This was because reconstituting the YCLSA would have been a more dangerous move. It could have exposed young communists to the risks of the worst of the brutality of the apartheid regime.

However, the apartheid ban of communist life successfully ended young communist activism in our struggle. The Communist Party integrated young communists, through careful selection, train-



A century of young communist militancy: An SACP poster celebrating the YCLSA centenary

ing and recruitment in its underground ranks, in the joint SACP (as the underground Communist Party was renamed in 1953) and ANC military formation, uMkonto weSizwe, and in other processes and pillars of our struggle, such as mass mobilisation and the international isolation of the apartheid regime.

While we reflect on the significance of the YCLSA's centenary, it would be to commit political suicide not to salute the SACP for the role it played in ending the apartheid regime, in bringing about our democratic dispensation, and in advancing the massive social progress realised by our people, with the youth an integral part. It is our duty to thank the SACP. After all, we ourselves as the YCLSA are part of the Party's achievements.

We thank the SACP for adopting the resolution, at its 11th National Congress held in Rustenburg in July 2002, to re-establish the YCLSA, which took place in 2003 December. This filled an organisational gap among young people.

As part of our Ten Youth Demands adopted in 2005, and 12 Youth Fronts in

2018, it is the YCLSA that post-1994 put back strongly free education on our national agenda, centring into our national discourse. Some of those who later projected themselves as the champions of this call actually opposed us fiercely when we called for the advance to free education. To be clear, we were guided by the Communist Manifesto. Today, we celebrate the massive advance we realised in the expansion of education at all levels, including post-school education and training.

It is the ufasimba, who made the call on the government to tax the capitalist bosses to fund free education and create sustainable jobs for youth.

South Africa is a highly unequal country. This is because the rich, who expropriate the wealth of our society, backed by their neoliberal policy thinkers, their lackeys and hangers-on inside and outside the government, want things to be like that.

In South Africa, massive amounts of wealth are concentrated in the hands of a few and monopolised by them side by side with mass poverty and mass unem-

ployment particularly of the youth and sky-rocketing inequality. Increasing tax on the wealth, rather than indiscriminately cutting corporate income tax, is the way to go in funding and sustaining the expansion of health and education. This is also the way to go in funding other wealth redistribution programmes and systematically tackling economic exploitation and inequality.

2023 will mark 20 years since the SACP re-established the YCLSA. We also celebrate the contribution we have made in calling for the dignity for young women and for women in general to be respected. It the YCLSA who centred the imperative of free sanitary towels on our national development agenda. This must deepen until basics such as free condoms, sanitary towels are universally available to every woman who cannot afford them. We have been part of the fight against gender based violence and femicide and continue to call for government to avail more resources in the fight against this pandemic.

As we prepare for our 6th National Congress in December, we have a responsibility to intensify youth mobilisation and consolidation of the left axis to tackle the problem of the Washington led IMF-driven global neoliberal policy regime that is imposed on our country via the National Treasury and the Reserve Bank, among others. Unless the youth roll back the neoliberal policy regime, we will not realise a better future. We can score some achievements here and there, but in general we will continue to live under conditions of misery. To address the crisis of sky-rocketing youth unemployment, including the massive problem of young people not in education and training, we need to roll back the neoliberal policy regime.

Today, youth-led collective action is proving to be decisive in combating global challenges. From fighting for environmental justice, to protecting the rights of women and demanding economic justice. This will be achieved with a well-focused youth front. To meet the aspirations of the next generations, we must be rooted in our communities and inspire innovators, activists and entrepreneurs under the age of 30 (another important issue as the world becomes younger) who will play a new critical role in developing our communities. ●

Cde Ntini is the YCLSA National Secretary and an SACP Central Committee member

Umsebenzi

Want to join SACP debates? Report on what's happening in your branch, your district, your province? We're starting the first of a series of six-month writing courses for SACP members in January 2023.

The courses are fully virtual – so we'll cover participants' basic data costs. Each course involves a monthly workshop plus a few hours' work a week and regular interaction with the trainers.

eMail Umsebenzi's deputy editor Cde Buti Manamela at butimanamela@gmail.com. Include:

- **Your name, contact details (email and phone number – and Telegram Messenger or WhatsApp numbers, if they're different)**
- **Your SACP or YCLSA branch details.**
- **A brief note 100-250 words on why you want to take the course.**

Classes are small – 10 to 12 comrades – so don't be discouraged if you don't make it on to the first course.

SAHRAWI ARAB DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

Solidarity with Polisario Front and the Sahrawi people!

Joint Tripartite Alliance statement on meeting with Secretary-General of the Polisario Front, President Brahim Ghali of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic

On 19 October 2022 the Tripartite Alliance – the African National Congress (ANC), the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) – held a bilateral meeting with the Polisario Front.

The President of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic and Secretary-General of the Polisario Front, Brahim Ghali, led the delegation for the Polisario Front, while the ANC Secretary-General's Office, represented by co-ordinator Cde Gwen Ramogkopa, the SACP General Secretary Cde Solly Mapaila, and Cosatu Second Deputy President Cde Duncan Luvuno together led the Alliance delegation.

This year is the 46th anniversary of the proclamation of the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic while Morocco continues its illegal occupation of Western Sahara. Solidarity with the Saharawi people against the illegal occupation was a key area of focus in the meeting.

The Alliance and the Polisario Front reaffirmed their long-established deep ties of solidarity forged in the common struggle for liberation, against colonialism and apartheid in South Africa, and for the Saharawi people's fundamental right to self-determination.

Ghali emphasised the importance of ending the occupation of Western Sahara by Morocco. He said the Sahrawi people must be allowed determine their destiny through a United Nations supervised referendum in line with the provisions of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 690 of 29 April 1991.

The Alliance reiterates its view that the United Nations should urgently implement the key tenets of the 1991 ceasefire agreement, which provided, among others, for the holding of a referendum,



Brahim Ghali, secretary-general of the Polisario Front and president of the Sahrawi Arab People's Republic, visiting a Sahrawi refugee camp in Algeria

to enable the Sahrawi people to exercise their right to self-determination.

The Alliance reaffirmed its support for the right of the Sahrawi People to self-determination. The Alliance reiterated its rejection of the idea of an autonomous Western Sahara under Moroccan sovereignty. This colonisation idea by Morocco contradicts the will of the Sahrawi people and the resolutions of the United Nations, United Nations Security Council and the African Union.

In the same vein, the Alliance rejects the posture by Spain. This former colonial power, Spain, supports Morocco in undermining the right of the Sahrawi people to self-determination.

In 1975, the International Court of Justice ruled that Morocco has no right to occupy Western Sahara or any of its territories. The Alliance reaffirmed its support for this ruling.

The Alliance also called upon the African Union to immediately engage with the 1983 Peace Plan, adopted by the Organisation of Africa Unity to resolve the situation of Western Sahara.

The Alliance denounced the lack of

consultation with the Sahrawi Republic by Staffan de Mistura, the United Nations Secretary-General's Personal Envoy for Western Sahara. The Alliance calls upon the United Nations to facilitate a process for direct negotiations between Morocco and the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic with immediate effect.

The Alliance welcomed the high-level discussion between President Ghali and President Ramaphosa. It commended the principled and steadfast leadership provided by President Ramaphosa in committing to elevate South Africa's bilateral relationship with the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic to a strategic partnership.

The Alliance called for deepening of bilateral economic and trade relations with the Saharawi Republic.

The Alliance will strengthen its solidarity with the Polisario Front and the Sahrawi people, by, among others, engaging in intensified united action on the domestic and international fronts for their national liberation and self-determination. ●



Residents watch a giant TV screen in Hangzhou, eastern China, as general secretary Xi delivers his report to the 20th CPC national congress

COMMUNIST PARTY OF CHINA CONGRESS

China won't be capitalist world's low-cost labour hub

Under the CPC, China takes its next step towards socialism based on a modern, developed economy, writes CJ Atkins



Xi Jinping's election to a precedent-breaking third term as general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) at its 20th Congress last month was pretty much all Western media audiences heard about the 16-22 October CPC congress. But leadership elections were only one aspect of the congress. More significantly for the world were decisions on the next stage of the country's economic reform and the 2 000 delegates' determination that China lead the way in building a cooperative alternative to the US-dominated international system.

If the CPC's goals are fulfilled, China will cease being global capitalism's cheap labour manufacturing hub and move toward an economy centred on higher

value, domestic-focused growth.

The country's main objective, the congress declared, is to achieve a breakthrough toward a "new pattern of development" premised on "promoting high-quality development; achiev[ing] greater self-reliance and strength in science and technology...and building a modern economy".

That transition is already under way. Wage rates in China have surged upward in the past few years. And even before Covid-19, the low-cost export industries that once populated China's southern free trade zones had already begun migrating to other countries.

Since 2016, China's global share of clothing, furniture, footwear and luggage exports have declined. While capitalist analysts portray this as a failure – China "losing" its "manufacturing and export

dominance" – in reality, the CPC never intended that China permanently remain at the bottom of the world's economy. A turn from cheap goods and the low wages, and the income inequality that go along with them, was always part of China's plan.

The CPC put scientific and technological development at the centre of its agenda at the 2012 congress. China's research and development spending is now second-largest in the world after the US, nearly tripling from RMB1-trillion (R2,7-billion) to almost RMB2,8-trillion (R7,4-trillion).

Chinese technology firms already compete with the rest of the world, especially in communications, chemistry, materials science, and physics. But it is still playing catch up in other sectors.

And it trails most developed countries' 13-25% of R&D expenditure on basic research, so has a big gap to close.

Xi told the congress that moving from export-led growth into more advanced economic sectors and reducing inequality to achieve "common prosperity" must be the hallmarks of the next phase of China's "rejuvenation". And pulling it off means sticking to the socialist road.

Tossing aside naysayers who dismiss the CPC's adherence to socialism as window-dressing, congress delegates issued a statement declaring: "Our experience has taught us that...we owe the success of our party and socialism...to the fact that Marxism works."

The effort to integrate Marxism with China's material reality is the story of contemporary China – from 1978 when party leader Deng Xiaoping initiated economic "reform and opening up", when China began reforming state-owned industries, liberalising agriculture, and wooing foreign investment with free market trade zones to access the capital and technology the country lacked.

It was aimed at building the productive forces and raising workers' standard of living in line with the historical materialist view that socialism could only be constructed on a modern and developed economy. As Deng said, socialism was not supposed to be a society of shared poverty. Out of that grew the concept "socialism with Chinese characteristics."

Reform has brought undeniable progress. More than 850-million people have been lifted out of poverty, and per capita incomes are 25 times higher than in 1978. National economic growth averaged 10% a year from 1978 to 2018. By purchasing power parity, China is already the world's biggest economy.

There have also been bumps on the road toward building a functioning socialist democracy: Tiananmen Square 1989, recent instability in Hong Kong, concerns about the elimination of presidential term limits, and questions about developments in the Muslim-majority region of Xinjiang.

Many Western commentators obsess over Xi's re-election and his supposed "unaccountable power," but they largely ignored the rest of the congress proceedings. Xi undeniably stands head-and-shoulders above anyone else in the party leadership. Even those who support Chinese socialism may be wondering what became of the collective approach and the consensus around term limits that had prevailed since Deng's days.

Mao Zedong's disastrous Cultural Revolution of the 1960s – when China descended into a decade of sectarian chaos – left a generation of CPC members determined to never again allow any one leader the kind of power Mao had exercised. Questions about whether such centralisation could be happening again don't arise purely out of thin air.

For instance, exhortations to members to uphold "Comrade Xi Jinping's core position on the Party Central Committee and in the Party as a whole" appear no less than five times in the final congress resolution. Xi's personal ideological contribution, Xi Jinping thought on socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era apparently merits being declared "the Marxism of the 21st century."

Concerns about over-centralisation aside, the most notable thing about the 20th Congress was that it demonstrated the CPC's determination to open a new phase in the strategy of economic reform.

Xi told delegates, "Material want is not socialism." China will strive for material abundance and "well-rounded development".

"We must uphold and improve China's basic socialist economic system," his report said. "We must unswervingly consolidate and develop the public sector" and "encourage, support, and guide the development of the non-public sector".

Xi said that the market will continue to play the "decisive role" in resource allocation and that reform of state-owned enterprises would be deepened – the ruling party will help SOEs "get stronger, do better, and grow bigger", making them more competitive.

His heavy emphasis on socialism is part of a long-running campaign since he took office. With a crackdown on corruption and a revival of ideological education, Xi has sought to restore the party's legitimacy in the eyes of the public. He constantly reminds Chinese communists of their revolutionary responsibilities.

Four years ago, Xi instructed party cadres to make time for Karl Marx, not just the market, encouraging them to again study classic socialist works. And

in 2021, the government initiated a large-scale regulation effort to reverse trends toward private monopoly in the economy, especially in the R21-trillion tech sector.

The CPC leadership is also determined to never let the disaster that befell socialism in the Soviet Union occur in China. In a 2013 speech recently circulated within the CPC for the first time, Xi asked party members: "Why did the Soviet Union disintegrate?" He answered that the Soviet communists' "ideals and beliefs had been shaken."

The repudiation of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union's history in the Gorbachev years brought chaos and amounted to a surrender to capitalism in the ideological competition.

Internally, China still faces immediate challenges: rising unemployment, slowing population and labour force growth. Externally, the war in Ukraine weighs on China in the form of global energy chaos and complicated diplomacy.

And the United States seems determined to provoke a new and long Cold War. Last month, the Biden administration decreed that the US will block China "in the technological, economic, political, military, intelligence, and global governance domains" – effectively, government state endorsement of the US capitalist class' complaint that China won't open its major industries to foreign control and privatisation.

This means a further ballooning of US weapons spending, continued encirclement of China with military bases, escalation of tension around the Taiwan question, and the sowing of division between China and its neighbours – measures to which China will have no choice but to respond.

Overseeing the transition of a developing economy of 1,3-billion people in a world where the laws of capitalism and powers hostile to socialism still hold sway isn't easy.

China's ability to navigate that challenge is vital for Marxism and scientific socialism. It's possible that had China not achieved the gains it has, socialism as an ideal might have been forced to wander in the darkness. For the sake of progress everywhere, China needs to succeed in its quest to find a path toward common prosperity, socialism, and democracy. ●

The effort to integrate Marxism with China's material reality is the story of contemporary China

Cde Atkins is the managing editor at CPUSA-linked digital daily newspaper, People's World, where this article was first published.

COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA CONGRESS

SACP and CPI – moving towards popular fronts

Nomarashiya Caluza argues that the CPI and SACP face some similar challenges and have adopted similar strategies to take their countries to the left and, ultimately, to socialism



The Communist Party of India (CPI) Congress, 14-18 October, started with a march leading to a public meeting attended by thousands of people in Vijayawada in Andhra Pradesh state. On the road leading to the stadium, marchers were greeted by crowds watching the procession with enthusiasm. The streets were literally red with communist flags and banners, adding to the bright red sea of marchers as if signifying the real blood of the working class under the oppression of the ruling class.

As if motivated by the Arab proverb a promise is a cloud, fulfilment is the rain, marchers endured this weather, a sign of their commitment and determination for socialism. One leader claimed that about 40000 people attended, blaming the rain for not achieving their expected target of 70000.

Most of these delegates wore traditional clothes (saris and dhotis) though in red and white, the symbolic colours of the CPI. This could be the indication of how the CPI recognises culture, religion, interests and needs of the people. Also fascinating was to see people of all ages marching to the rally.

Addressing the mass rally, CPI General Secretary, Cde D Raja, spoke about the acquittal of Delhi University professor GN Sibaba, who had been imprisoned for eight years without bail because the anti-communist government is constantly suppressing communist views. He also reminded the meeting of the common challenges faced by the country's peasants, working class and workers, infringements on women's rights, poverty, the inadequate educational system,



CPI general secretary D Raja, national secretary K Narayana, and Andhra Pradesh State secretary K Ramakrishna at a CPI rally ahead of the CPI congress

discrimination of minorities and xenophobia. The CPI needs to strengthen its vanguard character to rescue the people from this crisis of capitalism.

The General Secretary focused at the congress on the onslaught of neoliberalism economically on the working class. He outlined the dangers of neoliberal-

ism, privatisation and globalisation as recipes for growing inequality, unemployment and hunger.

The key lesson for me is that capitalist tendencies and effects are the same everywhere. The fact that the CPI observes the government's preference for private capital to manage state resources and in the process make profits is like the attempts by our government in dealing with challenges facing our own SOEs.

Similarities can be drawn from the recent privatisation of Air India and how South Africa handles Eskom and SAA. The weakening of the public sector through cost cutting measures and the erosion of hard-won labour rights to

The CPI resolved to strengthen itself while consolidating left unity



SACP Politburo member Nomarashiya Caluza delivers the SACP message to the 24th CPI congress

please corporate interest is a common feature in both countries.

Unlike in South Africa, in India there are other communist parties and left organisations than the CPI. They participated in the congress. While they may be divided on the approach to attain socialism, they do not antagonise each other – an opportunity to form a progressive front to advance the struggle for socialism and perhaps a lesson, for us, to build a popular front.

The key message from these other communist and left parties was the need for left forces in India to work together to topple the national RSS-BJP government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi. They spoke about purposeful unity in the form of a left movement in defence of the nation and the constitution of the country especially as the country prepares for the 2024 elections.

The CPI believes that the composition and character of the envisaged left movement may differ from area to area, informed by material conditions. This means the people on the ground will determine modalities of the movement – the vehicle to overthrow the sitting government and ultimately lead to socialism.

Parallel to the congress, CPI organised wreath-laying ceremonies for Marx, Engels and Lenin. The SACP and French

Communist Party were honoured to lay wreaths at statues of Marx and Engels. Also, one human rights organisation had a panel wherein leaders of the Communist Party of Cuba and the Palestine participated in discussion on working class struggles in their countries and the impact of the US blockage in Cuba and the apartheid imposed in Palestine by Israel.

Having characterised our own objective and subjective conditions, in the recent 15th Congress of the SACP, we resolved to build a powerful socialist movement of the workers and the poor in defence of the national democratic revolution as our direct route to socialism.

Similarly, to accelerate the social transformation agenda and ultimately reach socialism, the CPI resolved to strengthen itself while consolidating left unity and building a broader alliance of progressing forces to unseat the RSS-BJP government from power. I am tempted to believe the idiom Birds of a feather flock together.

The SACP and CPI are similar in being committed to popular fronts and alliances to take forward the struggle for socialism. ●

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COMMUNIST PARTY OF GREECE

KKE and the path to a classless society

Themba Mthembu recounts debates with representatives of the Communist Party of Greece on the possibility of ‘conquering’ the bourgeois state through participation or smashing it entirely



The passing of ministries of the bourgeois state into the hands of communists cannot be utilised in favour of socialism but indeed accelerates the co-option of communist parties by the bourgeois political system. This was part of the experiences shared in the engagement between the SACP and the International Section of the Communist Party of Greece (KKE) that took place at the party’s headquarters recently.

The KKE gave as an example communist parties’ past participation in or support for bourgeois governments in Spain, France, Italy and Chile – and more recently in several countries in Latin America, Cyprus and Portugal.

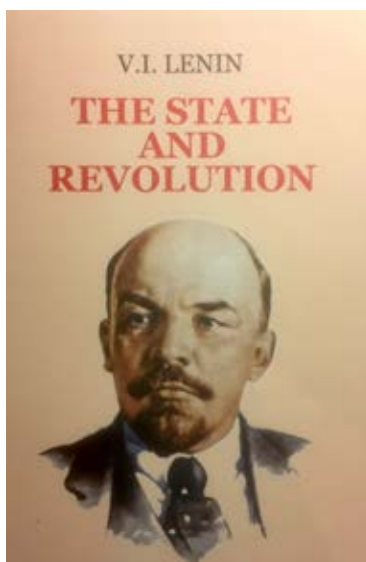
An example closer to home was the KKE’s own participation in Greece’s 1944 government of national unity and acceptance by communist ministers of wage freezes and liberalisation of in the name of making sure the government survived.

In none of these cases did the support or participation in bourgeois governments operate in favour of socialism.

These experiences are crucial, given the SACP’s role in government, and our discussions on state power.

The focus also shifted to the positions adopted by the KKE at its 10th Congress, where it declared: “the entire history of the political communist and workers movement from the 19th century until today has as its basic arena of controversy the path that should be taken to create a classless society.”

The KKE believes “there are two basic views: the opportunist view about the



possibility of reforming, “conquering” and utilising the bourgeois state for socialism and the revolutionary view regarding the need to smash the bourgeois state”.

This controversy reflects the ideological contest about the bourgeois state and bourgeois democracy. Opportunists understand the bourgeois state – especially in the form of bourgeois parliamentary democracy – as a state that expresses the correlation of forces between the various classes, in essence as a “supra-class” state that expresses the democratic will of the people, regardless of class. From this standpoint, they approach the democratic form of the bourgeois state as a favourable terrain that can be utilised to the benefit of socialism.

In contrast, as Marxists we understand the class character of the bourgeois state, regardless of the exceptionally var-

ied forms it has taken on historically. We understand bourgeois democracy as one of the varied forms of the dictatorship of capital and indeed the most “secure” form for the protection of the “omnipotence of wealth”, as Lenin wrote in *The state and revolution*. These two approaches may be regarded as fundamental differences informing the current debate on the SACP and electoral options.

Bourgeois democracy and fascism share a common class denominator. This has been repeatedly borne out in history by the interchanges between fascist and parliamentary forms of government which have served to stabilise bourgeois power in changing economic and political conditions. The historical political development here in South Africa, from colonialism to apartheid right up to the current dispensation is a classic example.

The KKE argues that defence of the “parliamentary road” to socialism is not always openly formulated. It often lurks behind the formulation of varied transitional programmes that accept the possibility of utilising the participation in a government on the terrain of capitalist ownership and the bourgeois state to improve the lives of the workers and sharpen the revolutionary mood of the masses. This analysis in essence denies both the economic laws of capitalism (as it considers that these laws when managed by a CP can be used to benefit the people) and the class nature of the bourgeois state – promoting the “capture” of the bourgeois state to overthrow it. ●

Cde Mthembu is SACP KZN Provincial Secretary and Deputy Speaker of the KZN Legislature