# Editorial

The struggle to get rid of outsourcing at the University of Johannesburg (UJ) by workers and students reflects the broadening of the #FeesMustFall campaign into a vibrant social movement, writes Itumeleng Moabi. However, management's resolve to crush the campaign saw the use of well-known tactics of a carrot-and-stick approach. Workers and students spent the night in police cells, an agreement was signed between a worker, unions and management under murky circumstances while police fired teargas on a peaceful march showing unnecessary strong-arm tactics.

Student protests were about decolonisation, race and class politics, writes Patrick Bond. Students demanded that universities be transformed, and that more indigenous professors be appointed.

Some of the explanations for the failures of South Africa's and Southern Africa's liberation struggles can be found in the writings of Franz Fanon, argues John S Saul. He writes: 'The national middle class-in-the-making, the nationalist elite, did indeed discover its historic mission: that of intermediary. And, in the end, as seen through its eyes its mission has had very little to do with transforming the nation; instead, it has consisted, prosaically, of being the transmission lines between the nation and a capitalism, rampant though camouflaged, which today puts on the masque of neo-colonialism and, indeed, of recolonisation.'

Government has announced its intentions to adopt a national minimum wage policy, but where do you start. Eddie Cottle explores the dynamics and argues that a national minimum wage is 'a powerful weapon in the hands of labour to fight poverty wages and is both reasonable and necessary'. It 'is not about a "normal" opposing of material interests between workers and the bosses, it is one of guarding the working class from decay, demoralisation and ruin'.

Sefikile, in the North West province, was a place of abundant cattle as a result of rich pastures that used to exist, but mining has changed all that. To rub salt into the community's wounds, the revenue does not even come to them. But they are not taking it lying down and are organising against the chief who collects all the revenue and some matters have ended in the courts. The community wants the custodian of the chief to be removed.

Going into the community for deep studies is what is required for socially engaged scholarship, argues Enver Motala. Deep study involves understanding different learning contexts and other social issues related to post schooling. Complex issues should also be recognised.

The anti-corruption stance taken by Nigerian president, Muhammadu Buhari, is welcome but more needs to be done, argues Denja Yaqub. Otherwise the effort itself can become corrupted. The campaign should go beyond just using the president's name to fight corruption but to 'build structures and institutions that can effectively wipe off corruption or at least reduce it'. This, he adds, will clear Nigeria's dented global image. LB

Elijah Chiwota
Editor

**The *South African Labour Bulletin's* mission is to:**

- provide information and stimulate critical analysis and debate on issues and challenges that confront workers, their organisations and their communities; and
- communicate this in an accessible and engaging manner.

In so doing the SALB hopes to advance progressive politics, promote social justice and the interests of the working class.



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# UJ workers'/students' alliance

## A tainted history

While taking part in the University of Johannesburg (UJ) workers' and students' protests to end outsourcing of services at the institution, **Itumeleng Moabi** witnesses a carrot-and-stick method as one of the workers inexplicably signs an agreement binding all workers while the peaceful march is teargassed. A lecturer even spies on protestors, allegedly misrepresenting the events to the university authorities.

In November the UJ workers' and students' movement started protests to end the outsourcing of services at the university. 9 November is recorded in history as the first victory for students and workers in their fight against outsourcing. On this day 141 students and workers as well as academics from UJ, University of Witwatersrand (Wits) and Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) attended their bail hearing at the Johannesburg Central Magistrates' Court.

The group was arrested on 6 November 2015 outside the UJ Kingsway Campus' main entrance on charges of breaching a court interdict requested by UJ earlier to declare the workers' strike illegal and unprotected. Declaring the strike illegal meant that workers went against their contractual agreement with UJ by downing tools and refraining from providing cleaning services to the institution.

Students and academic staff supported the plight of outsourced workers through solidarity and participation in a strike already declared illegal by the institution. By so doing they also contravened the court interdict, which stated that protesters should keep a 700m distance from UJ. After spending more than 24 hours in the Brixton Police Station cells, the group of 141 was released on free bail on 7 November 2015 on condition they not to attend any mass meetings or gatherings until their bail hearing in court on 9 November 2015.

On the court day, the 141 accused arrived for an appearance at the Johannesburg Central Magistrate Court in the Johannesburg CBD. However, before the court proceedings began, reports of a signed agreement between UJ and the National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union (Nehawu) on ending outsourcing at UJ were heard. It was later established that one of the 141 accused was also a signatory to this agreement between UJ and Nehawu which was made a day after the release from Brixton Police Station.

The collective was puzzled as to how the worker signed when she was supposed to be restricted by her bail conditions. The 141 were instructed by their lawyers not to attend or take part in meetings until the bail hearing on 9 November. More puzzling was how one worker became a 'representative of outsourced workers' in the Joint UJ and Labour Memorandum of Agreement on the Insourcing of Outsourced Services and the Transfer of Workers to UJ. She is the only worker from the group to have signed this agreement amidst three Nehawu signatures and that of the vice chancellor. What also alarmed the strikers is that this meeting took place at a country club in Woodmead, not at UJ. According to students, this venue is well-known for bribes.

When the said worker arrived outside the Magistrates' Court and was confronted by the collective about news of her signature on the agreement, she appeared shocked by the contents. It quickly became apparent that she had not seen or read the agreement before signing it. Based on the notes she made, discussion at the meeting in Woodmead also included new salary estimates based on available budgets. From her report to the collective, it was apparent that she was manipulated and coerced into signing the agreement.

However, the collective resolved that she needed to give a press statement in an effort to distance herself from what workers considered to be a fraudulent agreement that compromised her


*In solidarity with the arrested: Workers and students demonstrate outside Brixton police station in Johannesburg.*

bail conditions. It was evident that she needed to clear her name to avoid being regarded a 'sell-out' by the movement. She had to make it clear to strikers that she was not elected or mandated by the movement to represent outsourced workers. The strikers saw the agreement as unconstitutional and undemocratic in terms of how it was concluded.

At no point was she coerced or threatened into giving a press statement. Her will to deliver the press statement was based on her newfound understanding of the implications of signing an agreement on behalf of hundreds of workers without consulting any of them. She further understood the consequences of signing a vague agreement that did not specifically acknowledge the workers' memorandum and nor represent it. The strikers were disturbed by the implication of one of their own in this agreement.

## WALK TO CAMPUS

The protesters agreed to walk to UJ's Kingsway Campus from the court. After spending all day outside the courts waiting to hear the fate of the 141, it was announced that the charges have been dropped and that they were free to leave. Following the news, the movement decided to proceed to Auckland Park Kingsway (APK) to set up camp until the vice chancellor, Ihron Rensburg, met with them. Central to the demands of the movement was a transparent one-on-one meeting with Rensburg. During negotiations for the release of the 141, Rensburg kept making a concerted effort to destabilise the unity and transparency within the movement by calling certain individuals to private meetings. The worker who signed could have been a victim of these underhand tactics.

With the charges dropped, strikers claimed this announcement as a momentous victory for their cause and became more determined to fight against outsourcing.

The walk represented a forward movement towards getting answers from Rensburg. The group was made up of representatives of workers and students seeking justice from UJ. For instance, an older worker – probably in his 60s or 70s – assumed the responsibility of redirecting traffic from the route taken by the march. Generally, pedestrians and drivers accommodated the march, which was seamless, with little irritation. It was a slow-paced walk with the frontline chained together to limit anyone from stepping out of line. The songs were also peaceful, incorporating greeting messages to fellow workers in shops as well as at the Wits construction site.

As the march moved through Braamfontein, metro police officers appeared and escorted the demonstration. The 'walk' then came to a halt when a bus carrying UJ students was spotted. Protesters blocked the bus and demanded that the students aboard join the protest. Metro police officers were present during this entire altercation and at no point did they witness any cause for intervention. Eventually, the bus driver allowed students to get off but insisted that he will follow 'the walk' to APK to collect the students again. The bus drove behind 'the walk' whilst the metro police vehicles were at the front.

After a main intersection, black police vehicles arrived and again 'the walk' came to a stop. Out came the same senior police officer who had led the team that arrested the 141. Shortly after, protesters were scattered all over Kingsway Road when the South African Police Services (SAPS) members fired

*Homebound: Workers and students leave Brixton police station after their release.*

several tear-gas canisters on the unarmed and non-confrontational strikers who were moving to the Bunting Road Campus. It was at this same intersection that protesters were approached by a man they recognised as a UJ lecturer. He approached me and other comrades as we were fleeing the tear-gas smoke. During my conversation with the lecturer he seemed sympathetic to students and workers and was against the tear-gassing by the SAPS. The lecturer said he had been away and wanted some perspective on what was happening from the protesters' viewpoint and why police were firing tear-gas and assaulting us.

He was also interested in finding out why we specifically wanted to speak to Rensburg. During this conversation, the lecturer was on his phone constantly updating the person(s) on the other end of the line of the exact location of the 'walk' and what was happening with the police. I told him that we wanted a transparent and open meeting with the vice chancellor.

On the same day the lecturer told Rensburg and 20 concerned academics that he was 'shocked and ashamed to say UJ students smashed windows of a bus with passengers inside'. This story was not only false and misleading but defamed the protestors. It is alarming when management uses such infiltration tactics to discredit workers and students.

Another important clarification that should be made is that the bus burnt on 9 November 2015 is not linked to the march as all protesters were gathered outside the Johannesburg Central Magistrates' Court. The movement condemns any acts of violence committed in their name and denounces false statements about any member of this movement acting violently in any form or shape. If anything, there are students and workers who sustained injuries at the hand of the bouncers employed by UJ and the SAPS. The message against violence was delivered to the media before the walk commenced and also to the alleged lecturer during the walk. Also condemned were remarks made by anyone trying to incite the movement into acting violently. Protesters condemn reports of violence by students and workers as vile tactics to side-track them from the main issues of transformation and outsourcing in higher education institutions. Beyond this, these tactics are used to justify UJ's bullying stunts and dismissive attitude.

On arrival at the UJ Kingsway gate, strikers were met with numerous SAPS and Johannesburg Municipality Police Department (JMPD) vehicles, including big 'gumba gumbas' (armoured police vehicles) like the ones used during the arrests on 6 November. On the opposite end of the gate, the hired UJ bouncers were gathered in what seemed like a briefing session before they were set loose to attack workers and students. Meanwhile, protesters sat along the sides of the drop-off zone on a mission to spend the night outside the UJ gates until Rensburg came out to engage them. The continuation of the mission to occupy UJ showed a commitment on the side of the workers and students alliance to see their demands through. The general consensus governing this commitment was that workers had nothing more to lose since dismissals had started the previous week. The determination was relentless with both students and workers understanding what was at stake – the future of transformation. LB

*Itumeleng Moabi is a researcher at the Centre for Education Rights and Transformation at the University of Johannesburg.*

# NMMU ends outsourcing

The **Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU)** Council has taken note of, and salutes, the struggle that has been waged by students and workers for a more equal, socially-just society. The NMMU wishes to state its full commitment to creating progressive opportunities for working-class students to access the university and for workers to enjoy equitable and just conditions of service.

We received representation from students and service workers at a time when council met to discuss two issues, namely student debt and insourcing of services.

The decisions I am going to be sharing with you are the outcome of these deliberations.

NMMU Council has resolved to commit the University to ending outsourcing of service workers as this practice leads to exploitation of labour and unethical practices not in line with NMMU's core values.

As the process of preparing for in-sourcing of service labour is underway, and as a measure of goodwill, Council has instructed management to put into place the following immediate relief measures:

- Across the board minimum wage guaranteed to each service worker of R5,000 per month cost to company.
- The new minimum wage level will come into effect on 1 December 2015 until service workers in key sectors are in-sourced.
- During the university shut-down period, such workers will continue to receive the same level of pay and benefits.
- Study benefits currently available to NMMU permanent staff will be available to all service workers employed in outsourced companies.
- Staff currently employed in outsourced services will have access to University clinic services for medical treatment.

Council furthermore commits the University management to immediately work with representatives of organised labour, students and workers employed in outsourced companies at NMMU on a process towards in-sourcing contracts of service workers. These steps must include, among others, possible renegotiation of current contracts without putting job security at risk and limiting financial losses, and phasing in-sourcing of service contracts from the beginning of 2016.

Turning to student debt demands, Council has determined for 2015 the following measures for immediate implementation:

- debt relief for all National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) students with zero-EFC (expected family contributions)
- debt relief for all NSFAS-eligible students with outstanding balances
- debt relief for students falling in the 'missing middle' income brackets who are academically deserving
- removal of the requirement for upfront payment for students falling in the 'missing middle' income bracket
- lifting the threshold of qualification for financial assistance
- student representatives to inform other students about this who have already left campus.

Council furthermore calls on government to ensure an effective and adequate system for debt relief for students from financially-disadvantaged backgrounds and that this be put into place for 2016 and beyond to ensure access of the poor to University education. Council has also instructed the university management to expand mobilisation of funding from external sources to support poor students wishing to study at post-graduate levels in 2016 and beyond. LB

Judge Ronnie Pillay
Chairperson, NMMU Council

# Fixing minimum wages in SA

## Where do you start?

How is the national minimum wage to be determined in South Africa? **Eddie Cottle** suggests some things to take into account.

The struggle for a national minimum wage (NMW) in South Africa has a long history having been waged largely by organised workers' formations since the 1930s. These efforts have taken various forms from open class conflict to more subdued trade union representation to various governments of the day. Most of these representations by the labour movement to government were made for the introduction of a minimum wage system that would enforce minimum wages across all industries in South Africa. It was only after the Marikana Massacre and the farm-workers' revolt of 2012 that the African National Congress (ANC)-led government decided to revisit the introduction of a NMW, initially through agreeing to an investigation.

The contents of various reports of task teams have not been made public and the rank-and-file members of the trade unions have not been involved in democratic processes to decide where to fix a NMW. The following should be taken into consideration in determining a NMW for South Africa.

The main consideration should be to raise poverty line of R2,648 per month for a household as the primary goal of any minimum wage policy to increase the incomes of those at the very bottom of the wage scale and, in so doing, lift them out of poverty. We should also consider that the majority of workers' incomes are being determined solely by the employer as 69% or 8-million formal-sector workers are not directly covered by any form of collective bargaining. Only 31% or 3.6-million workers benefit from some form of collective bargaining.

The NMW must therefore, by its very nature, be universal. This is to enable the lowest paid worker, most of whom are women, but all workers, regardless of their location in a particular sector or industry, to be lifted out of lifelong poverty.

In many countries the NMW is set using the figure of 35% to 45% of the national average wage or 40% to 60% of the median wage, argue Belser & Sobeck. According to Statistics South Africa's Quarterly Employment Statistics (QES), the average monthly income for the formal non-agricultural sector was R16,470 in November 2014. In South Africa, the average minimum wage, based on the average wage level, would therefore be somewhere between R5,766 and R7,412. If the minimum wage is based on 50% to 60% of the median wage of R3,033, it would result in a wage of R1,517 to R1,820. Clearly, using the average and median wage as the rate at which to fix a NMW would either be too high (as it almost exceeds the highest minimum for all industries) or too low (since it is below the poverty line). This would leave the majority of workers trapped in poverty.

On the other hand, using the national median wage of R3,033 would clearly mean setting it too close to the household poverty level of R2,648 per month. Another suggestion could be to fix the NMW in relation to the Labour Research Services' (LRS') median minimum wage amount of R3,600 per month for all industries.

There is much concern that a high NMW may increase unemployment and that there is a difference between conditions for economic sectors involved in the export sector and those that essentially serve the domestic market. A NMW that is fixed at a level that is considered too high might lead to considerable retrenchments in the agricultural sector. In the famous 2012 farm workers' revolt in the Western Cape farm workers demanded a minimum wage of R3,000, and on the other hand the Marikana platinum mine striking workers demanded a living wage of R12,500. What is important is that workers themselves have their own perspective on what their needs are and what a minimum wage and a living wage should be regardless of what certain experts may argue.

In broader terms the figure of R3,000 in 2012 was what farm workers felt would take them out of a poverty wage and provide a minimum wage they could live on. Would it therefore be feasible to use the LRS median minimum wage of R3,600 as a benchmark for all industries to fix a NMW in 2015 or is it still too close to the poverty level?

Finally, we cannot set a benchmark for the NMW without first examining the most important benchmark for workers themselves. This consists of a living wage which should be based on any working-class family being able to afford a low-cost house and is called a housing-based living wage. According to LRS, a housing-based living wage is premised on two important assumptions, namely:

1. That housing is the largest item of expenditure in household income.
2. That a living wage can be derived from the monthly cost of housing if this is set at a particular percentage of total income.

According to the banking industry a household should look at spending no more than a third (33.33%) of its monthly income (after tax and other deductions) on monthly bond repayments.

First National Bank's Property Barometer for former 'township' markets indicates that the average house price is R323,000 in 2015. Using the bank's bond calculator, we arrive at a monthly bond cost of R3,067 and a qualifying minimum gross income of R10,224 per month. We have thus derived a housing-based living wage of R10,224 per month for 2015.

It thus appears that, in order to take workers out of the poverty wage system inherited from apartheid, the NMW would have to be located somewhere between the all industries median minimum wage of R3,600 and the housing-based living wage of R10,224. An important consideration is that the fixing of a NMW should not be set too high so that it is confused with a living wage.

If the all industries median wage of R3,600 is acceptable then workers covered by sectoral determinations (ranging from domestic workers to workers employed in the private security industry) and workers employed in construction, finance, wholesale and retail then about 7-million workers out of the total of 11.7-million formal sector workers in South Africa stand to benefit. The extent of the coverage depends on how high the NMW is finally set between the all-industries and the housing-based living wage benchmarks.

But how feasible would it be to adopt a universal NMW without shedding jobs and causing harm to the broader economy?

Of all the sectors studied (wholesale and retail, domestic workers, forestry, taxi and security) the researchers at the University of Cape Town (UCT) found it was only the agricultural sector where there was significant occurrence of unemployment after the implementation of the agriculture sectoral determination of 2003. However, reports of economic growth in the agricultural sector remained positive and thus there were no economic shocks (even in exports) that could have caused the unemployment in the sector's largest employers, namely, citrus, maize and grapes, write Bhorat, & Mayet.

LRS's findings on employment in the agriculture sector over time indicate that the largest drop (just over 500,000) in employment took place in 2001, two years prior to the implementation of the 2003 sectoral determination. However, employment increased again between 2005 and 2006 by 181,000 jobs and dropped steadily until a low of 627,000 in 2011 then started to increase again to 891,000 in the first quarter of 2015. This represents an increase of 20% or an additional 182,000 jobs in the first quarter of 2015 when compared to the first quarter of 2014. Employment levels thus returned to the level of 2003 when the sectoral determination was first implemented.

The drop in employment of 55,000 farm workers by 2014 is thus a very small decline given the magnitude of the increase in the minimum

*Domestic workers will benefit from a national minimum wage. Credit: William Matlala.*

wage and looking at employment levels over the long-term. What the employment figures show is that most farmers had in fact absorbed a massive increase in the new minimum wage of R105 a day, a 50% increase (on the prior R69 a day) in 2013.

Workers also gained tremendously with an increase in the wage bill of R1,5-billion in 2013 and a further R1,6-billion in 2014. However, the wage determination has modestly increased real average wages and the overall wage bill was only 10.6% of total farming costs in 2013, according to the Department of Agriculture. Additionally, the department says the sector registered strongest growth of 5.6% in 2014, up from 1.5% in 2013. The sector's growth was because of the R25,1-billion (13.2%) increase in gross income from agricultural products in 2014 compared to 2013. Thus profit levels in the agriculture sector increased despite the introduction of the sectoral determination for farm workers in 2003 and the increase of 50% in farm workers' wages in 2013.

A 2014 study by the Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies (PLAAS) at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) sums up the experience of the agricultural sector in relation to minimum wages. It shows that employment figures in the agricultural sector indicate a trend towards stabilisation of employment along with a significant shift from casual and seasonal to permanent employment, that is, both these factors are reversals of previous trends. What the experience in agriculture (an export sector) and minimum wage determinations indicate is that there is no mechanical relationship between wages and employment where increases in wages automatically lead to greater unemployment. The simplistic argument that increased wages lead to unemployment is not supported by evidence and instead what we observe is increased employment and increased profitability. Thus, besides financial gains, farm workers have also scored a change from casual to permanent employment, including a reduction of workers' weekly working hours from 47 (2008) to 46 hours, writes Statistics South Africa.

A NMW is a powerful weapon in the hands of labour to fight poverty wages and is both reasonable and necessary. A NMW is not about a 'normal' opposing of material interests between workers and the bosses, it is one of guarding the working class from decay, demoralisation and ruin. It is the trade union movement that has historically fought against poverty wages and it is only the labour movement that can make a NMW a reality. LB

*This article is based on extracts from a booklet by Eddie Cottle: 'Towards a National Minimum Wage in South Africa', International Labour Organisation, Geneva.*

# Exploring workplace conflict

## Cosatu Workers' Survey and 2013/14 strike wave

Workplace conflict can be dealt with through addressing inequality and being innovative in transforming workplaces including upward progression for young workers, writes **Neva Makgetla**.

Strikes in mining and, to a lesser extent, the metals industry were unusually prolonged and bitter during 2013/2014. In the North West, 70,000 miners went on strike for five months until July 2014, following two years of on-and-off strikes with relatively high levels of violence, unprocedural actions and inter-union rivalry. In the metals industry, a month's strike in the auto components industry in 2013 was followed by another month-long strike across the metals sector in July 2014. In the end, the strikes achieved an annual average increase of 4% to 5% above inflation for workers in the lowest band in each industry. Other workers in the two industries secured increases of between 1% and 2% above inflation. According to Bowman and Isaacs, the annual cost to employers in the mining industry is estimated at around 25% above inflation for the coming three years.

These were the first strikes since 1994 to have a significant impact on the national economy. The mining strike saw a 40% fall in platinum exports,

which constituted almost 10% of South Africa's total foreign sales in 2014. Auto production in July 2014 fell by close to 30%, following a similar fall during the 2013 strike. What then can the 2012 Cosatu Workers' Survey tell us about the factors behind the strikes in these industries? Of the total of 2,293 workers who said they were union members in the Survey, there were 53 miners in the North West province who were all members of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) – as well as 158 in NUM outside of the North West, and 233 workers who were members of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa). The analysis suggests:

- In both industries, unionised workers were paid well above the median for formal workers, including in manufacturing. In other words, the bitterness of the actions did not arise simply out of low pay by South African standards. Rather, the evidence suggests they were fuelled by the persistence of profound inequalities inside and outside the workplace combined with a lack of career mobility for ordinary workers. In the Cosatu Survey, this situation was reflected in the workers' experience that private sector employers still discriminate against and even abuse black workers in the workplace.
- The Cosatu Survey also showed that union members in the North West platinum mines were unusually young, relatively well educated but in low-skilled jobs, and distrusted their union – at that time, almost exclusively NUM – while reporting high levels of racial discrimination and abuse by their employers.

These findings point to the failure to transform the apartheid workplace even for relatively well-paid formal sector workers. The result is an unusually high degree of workplace conflict and anger, aggravated by extreme economic and social inequality in society as a whole. On the platinum belt, where employment doubled between 2001 and 2011, these problems were compounded by the stresses associated with rapid growth in mining employment, which resulted in poor housing, transport and social infrastructure provision as well as requiring rapid growth in management and union structures. The next part of this article reviews information on workers' pay, overall inequality and workplace conflict, using national data as well as the Cosatu Workers' Survey. Further, it draws upon the Survey to explore specific factors behind workplace conflict on the platinum belt. The concluding section argues that transforming the apartheid workplace is critical for inclusive growth. That, in turn, requires agreement on what constitutes a decent workplace as well as living conditions for workers and how to get there.

## STRIKING INEQUALITY?

In 2012, the Cosatu Survey found that both miners and metalworkers were better paid than other union members apart from the social service professions (that is, primarily education and nursing). It found that in the mining, metals and auto sectors, more than 80% of union members who said they were skilled workers or labourers earned over R2,500 a month. In contrast, in other manufacturing and private-sector activities, less than 70% of workers earned over R2,500. Only the public sector provided higher pay than metals and mining for skilled production workers.

The Cosatu Survey findings are borne out by Statistics South Africa's Labour Market Dynamics dataset. The latter found that in 2013, the median pay for workers in mining and metals was between R5,000 and R6,000 a month – around twice the median for all employees, which was R3,000. Pay for workers in manufacturing outside of metals, in contrast, was more or less the same as in construction and retail.

The worst-paid sectors were agriculture and domestic work, neither of which had a significant union presence. Pay rose substantially in both of these sectors from the mid-2000s after the government introduced sectoral minimum wages (through sectoral determinations under the Basic Conditions of Employment Act). Still, in mid-2014 the legal minimums were well below the norm in the rest of the economy, at either R1,618 or R1,878 per month, depending on the area, for domestic workers, and R2,420 for farm workers. Most workers did not actually receive the legal minimum, partly because of employer resistance and partly because many domestic workers did not have full-time jobs.

Income levels for informal-sector workers were similar to those in agriculture and domestic work. These workers were largely self-employed, however, and therefore not subject to the protection afforded by labour laws or minimum wages. In short, the bitter 2014 strikes in mining and metals did not result from low pay compared to other South African workers. Instead, the main causes appear to be extraordinarily high levels of economic inequality both overall and within the industries themselves, combined with the failure to transform supervisory practices, end discrimination and support career mobility in the workplace.

According to the 2013 Labour Market Dynamics dataset, around a third of domestic workers had paid work for less than 30 hours a week. In contrast, fewer than 5% of farm-workers said they usually worked under 40 hours a week.

## INEQUALITY IN SOUTH AFRICA

Inequality in South Africa remains an outlier by global standards, which places a significant burden on labour relations. Where earnings and economic opportunities are deeply inequitable, many workers will measure success in wage negotiations not by past increases or by standards in other industries, but against the lifestyles of employers and the economic and political upper classes in general. Of the 90 countries that reported a Gini coefficient in the World Development Indicators from 2007 to 2011, South Africa was one of only three countries where the figure exceeded 0.60 in the late 2000s. In contrast, the vast majority of countries reported Gini coefficients between 0.30 and 0.45. In South Africa, the richest 10% of households captured around half of the national income, while the poorest 60% received about 10%. The available data does not permit a realistic assessment of trends in overall inequality from 1994.

Apartheid entrenched relationships that reproduced the unequal distribution of income in South Africa, with unusually strong inequalities in the following areas:

- ownership of productive assets of all kinds, combined with market institutions and infrastructure systems that effectively excluded most small and rural entrepreneurs
- educational systems, although after 1994 differences were increasingly linked to class and location rather than race
- access to jobs, with only around 40% of adults in employment in 1994, and only 20% in the former so-called 'homeland' regions, compared to the global norm of 60%
- work organisation and the associated remuneration systems that were shaped to deskill and prevent promotions for the majority of workers as the basis for improving conditions for supervisors and more skilled employees.

In sum, South Africa remained amongst the most inequitable countries in the world, which added to workplace stress. We now consider the available evidence on how these inequalities played themselves out within the workplace.

## APARTHEID WORKPLACE

The Cosatu Survey found that in the private sector, perceptions of racial discrimination and abuse remained high in 2012, especially amongst black union members. Some 45% of African union members said their employer discriminated against black people in hiring and promotions and 38% said their employer abused black people on the job. The figures were significantly lower for Africans who did not belong to unions, and lower still for non-Africans. All groups saw far less discrimination against black people in the public sector.

The racialised nature of workplace relations also emerged in the fact that when it came to non-Africans, perceptions were reversed: compared to Africans, non-Africans saw greater abuse of non-Africans by the employer. Still, even in the public sector, only 14% of non-Africans said the employer discriminated against their group.

Perceptions of discrimination and abuse remained widespread in large part because the workplace relations and organisation shaped by apartheid, with the associated unfair inequalities and poor communication, persisted. The key elements of the apartheid workplace can be summarised as:

- Poorly trained supervisors with apparently arbitrary decision-making, alongside top-down and inconsistent communication.
- Virtually no career mobility or recognition of seniority for black workers, who did not have defined opportunities for promotion, access to qualifications, or pay notches for seniority. As a result, the only way to improve pay for most workers was to win an increase in the overall pay scale, which increased pressure and expectations on the outcome of wage negotiations for most workers.
- Unequal facilities such as toilets, showers and common rooms for different categories of workers in the same workplace.
- A lack of friendships across levels outside the workplace, in part because different groups lived in different communities.

These factors also led to unusually inequitable pay scales. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) measures inequality in pay by comparing the pay of the 10th percentile of wage earners (excluding employers and the self-employed) with that of the 90th percentile. By this measure, South Africa still has amongst the most unequal pay scales in the world, with a ratio of 22 between the 10th percentile and the 90th percentile in the formal sector alone. That compares to a norm of around nine for middle-income economies, and seven for high-income countries.

By this measure, pay in mining was more equitable than in most other industries in South Africa. Employees in the 10th percentile earned around a 10th as much as those in the 90th percentile. But employers captured most of the benefits of the commodity boom of the 2000s. From 1999 to 2002, the share of remuneration in total value added at factor cost in mining dropped from 51% to 38%, where it more or less stabilised. From 2011 to 2013, however, as mineral prices fell by

*Engineering strike: Workers take to the streets. Credit: William Matlala.*

approximately a quarter, the share of remuneration in value added increased from 34% to 40%.

The ratio between the 20th and 90th percentile can also be applied to compare sectors, although inequalities within industries are typically not as sharp as for the economy as a whole. Pay for formal employees in manufacturing was more inequitable than in mining, with heavy industry showing the greatest disparities. In manufacturing as a whole, the ratio from the 10th percentile to the 90th percentile for employees' pay was 19 to one. Within manufacturing, pay was particularly unequal in the metals industry, with a ratio of 20 between the 10th and the 90th percentile (calculated from Statistics South Africa 2014, series on employee earnings, formal sector, by industry).

From the early 2000s, the share of remuneration in manufacturing rose substantially, reaching unusually high levels by global standards. The increase was particularly pronounced in the metals industry. Given profoundly unequal pay systems, however, it is not clear how much of the increase went to ordinary workers. Deep inequalities in employee earnings were also associated with persistent differences in wages by race. Whites generally earned more than Africans with the same schooling, and the disparity rose with higher educational attainment. In part, the difference may have been related to age, but it also reflected the lingering link between race and career prospects.

In sum, apartheid left behind profoundly inequitable work organisation and pay structures, top-down supervisory practices and differentiated facilities. For both unions and employers, the challenge was to redesign the workplace – a difficult task when few in either group had experience of any other kind of working situation. Workers often could not articulate demands other than very high pay increases to compensate for the unpleasant environment at work (and in their communities, in the case of the vast majority of workers).

## MINERS IN THE NORTH WEST

Comparison between the North West sample of union members in mining with union members in mining in the rest of the country points to critical differences that help explain the bitterness of the 2014 strike. That said, at 53 members, the sample is fairly small and so the findings here are only indicative. Moreover, the non-member part of the Cosatu Survey cannot be analysed by sector, which means it is not possible to compare non-members to members. To start with, miners in the North West were significantly younger than in the rest of the country. In 2012, 40% of miners in the North West were under 30 years old, compared to 12% in the rest of the country. The relative youth of the North West miners reflects the rapid growth of the platinum industry. Between 2001 and 2008, platinum employment rose from just under 100,000 to 200,000. After the global financial crisis in 2008/9, employment in the industry stagnated. Despite this, the platinum sector increased from 24% of total mining

employment in 2001 to 38% in 2011. For comparison, iron ore, which after 2010 more or less equalled platinum in terms of the dollar value of exports, employed only 22,000 people in 2011.

The growth in the platinum sector drove the expansion of the mining industry in the North West. The number of miners in the North West climbed from 126,000 in 2001 to 179,000 in 2011, or by 3.6% per year. As a result, from 2001 to 2011, Bojanala District in the North West had the fastest growing population in the country outside of Gauteng. The affected municipalities did not provide adequate housing, commuter transport or social facilities for the influx of new workers. This situation often occurs during periods of mining booms in new areas that bring a sudden increase in the need for housing. It adds to stress in the workplace both because many in-coming workers have poor living quarters and because, in light of the lack of schools as well as homes, they often leave their families behind.

According to the Cosatu Survey, of organised miners, in the North West 20% said that poor housing was a major source of stress, compared to 13% in the rest of the country. Moreover, 13% of organised miners in the North West said conflict with their partner was a source of stress, compared to 3% in the rest of the country. In part because schooling expanded rapidly after 1994, the relatively young miners in the North West tended to be better educated than in the rest of the country. Some 53% of miners in the North West had passed matric, compared to 35% in the rest of the country. Nonetheless, 67% of North West miners said they were in unskilled work, compared to 53% in the rest of the country. This finding suggests a lack of career paths, including prospects for promotion, for most miners working on the platinum belt.

A similar conclusion can be drawn from the distribution of incomes. The wages of organised miners in the North West were much more clustered than for miners in the rest of the country. Over half of organised miners in the North West earned between R5,000 and R8,000, while another third earned from R2,500 to R5,000. Virtually none earned less than R2,500, and only one in seven earned more than R8,000. In contrast, one in four organised miners in the rest of the country earned over R8,000.

The evidence also suggests that management practices in the North West were worse than in the rest of the country. Some 57% of organised miners in the province claimed their employer discriminated in promotions and hiring practices based on race. That compared to 44% of miners in the rest of the country, and 30% for all union-member respondents.

Furthermore, 53% of organised miners in the North West said their employer abused black workers in the workplace, compared to 36% in the rest of the country. For all union respondents nationally, the figure was only 23%.

Compared to organised miners in the rest of the country, miners in North West reported fewer workplace structures where they interacted with employers. Over four out of five miners in all regions said there were shop steward-management committees and health and safety committees where they worked. But in the North West they were less likely to have other kinds of joint committees than in other provinces.

Organised miners in the North West also felt unusually alienated from the NUM, their union at the time of the survey in 2012. Only 29% of miner members in the North West said they had a lot of influence over their shop stewards compared to the rest of the country.

Only 50% of miner members said they would ask shop stewards for help if afraid of dismissal or discipline, compared to 65% in other provinces. They were more likely, than other members of NUM to ask their union office or someone outside of the union for help instead.

Moreover, 29% of miner members claimed they had personally seen corruption in their union, compared to 18% of other organised miners – and 12% of union members in other Cosatu affiliates. By far the most common form of corruption cited was bribes of shop stewards or organisers by management.

In part, these findings reflect the relative youth of union structures in the North West mines. In 2012 the average miner had been a union member for seven-and-a-half years, compared to 10 years for the rest of NUM.

Two other figures suggest that NUM was not as entrenched or effective on the platinum belt as in the rest of the country:

- Of NUM members in North West, 98% did not know who their union leaders were, compared to 83% in the rest of the country.
- In terms of benefits, 32% of miner members in the North West said they got funeral benefits from the union, compared to 43% in the rest of the country, while just 4% got other benefits (bursaries, insurance, loans or medical) compared to 25% of miner members in the rest of the country.

Even in 2012, at the time of the Cosatu Survey and before the 2013 strike and the massacre, miners in Marikana were significantly more likely to say that strikes had involved violence or intimidation by employers or workers. Amongst miners in the

North West, 25% said there had been violence or intimidation by police or management, compared to 7% in the rest of the country. Moreover, 18% said there had been violence or intimidation by strike supporters in the North West, compared to 3% in the rest of the country.

In short, the Cosatu Workers' Survey suggests that even in 2012, organised miners in the North West were younger as well as more distrustful of both their employers and NUM than miners in the rest of the country. They also appeared to have less career mobility than their counterparts in other provinces.

Finally, asked what political leader best represents them, 24% of organised miners in the North West said Julius Malema, who had been expelled from the African National Congress (ANC) a few months before the Survey. For the rest of NUM and other Cosatu affiliates, the figure was just over 5%.

## CONCLUSIONS

The strikes in key industries in 2013 and 2014 demonstrated that South Africa cannot look to accelerated economic growth as the way to deal with the profound inequalities left by apartheid. Rather, if more is not done to ensure inclusive growth, contestation about ownership and policies, combined with workplace unrest, will make sustained growth highly unlikely, at least in the absence of another prolonged global commodity boom.

The strikes also underscore that workplace inequalities, rooted in apartheid work organisation and poor supervisory and management practices, form a pillar of overall inequality. It is difficult, however to find evidence on specifics. Here, the Cosatu Survey fills a gap by providing some important information on worker attitudes, which in turn, reflect the realities of racial inequality, the lack of career mobility and poor communication and supervision in many workplaces.

Transforming the workplace, however, requires innovative approaches. On the one hand, wage negotiations and the associated laws and dispute settlement systems are not designed to facilitate structural change. They aim to manage the labour market, not to re-shape long-term work relations. Moreover, it often proves difficult for participants to articulate demands for a transformed workplace. On the other hand, workplaces and production processes vary greatly, so the state cannot simply dictate an efficient or desirable solution. As a starting point, it would be helpful to develop indicators of what a decent workplace may look like that can be monitored and promoted. These indicators must go beyond the minimum assumed internationally in order to address specific legacies of apartheid. Specific requirements include:

- Improved supervisory and management practices and workplace communication systems, including effective and fair mechanisms for workers to register complaints about their supervisors. Managers in the workplace often lack training of any kind in human resources or diversity management; they may speak a different language from the people they supervise; and there are frequently no ways for workers to raise issues or explain their side of the story. Often decisions on issues such as shifts, work allocation, promotions and pay notches are made without much, if any, accountability to the affected workers.
- Shared facilities for all people working in the same workplace, whatever their position.
- Career mobility for all workers, linked to training and well-defined, merit-based promotion opportunities. As long as workers know they cannot ever move into higher-level jobs, they can only look to higher base pay for an improvement in their conditions. Moreover, for most people, career prospects form an important component in their sense of dignity and respect.
- Seniority notches, including for contract workers, which aim to recognise and reward experience over time. Given the history of arbitrary, discriminatory and divisive pay increases, seniority notches, which are usually between 1% and 2% a year, would have to be almost automatic. The aim is to reward workers for incremental improvements in their work as a result of experience, and to improve retention.

If agreement can be reached on what constitutes a decent workplace, as opposed to the inherited systems from apartheid, then it becomes easier to find ways to improve conditions for ordinary workers in ways that speak to their position in the production process as well as their pay. LB

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# Unlocking labour laws

## Impact of the *Barnard* decision

The Constitutional Court handed down an unanimous judgment that a decision taken by the police commissioner, as head of the South African Police Service, not to promote Renate Barnard to the position of superintendent on the grounds of her race was fair discrimination in terms of section 9 of the Constitution and section 6 of the Employment Equity Act. **Shamima Gaibie** explains the judgment.

***Section 9 of the Constitution is central to this debate. It provides:***

Section 9(2): 'Equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms. To promote the achievement of equality, legislative and other measures designed to protect or advance persons, or categories of persons, disadvantaged by unfair discrimination may be taken.'

Section 9(3) and (4) prohibit unfair discrimination.

Section 9(5): 'Discrimination on one or more of the grounds listed in subsection (3) is unfair unless it is established that the discrimination is fair.'

***Section 6 of the Employment Equity Act is the equivalent provision and directly relevant to employment matters.***

Section 6(1): 'No person may unfairly discriminate, directly or indirectly, against an employee, in any employment policy or practice, on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, family responsibility, ethnic or social

origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, HIV status, conscience, belief, political opinion, culture, language and birth.'

Section 6(2) recognises that: 'It is not unfair discrimination to –

(a) take affirmative action measures consistent with the purpose of this Act; or

(b) distinguish, exclude or prefer any person on the basis of an inherent requirement of a job.'

***How is the disadvantaged group or how are the beneficiaries of affirmative action identified?***

Should there be a difference in treatment between those who make up the disadvantaged group either on the basis of colour or on the basis that some of them have not in fact suffered disadvantage? If so, how should such a difference be applied and what criteria would justify such a difference in treatment? Should the application of affirmative action measures be balanced against the cost to those who have been deliberately excluded?

In 2004 the Constitutional Court in *Minister of Finance v Van Heerden* had occasion to interpret these provisions.

***The fit between the aim of equality and the measures to achieve equality***

Should there be a relationship between the aim and the measures? If so, how close should the fit be? In *Van Heerden* the Constitutional Court stated that the remedial measures must be 'reasonably capable of attaining the desired outcome'.

This excludes measures which are arbitrary, capricious, or display naked preference, or are not reasonably likely to achieve the end of advancing or benefiting the interests of those who have been disadvantaged by unfair discrimination. In other words, the Constitutional Court requires the measures to meet the standard of reasonableness, and not of necessity.

***How does the Constitutional Court determine whether a measure meets the standard of reasonableness?***

In *Van Heerden*, Moseneke J established a three-stage test for determining whether a measure falls within section 9(2):

- First, the measure must target persons or categories of persons who have been disadvantaged by unfair discrimination.
- Second, the measure must be designed to protect or advance such persons or categories of persons.
- Third, the measures must promote the achievement of equality.

***First stage – categories of persons***

The Constitution leaves the detail of the potential beneficiaries of affirmative action deliberately vague and open ended.

While race will be the permeating feature of affirmative action measures, the Constitutional Court recognise that the purpose of section 9(2) is to redress disadvantages based not only on race but also on the basis of gender and class and 'other levels and forms of social differentiation and systematic under-privilege, which still persist'.

In contrast, section 1 of the Employment Equity Act (EEA) identifies the following three distinct categories of beneficiaries:

- black people,
- women of all races; and
- people with disabilities.

The category of black people is intended to cover the same racial categories that are reminiscent of the apartheid era, such as 'African', 'coloured' and 'Indian'. Does this identification of beneficiaries mean that all members of those categories should benefit simply because they share the same protected characteristic, or is something more needed?

Put another way, should middle-class blacks benefit even though they are affluent and no longer experience either racial or socio-economic disadvantage?

Moseneke J held that the measure should be assessed by 'whether an overwhelming majority of members of the favoured class are persons designated as disadvantaged by unfair exclusion'.

Mokgoro J's separate but concurring judgment was more unequivocal in this regard. According to her, actual disadvantage does not have to be demonstrated, as membership of the group identified by legislation is all that is needed to benefit from affirmative action measures.

***Second stage – the measures must be designed to protect or advance such persons or categories of persons***

As indicated earlier, the measures 'must be reasonably capable of attaining the desired outcome'. The meaning of what is 'reasonably possible' is open-ended and the courts will have to develop appropriate jurisprudence in this regard over time.

According to Currie & De Waal, 'it is necessary to show both the purpose of the programme in question and the means selected are reasonably capable of meeting that purpose. This requires affirmative action programmes to be carefully constructed to achieve equality'.

In an attempt to grapple with this requirement, our courts have developed the principle of rationality. The following principles have emerged from the jurisprudence thus far:

- There must be a policy or programme through which

affirmative action measures are to be effected for the purposes of ensuring accountability and transparency.

- An affirmative action policy or practice that is haphazard, random and overhasty could hardly be described as measures designed to achieve something.
- The refusal to promote an employee in circumstances where an employment equity plan is not yet in existence constitutes unfair discrimination.
- Shortlisting formulae aimed at excluding members of a particular race are essentially discriminatory and irrational.
- The refusal to promote an applicant on the basis of the application of an affirmative action measure in circumstances where the employer's affirmative action targets have been reached and the applicant is the best candidate for the post is arbitrary and unfair.
- The refusal to promote an applicant in consequence of an erroneous application of an employment equity plan is arbitrary and unfairly discriminatory.
- Employment policies or programmes which afford absolute preference to members of designated groups who meet the minimum job requirements are not compatible with the variety of factors that need to be taken into account for an employment decision to meet the constitutional requirements of fairness and proportionality.
- In appropriate circumstances, the imperatives of 'efficiency' and 'service delivery' in the public service are factors that must be taken into account in the implementation of an employment equity programme.

***Third stage – the measures must promote the achievement of equality***

In determining whether a measure promotes the achievement of equality, the Constitutional Court requires us to assess whether the measure will 'in the long term promote equality' and it requires a consideration as to whether the measure constitutes an abuse of power or imposes 'such substantial and undue harm on those excluded from its benefits that the long term constitutional goal will be threatened'.

Mokgoro J, distanced herself from the third stage of the Moseneke test, in the following terms:

'This distinction is in my view important. It would frustrate the goal of section 9(2) if measures enacted in terms of it paid undue attention to those disadvantaged by the measure when that disadvantage is merely an invariable result and not the aim of the measure. The goal of transformation would be impeded if individual complainants who are aggrieved by restitutionary measures could argue that the measures unfairly discriminated against them because of their undue impact on them … It is for this reason that the equality jurisprudence developed by this Court in the context of section 9(3) is unsuited to analysis under section 9(2). The test as established by cases such as *Harkson v Lane NO and President of the Republic of South Africa v Hugo* would focus unduly on the position of the complainant to be appropriate to the section 9(2) analysis.'

This difference in approach between Moseneke J and Mokgoro J leads us to an important question: on the assumption that an employer's employment equity plan complied with the threefold test set out by Moseneke J, would all measures that fall within the proposed targets qualify for protection from any unfair discrimination claims?

Moseneke J said the following in relation to this issue: 'It is therefore incumbent on Courts to scrutinise in each equality claim the situation of the complainants in society; their history and vulnerability; the history, nature and purpose of the discriminatory practice and whether it ameliorates or adds to group disadvantage in the real life context, in order to determine its fairness or otherwise in light of the values of our Constitution. In the assessment of fairness or otherwise a flexible but 'situation sensitive' approach is indispensable because of shifting patterns of hurtful discrimination and stereotypical response in our evolving democratic society …'

Moseneke J went on to explain: 'If a measure properly falls within the ambit of section 9(2) it does not constitute unfair discrimination. However, if the measure does not fall within section 9(2), and it constitutes discrimination on a prohibited ground, it will be necessary to resort to the *Harksen* test in order to ascertain whether the measures offend the anti-discrimination prohibition in section 9(3).'

'When a measure is challenged as violating the equality provision, its defender may meet the claim by showing that the measure is contemplated by section 9(2) in that it promotes the achievement of equality and is designed to protect and advance persons disadvantaged by unfair discrimination.' LB

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# Cosatu celebrates 30 years

Founded 30 years ago, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) had its 30th anniversary at Curries Fountain in Durban and the federation's president **Sdumo Dlamini** reflected on its history, current activities and plan of action for the future.

Cosatu's 12th National Congress held in Johannesburg in November was 'clear about our weaknesses and confident about our existing strengths and even more confident about our future'. Tribute was paid to the federation's predecessor the South African Congress of Trade Unions (Sactu) and also to the Freedom Charter.

## ON NELSON MANDELA

Dlamini paid tribute to former president, Nelson Mandela, who passed on two years ago. He described Mandela as 'Isithwalandwe, the volunteer in chief in the active resistance, the first real Commander-in-Chief of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), the first black president of democratic South Africa, a rare human being who joined the galaxy of iconic symbols representing the best in humanity to ever walk on planet earth ...'

'Mandela, remains an outstanding revolutionary of all times, similar to other outstanding iconic revolutionaries such as Simon Bolivar who led the Hispanic American people's revolution, Samora Machel who led the liberation struggle in Mozambique, Antonio Agostinho Neto of Angola, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Patrice Lumumba of the Democratic Republic of Congo and Thomas Sankara of Burkina Faso, Che Guevara and Fidel Castro in Cuba. All these are leaders who wanted nothing for themselves but everything for their people!'

Mandela 'signed into law a Constitution with a Bill of Rights that elevates and protects workers right to strike' among other laws. For instance, section 25 of the Constitution allowed the 'government to effect laws that will ensure redistribution of wealth to the people'.

'Mandela signed these legislations despite a serious and heightened campaign by the Democratic Alliance-led opposition who went all out to mobilise against those laws'.

'As workers we know, respect and cherish comrade Mandela as our own leader, and a true freedom fighter who insisted that 'the organisation of the workers had a crucial role to play, ensuring that the poor and the working people remain at the centre of our national efforts, thinking, planning and execution'.

## ON 12TH NATIONAL CONGRESS

Dlamini introduced the newly elected leadership of Cosatu: 1st Deputy President Tyotyo James, 2nd Deputy President Zingiswa Losi, National Treasurer Freda Oosthuysen, General Secretary Bheki Ntshalintshali, and Deputy General Secretary Solly Phetoe. Phetoe is a former Cosatu provincial secretary for the North West Province.

'... 30 years ago workers declared that they wanted a Cosatu that was based on its constitution and founding principles of one country – one federation, one union, one industry, paid up membership, worker control, worker solidarity, non–racialism and unity. It is these principles which we have continued to practise and defend with our lives'.

'As this leadership collective including leaders from all our affiliates, we are ready to lead you to battle based on these principles based on our battle cry "An injury to one is an injury to all".

## PRIORITIES

The three main priorities from the congress were 'back to basics', an aggressive political programme' and 'building and strengthening the South African Communist Party (SACP) to advance the struggle for socialism'.

'Going back to basics means going back to ensuring that leaders, organisers and shop stewards must spend their time and the resources of the organisation servicing workers at the workplace. No leader must spend the resources on anything else except on advancing workers' interests. Leaders' primary responsibility is to defend workers' interests and not employers' fears and profits'.


*All smiles: Zingiswa Losi (2nd Deputy President), Tyotyo James (1st Deputy President), Sdumo Dlamini (President) and Freda Oosthysen (Treasurer) shortly after reelection at the Cosatu 12th National Congress in Midrand, Johannesburg.*

'No one must go to a constitutional meeting without a mandates from workers. We are going back to ensuring that leaders report to workers about every decision and resolution taken in meetings and also to:

- ensure that for everything we do, it is done on the basis of mandate from workers
- defend the Constitution and the founding principles and policies of Cosatu
- fight corruption inside our ranks, in the private sector and in the public sector.

'We will work to ensure that Cosatu remains independent and is conscious of the dangers of being co-opted by employers and politicians.'

'We will continue to strike a balance between the immediate concerns of our members to the need for "stability" and "national development" without subordinating each to the other.'

On Cosatu's political programme he added: 'It includes waging campaigns on the ground to build the Alliance (African National Congress (ANC), SACP. We will work on the ground to build an alliance which respects and implements its own resolutions. We want an alliance which is at the centre of driving the National Democratic Revolution (NDR)'.

On the SACP he said: 'We will also consciously work to build a strong SACP that has the resources and capacity to advance the struggle to deepen and advance the NDR as a direct path to socialism.'

'This work will include consciously working to strengthen the socialist axis under the leadership of the SACP and to advance in a programmatic way the struggle for socialism. This will also include participating in the SACP process towards a decision on how it will relate to electoral politics in the future guided by our 9th Congress resolution and the SACP's 12th National Congress and its Special National Congress resolution in this regard.'

Cosatu will mobilise for an ANC victory in local government elections in 2016. 'We are going back to our communities to mobilise our people for the overwhelming victory of the ANC in the forthcoming local government election.'

## NATIONALISE STRATEGIC SECTORS

'We want our government to nationalise specific strategic sectors of the economy. We want a state mining company, a state bank, a state pharmaceutical company, SASOL and Accellor Mittal to be nationalised now. We want the implementation of the National Health Insurance now. We want free education at all levels as agreed in Polokwane and in Mangaung. Cosatu also wanted to be involved in determining the figures for the national minimum wage.'

On the African continent Cosatu will campaign for re-industrialisation and globally against neo-liberalism.

'The South African Students Congress (Sasco) and the progressive youth alliance has led the way in the fight for free education which included demands against outsourcing in many higher education institutions.'

## FIGHTING CORRUPTION AND BUSINESS UNIONISM

'We will be leading a campaign exposing corruption in the private and public sectors and call for decisive punitive action against perpetrators. The current framework is not hard hitting enough against offenders in the public sector. It allows business to pay their way out and get away with murder as in the cases of collusion as exposed by the Competition Commission. We demand the strengthening of the legal framework so that responsible company executives can face prosecution.'

'With regard to the scourge of business unionism, we shall systematically develop binding policy frameworks, which must address challenges arising from our investment arms, union-linked retirement funds, procurement of goods and services and fund raising.' LB

*This article is based on a speech by Cosatu President Sdumo Dlamini made at the 30th Anniversary rally at Curries Fountain in Durban where Cosatu was founded in 1985.*

# Sefikile

## The place of abundant cattle

Injustice has repeated itself in Sefikile. Colonialism and apartheid gave land title to traditional authorities who in turn gave mining rights to Anglo Platinum Union mine while pocketing the royalties. Whilst some plots were sold some mineworkers constructed shacks on the farm, write **Sonwabile Mnwana** and **Gavin Capps**.

Sefikile village is located on the south-western portion of the farm Spitskop – roughly 20km northeast of the Pilanesberg Mountain range. Clustered around a dramatically beautiful hillock, it stands adjacent to Amplats' Union section, which is the oldest platinum mine in the area. Yet, despite yielding royalties to the Bakgatla chieftaincy since 1982, Sefikile itself is deeply impoverished. The only visible public amenities are two overcrowded schools, a half-built clinic, and a rutted, rocky track with a billboard proclaiming this 'internal road is maintained by the Anglo Platinum Union mine'.

The evident underdevelopment of Sefikile has led local residents to contest the tribal registration of Spitskop. They argue that the farm was purchased by their forefathers and that the revenues from the mine should directly flow to the community rather than to the chief in Moruleng. Their claim in turn reveals a critical connection between the multi-ethnic origins of the village, its distinctive system of governance and the history of this group-land acquisition. However, while this has generated a remarkably inclusive political identity, new group boundaries are also being erected as mine migrants stake their own claims in Spitskop, including through a burgeoning land market.

### 'ATAMELANG!' THE DIVERSE ORIGINS

In contrast to the villages of Lesethleng and Motlhabe, which trace their origins to the 19th century splits within the ruling lineage, Sefikile has had a profoundly multi-ethnic character from its inception.

Tradition has it that when Mzilikazi's Ndebele arrived at the small rocky mountain, that would come to form the heart of the settlement, they declared 'Sifikile!' – 'We have arrived!' 'We are here!' Moreover, a number of their captives were left behind when Mzilikazi was driven westwards by the voortrekkers. Over time these founders of the Sefikile settlement were joined by other refugees from the difaqane, former labour tenants from white-owned farms, and other Africans displaced by various forms of injustice during the colonial and apartheid eras.

The politically inclusive character of the village is well illustrated by the story of one of its sections, colloquially known as Atamelang. Initially, a group of former labour tenants established a settlement some distance from Sefikile. However, as time went on they were accepted as part of the community and allocated residential land on the north-eastern side, across the Sefatlhane river. As one villager put it, 'we said to them "atamelang!" ["come closer!"]. Now you are part of Sefikile.'

There is also one kgoro – ward, called Morema in Sefikile. Throughout its history, families and individuals of diverse ethnic origins have also been integrated into the village through this kgoro.

But what was it that had first bound all these disparate elements together and created a sense of community into which others could be invited? In researching the land claim of the ba-Sefikile, it became apparent that there was a crucial relationship between the group acquisition of Spitskop and the creation of their distinctive political identity. What follows is a three part account of this land and political history, based on oral histories and archival material.

We begin by providing a brief description of the independent syndicate of 52 families that acquired Spitskop between 1910 and 1912. We then detail the process through which the farm was purchased and registered in two lots. Finally, we discuss how

land-use rights on the farm gradually diminished as the operations of the Union mine intensified during the second half of the 20th century. This ignited popular resistance against both the mine and the tribal authority, which further strengthened and defined the ba-Sefikile identity.

## MULTI-ETHNIC SYNDICATE

According to our informants, the independent syndicate that purchased Spitskop was ethnically mixed. It comprised African families who came from different areas and found a niche around the Sefikile mountain during the last half of the 19th century. Some were Bakwena who originated from Sebilong near Thabazimbi. Others were Basotho. Some were Ndebele people who came with Mzilikazi, and remained behind when he left Pilanesberg in the late 1830s. Some originated from the Bakgatla-ba-Mosetlha in Hammanskraal near Pretoria.

Evidently, when Spitskop was bought in the second decade of the 20th century there were relatively few families living in Sefikile. The village consisted of a loosely-scattered cluster of small homesteads around the mountain. Between 1912 and 1918, the Native Commissioner of Rustenburg recorded 50 to 59 'native families' living on Spitskop farm. If these numbers were accurate, then the claimants' argument that 52 families contributed towards the purchase of the farm may not be farfetched.

Oral traditions hold that the families who raised money for this purchase did so without an instruction from a chief. Kgosi Ramono Pilane of Bakgatla only came later in the process when the deed of sale had to be signed. The narratives converge on one name – a certain Reverend Caiphus Makgale. He was, the elders said, the person who collected the money, cattle, crops, goats, and other items for the purchase of the farm. Rev Makgale was a Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) minister, whose church was based at Sefikile.

Apparently, beyond proselytising, Rev Makgale also played a leadership role in the village. It is said that the reverend was also literate, and recorded the names of the buyers and their contributions.

In addition to their collective interest in Spitskop, the buyers had one other thing in common – an agrarian lifestyle. Tradition has it that some of the farm buyers were successful peasant farmers who raised a significant number of cattle and produced a wide range of crops.

This narrative is rooted in a popular aphorism passed on from generation to generation: 'Sefikile-sa-kgomole-mabele': It [the phrase] means this is a place where our grandparents had abundant cattle and crops. The cattle were happy here'.

Most elders in Sefikile had grown up farming with their parents. Without hesitation, they listed the range of crops they raised on Spitskop. These included mabele (sorghum), dinawa (beans), potatoes, sweet potatoes and pumpkins. At times they sold or bartered livestock and crops to meet other family and communal needs.

The main challenge facing them was a shortage of land for grazing and ploughing. The villagers had to lease some the white-owned portions of this farm. For instance, between 1926 and 1945 the African and European Investment Company (AEIC) leased the north-eastern half of the farm Spitskop to Africans living at Sefikile. The number of the lessees ranged between 44 and 51. The prices changed each year when a new contract was signed.

It was land shortage which first led the syndicate to purchase a portion of Spitskop. However, they were compelled to do so through the office of the Bakgatla chief, Ramono Pilane. The deed of sale, dated 28 October 1910, stated that Kgosi Ramono as the '[p]urchaser' agreed 'to buy certain remaining half part ... of and in the quitrent farm Spitskop No. 298 situate [sic] in the District of Rustenburg ... for sum of eight hundred pounds (£800) sterling'. The deed also acknowledged an initial payment of £260, broken down as follows:

- cash £149.10
- four large oxen at £35
- three small oxen at £6.10 each
- three cows at £7 each
- five goats at 15p each
- two Hammels [farm equipment used for crushing] at 15p each.

The transfer for this sale was registered on 28 August 1912 to 'Ramono Kgamanyane Pilane, a native chief in trust for the Bakgatla Tribe of Natives'.

Another significant portion of the farm Spitskop was purchased between 1916 and 1918. In 1919 this portion was transferred to the 'Minister of Native Affairs in Trust for Bakgatla Tribe of Natives Chief Linchwe K. Pilane'. Combined with the first purchase, this gave the Bakgatla chiefs full control and custodianship over the south-western half of Spitskop.

Registration of group-purchased farms in the name of a recognised chief and his tribe was, as we have seen, the only way African syndicates could formalise and maintain rights to such land at this time. A village elder in Sefikile, who was also a former government employee and retired businessman, captures the fundamental injustice at the heart of this administratively-driven tribal trusteeship:

'People bought land [here] before and after 1913. The apartheid laws deprived black people of the right to own land, even if they bought it. So, no one except the chief and the then Native Affairs Commissioner ... had the right [title] over whatever portion of land they bought, whether privately or not. If a group of people bought land, they had to give away that land into the custodianship of the chief. No chief ever bought a piece of land! Chiefs owned land by virtue of


*Not much to show for mining revenues: Homes at Sefikile. Credit: Sonwabile Mnwana.*

them being guardians ... they had to own land which was not bought by them ... So, my great grandfather is one of the people that bought the farm.'

After the farm was purchased, however, residential and agricultural plots were allocated for every household in the village. Grazing land was communal. New members who joined the village after the farm had been purchased were also granted ploughing and residential plots, thus themselves becoming ba-Sefikile. They were also allowed to graze and water their livestock on the farm. However, as the years went by, it became increasingly difficult for villagers to use this land to support agrarian production. This problem mainly resulted from drought and Union mine's unexpected entry onto village land. The mine had a particularly severe impact on villagers' land rights and livelihoods.

## VILLAGE-LEVEL GOVERNANCE

The multi-ethnic composition of the village of Sefikile links not only to the historical purchase of Spitskop, but also to the distinctive system of local governance which characterises this village. Although Sefikile was historically integrated into the territory under the administration of the Bakgatla Tribal Authority, until 2011 Bakgatla chiefs never formally appointed any dikgosana – headmen – to rule over the village. Thus, unlike other settlements in the Bakgatla area, Sefikile's dikgosana were neither derived from the lineage of the great Kgosi Pilane Pilane, nor did they inherit their position from their fathers. Rather, at different historical times, influential men voluntarily assumed this local leadership role.

These men undertook several tasks including dealing with disputes among residents, and distributing residential and agricultural plots. They also served as representatives of Sefikile in the tribal administration office in Moruleng. As such they were generally regarded as dikgosana – headmen – although they volunteered for this position. Nevertheless, these men also had to be endorsed and officially recognised by the Bakgatla chiefs in order to represent Sefikile in the tribal affairs, and at no time did women assume these positions. Sefikile had no 'kgosana' between 2009 and 2011.

Residents removed the previous headman on the alleged grounds of corruption. A group of activists who identified themselves as the Bakgatla-ba-Sefikile Traditional Community Association (BBSTCA) took over the leadership of the village. They elected a committee which administered community finances and allocation of residential land.

However, the BBSTCA itself soon lost popularity also because of allegations of corruption. It was claimed that these leaders had misused R1.2-million from Eskom, which had been paid to acquire servitude rights to construct a power station and to run power lines on Spitskop. It is said that Eskom paid this amount to the seven 'board of directors' of the BBSTCA on behalf of the community. Now dubbed 'The Gang of Seven', they are also accused of appropriating bribes from 'outsiders' – mainly migrant mine-workers – in exchange for residential plots.

In 2011 residents demanded that the BBSTCA leaders be removed from power. They also requested Kgosi Nyalala to appoint a kgosana in Sefikile. The chief immediately granted both demands. For the first time accepting his 'customary' prerogative to install a headman may have brought a degree of order, but tensions in Sefikile remain high.

According to some respondents, the chiefs have never fully regarded the people of Sefikile as part of the Bakgatla. 'The chiefs at Moruleng' – as they are commonly called – have allegedly given away land to incoming migrant groups without consulting local residents. Some assert that the chiefs were bribed.

## SINKGALALENG!

A significant portion of Spitskop farm is now leased to Union

for mining operations. Although the mine officially developed over Spitskop in the early 1970s, local farmers began losing their ploughing fields in the late 1940s when the mine started operations on Swartklip, an adjacent farm. Grazing land was fenced off for the mine's operations. According to some village elders, residents were never consulted before the mine came. The mine signed an agreement with the chief and simply occupied the land. Villagers nicknamed the mine Sinkgalaleng! – Don't undermine us! This is how an elder narrated his early encounter with Union Mine:

'I can remember clearly when they began mining in this village. I was about 10-years-old. On one side of this farm we were ploughing. On the other side we grazed cattle. There were families that had cattle posts on the part of the farm that is now occupied by the mine. They were removed by force from that area. There was no compensation from the mine.'

There have been sporadic uprisings against the mine. But these never proved particularly significant. However, matters took a different turn in the late 1990s when a group of village youth activists took up the struggle against the tribal authority and Union mine. The youth were concerned that, ever since mining began in Sefikile, residents had never benefited. Their initial focus was on getting jobs in the mine and public infrastructure in their village. The mine responded by funding two projects: the renovations at Sefikile Primary School and a short tarred road that runs along the western side of the village. Resistance subsided for a while.

Tensions surfaced again in 2006 when the people of Sefikile became aware that Amplats had been paying royalties for its operations on their village lands since 1982. The tribal administration in Moruleng had been receiving these payments. Towards the end of 2006 rumours circulated that Kgosi Nyalala was about to enter into another transaction with Amplats. He was in the process of converting future royalties from Union mine into a 15% equity stake. When this transaction was finalised and announced in the media in December 2006, the growing sense of disquiet broke into the open.

What had initially begun as a youth-led uprising now became broader village opposition to the royalty-to-equity conversion. Most residents – young and old – joined in and blockaded the road between the village and the mine. They demanded an urgent reversal of this transaction. It was during the peak of this conflict that some of the elders told the young protesters about the land purchase history. They learnt that Spitskop was not really a tribal purchase, but had been bought privately through the contributions of local families between 1910 and 1912. From that moment, the locus of the village struggle shifted. Contestation over Spitskop became central to the struggle against the Kgosi Nyalala and the mine.

The peak of this struggle was a court battle, which raged for almost two years between 2010 and 2011. On 14 June 2010 the BBSTCA filed a court application with the North Gauteng High Court to challenge tribal ownership of the farm. The BBSTCA represented the descendants of the 52 families who contributed towards the purchase of the farm between 1910 and 1912. This group sought a court order to compel the Minister of Rural Development and Land Affairs to transfer the ownership to the names of the original buying families. This application sought to effectively remove Kgosi Nyalala's custodianship over this property and its mining revenues.

North Gauteng High Court, 'probably because of lack of jurisdiction ... over this matter' transferred the application to the North West High Court on 31 January 2011. Judge Leeuw handed down her judgement on the case on 1 December 2011. She relied strongly on the perceived 'customary' custodianship of chiefs over communal land, and made reference to the Constitution and post-apartheid legislation that empowers chiefs to act as trustees over communal land. Citing section 211(3) of the Constitution, Leeuw argued: 'In this matter I am enjoined by the Constitution to recognise that land that is held by the kgosi or traditional leader on behalf of a tribal community should be dealt with in terms of legislations that have been enacted for the purpose of regulating amongst others, the ownership thereof as well as the role and powers of the traditional leaders.'

The judge dismissed the application of the BBSTCA with costs. The distorted conception of chiefly custodianship that evolved with the tribal-trust regime thus prevailed. The BBSTCA, apparently facing financial challenges, has been unable to challenge the judgment. But as mentioned, tensions and divisions had also emerged within this group when its leaders were accused of misusing community funds. This contributed significantly towards the BBSTCA's loss of popular support in Sefikile, but there are still many residents that want to take the land struggle forward.

But there are also other kinds of land disputes unfolding at the village level, which point to the potentially exclusionary nature of the prevailing conception of corporate community in Sefikile.

## THULA MTSWANA!

The impact of the mining operations is more visible in Sefikile than in any other village in the Bakgatla area. The loss of pastoral and agricultural land is among the most glaring consequences. Even more land has been lost as a result of the

mushrooming informal settlements around the village. The informal settlements provide home to thousands of migrant mineworkers and job seekers mainly from the Eastern Cape, Mozambique, Lesotho and other labour sending areas.

It is important to note that Union Mine operates using vertical and decline shafts. Unlike PPM, it is not opencast. As a result the immediate incursion of the mine on farm land was less drastic than at Lesethleng and Motlhabe. Deep-level mining, however, requires a much larger underground workforce which is largely recruited as migrant labour. After 1994, when the mines started to pay living-out allowances, migrant workers moved out of mine hostels and into informal settlements on surrounding land. This process led to local village challenges to customary authority taking an ethnic form. It was 'foreigners' who were perceived to be taking over agricultural land with the chief's approval, as well as the mine directly.

Migrant miners forced their way onto Sefikile's communal land and built informal settlements in the early 2000s. A village activist in Sefikile who was also a Union mineworker narrated the events that led to the establishment of the informal settlements:

'Foreigners are the mineworkers from the Free State and the Eastern Cape who are occupying our land by force. This all started when these guys began moving out of the hostel and occupied [mine] land behind this mine hostel [pointing through the window], the A Hostel. Unfortunately, the management of this mine removed them. Police came and demolished their shacks. That was when they began to occupy our ploughing and grazing fields at Sefikile. We tried to stop them. A conflict started. Two of our youth leaders were killed during that conflict.'

Residents of Sefikile pleaded with Kgosi Nyalala to intervene, but, despite several attempts to get the chief's intervention, he never acted. The largest informal settlement, Khwecheza, straddles the land between the Union mine and the original village of Sefikile. It was alleged that some of the occupants of Khwecheza paid the chief to get residential plots. Khwecheza has become an enormous shack settlement nicknamed by its inhabitants 'Thula Mtswana' – isiXhosa for 'Shut up Tswana'.

Residents of Sefikile generally refer to Khwecheza residents as 'foreigners'. A particularly virulent notion of 'foreigners' originated in the 1980s during the reign of former Bophuthatswana leader president Lucas Mangope, who often dealt harshly with non-Tswana migrant miners. Some residents narrate nostalgically how Mangope's Bophuthatswana police chased and arrested non-Tswana miners found wandering in the village. The arrested miners were at risk of losing their jobs and of being deported back to their 'homelands'.

When this study was conducted there were no services at Khwecheza except for a few communal taps and pit latrines in every small yards. There were no roads, electricity, health-care centres or even a school. From the ground at least, it appears that neither the mine nor the local municipality has shown any interest in upgrading Khwecheza. The fading edges of what used to be ploughing plots were the only sign that there was once productive agricultural land in the area now occupied by this informal settlement.

## KOMASINGLING TO MACHELA PATA

Informal sales of land by some members of prominent families have also increased social tensions in Sefikile. This practice began in the late 1990s. Two male residents of Sefikile sold portions of their ploughing fields as residential plots to unmarried women. Until that time customary law denied single women the right to own land. As more women entered the informal land market, this area soon developed into a new section of the village. It became known as Komasingling – the place of the singles – since it was mainly occupied by unmarried women. It is said that these residential plots were sold for between R2,500 and R5,000 each.

The chief and his traditional council in Moruleng did not intervene to stop the practice. Instead, they 'formalised' it by issuing stand cards for the women who had acquired stands. For the first time in Sefikile's history, unmarried women owned residential plots in their own names.

Customary law also excludes migrants from other ethnic groups from acquiring residential plots in the Bakgatla area. A stand card must be obtained from the Bakgatla-ba-Kgafela tribal administration office in Moruleng, and only a recognised village kgosana can forward the requisite letter of approval confirming that the applicant is a village resident and a member of the tribe. Here the 'land-sellers' spotted a new market opportunity. They bought up land much faster than the single women did. The name of this section had to change from Komasingling because it was no longer occupied only by single women. It was renamed Machela Pata – across the road. Mineworkers who buy these plots usually build rows of shacks and rent them out to other migrant miners.

Machela Pata has become the section of Sefikile with the most single-roomed shacks. Most of the new shack owners in this section are also isiXhosa speakers from the Eastern Cape. Renting out shacks seems to be the most lucrative business at Machela Pata. Between eight and 20 shacks can be found in one plot. Without any form of public infrastructure and services, Machela Pata, is now the most overcrowded section of Sefikile after Khwecheza. LB

# Student protests

## First big victory won

University students were furious and their cry 'Fees must fall!' rang out on campuses and sites of political power across the country. An historic victory over South African neo-liberalism was won through the most intense three-week burst of activist mobilisation since liberation from apartheid in 1994, writes **Patrick Bond**.

The liberation movement rulers in the African National Congress (ANC) have faced unprecedented socio-economic pressure and unrest. This is the most unequal of any major country, with a working class that the World Economic Forum (WEF) recently judged to be the most militant on earth for the fourth straight year, and a deregulated corporate elite which enjoys the world's third highest profits, yet which remains intent on looting the economy at a rate as fast as any. All these measures have amplified since the ANC took power in 1994. Suffering a 53% official poverty rate, South Africa witnessed 2,300 protests recorded by the police as 'violent' this year, a fifth more than last year.

The desperation flash point was the announcement of double-digit increases in university tuition fees. Students demonstrated not only against local managers at more than a dozen campuses. Their organisations united across the ideological spectrum, from socialist to nationalist to even the centre-right student wing of the main opposition party, and hit national targets.

They began by storming the parliamentary precinct in Cape Town on 21 October, then marched to the Johannesburg and Durban headquarters of the ANC on 22 and 23 October, and finally demonstrated – tens of thousands strong – at President Jacob Zuma's Union Buildings office in Pretoria on 23 October.

There, restraining fences were torn down by some of the activists and tyres and latrines were burned, with police once again responding by using stun grenades, rubber bullets and water cannons. Refusing to come out to address the crowd, instead Zuma held a press conference where he unexpectedly conceded to the students' main demand: no fee increase for 2016 (in spite of general price inflation around 5%).

### RACE TO CLASS

The current insurgency began were with sporadic acts of fury. At the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Durban, small groups of students burned an administration building and cars, and students were then caught bringing human excrement on campus, a tactic that was used successfully six months earlier to catalyse the dismantling of a hated statue at the University of Cape Town (UCT).

That was the #RhodesMustFall movement. Within a few weeks of a 'poo protest' in which excrement was hurled at the prominent likeness of 19th century colonial mining lord Cecil Rhodes, thousands cheered when the statue was removed from the scenic campus. But their other demands for university transformation and 'decolonisation' – racial equity, a different campus culture, curriculum reform, more indigenous African professors (there are only five out of more than 250 senior faculty at Cape Town) – were unsuccessful.

After a breather, at UCT and Johannesburg's University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), the country's two traditional sites of ruling-class reproduction, student protests revived. Of the dozen that erupted at tertiary institutions, these two were the best organised, most sustained and non-violent, mainly using the tactic of entrance blockages, then moving to the nearby arterial roads. Disciplined student leaders emphasised non-violent civil disobedience. Police brutality and occasional clashes with higher-income drivers who drove into the blockades did not deter the activists.


*Youthful energy: Students and workers had a night vigil outside Brixton police station in Johannesburg.*

On 21 October, inside parliament, the opposition Economic Freedom Fighters' (EFF) support for their cause came before Finance Minister Nhlanhla Nene delivered his medium-term budget speech, which EFF leaders ardently tried to postpone, before being forcefully evicted. Outside, courageous students nearly broke their way into the main hall where Nene was speaking.

But although there is still plenty of scope for fiscal expansiveness, Nene's budget was heartless: no new money for universities (just condemnation of 'unconstructive' student protests), and tokenistic monthly increases in grant payments to the poorest pensioners and disabled people. Although the latter is less than one per cent, Nene dishonestly claimed that this plus a prior tiny raise offered in February are 'in line with long-term inflation'. (The inflation rate for poor people is much higher than the norm due to the far higher share of faster-inflating food, housing and electricity costs in their budgets.)

Nene did find funds for a three-year R813-billion infrastructure programme whose major projects promote, first, exceptionally destructive coal exports mainly by multinational corporations; second, the Durban port-petrochemical complex's expansion; and third, iron-ore exports. Yet there is vast world over-capacity in coal, shipping and steel, with South Africa's second major steel producer barely avoiding bankruptcy. But these white elephant mega-projects continue to get the lion's share of state, parastatal and private infrastructure funding.

The influence of big business on Nene's budget team is blatant: for example, the world's largest mining house, BHP Billiton, still gets electricity at one tenth the price of ordinary consumers, and persistent corporate tax evasion and illicit financial flows are now notorious. Another pro-corporate investment that will be looked at with increasing suspicion by society the more it becomes active, starting next year, is the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, SA) bank, whose target capitalisation (spread among five countries) is R1,4-trillion.

## 'COMMUNIST' MINISTER

Whether seen through the eyes of students, workers, the poor, women and environmentalists, Nene's budget was a recipe for intensified social struggle. Yet this was the first time since 1991, when Value Added Tax (VAT) was imposed during apartheid at the behest of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), that a major spontaneous protest targeted the finance minister at such a sensitive moment. For Nene, the only objective appeared to be appeasing the banks' credit ratings agencies.

As Reuters reported, Nene 'downplayed the effect of university students storming parliament as he delivered his medium-term budget on the credit rating of Africa's most advanced economy. "What matters for the ratings agencies is our response as government in addressing these challenges," he said about the students' demands to keep tuition fees unchanged.'

Government's response was a combination of widely-condemned police brutality and ineffectual seduction by the ruling

alliance's left flank, especially the South African Communist Party (SACP) whose leader Blade Nzimande is also minister of Higher Education. He was shouted down by protesters outside parliament when he tried to explain why their demand was unrealistic and that they would face a 6% increase.

Nzimande's 2013 Ministerial Committee for the Review of the Funding of Universities found 'the amount of government funding is not sufficient to meet the needs of the public university system ... Government should increase the funding for higher education, to be more in line with international levels of expenditure.' But Nzimande had refused to release a prior commissioned study favourable to the idea of free tertiary education.

## ANTI-AUSTERITY ACTIVISM

Students simply refused to accept Nzimande's 6% tuition rise, given that inflation is currently less than 5%. So the march on Pretoria two days later – and threat of a full storming of the Union Buildings – must have been the decisive factor in the state's reversal. Although the cost of a deferring a tuition increase entirely will only be R2.1-billion, by making this concession Zuma has given encouragement to many more future protests and Pretoria marches.

For those in the society watching and rooting for the students, this was a critical moment, perhaps ultimately as important as the breakthrough Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) fight for free AIDS medicines 15 years ago. For, as Nene signalled, a more damaging period of austerity looms. South African Growth Domestic Product (GDP) growth will be only 1.5% this year and probably the same in 2016, lower than population growth. Thanks to Nene's tight-fistedness, there will be a relatively small budget deficit (3.3% of GDP), but financial commentators are full of threats about South Africa following Brazil's recent downgrading to a junk-bond rating by Fitch, Standard & Poors and Moodys, the creditors' cruel rating agencies.

*In solidarity: Wits FeesMustFall leader Nompendulo Mkatshwa.*

The class war rages on. Other student demands remain outstanding: free tertiary education for poor and working-class people as the overall goal, and an end to labour casualisation and outsourcing for low-paid university workers. Many such workers barely receive R1,400/month, and with a poverty line of R840/person/month, raising a family on starvation wages is impossible.

The task of retaining this visionary student-worker alliance and maintaining a national presence will be as difficult as is the multi-class 'United Front' organising now underway. Difficult yes, but now, nothing seems impossible in this exceptional site of class struggle. LB

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# Myth of a green economy

## What strategy for labour?

The myth of a green company is based on capitalist thinking and development models. Instead what is needed is a democratic ecosocialist approach, writes **Eddie Cottle**.

In recent years a new mantra for economic growth has been discovered by environmental economists because of the widespread disillusionment with the prevailing economic paradigm and it is called the 'Green Economy'. The key problem identified by these economists concerning the ecological crisis is the 'gross misallocation of capital', whereby relatively little was invested in renewable energy and protecting and conserving the environment. The mechanisms for dealing with this 'misallocation' are, in short, better public policies, including pricing and regulatory measures (such as eco-taxes) to change the market which ignores social and environmental externalities. According to the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) the state, in particular, will further redirect public investment to green investment and greening public procurement.

The green economy, as envisioned by the UNEP, favours neither a state- nor market-led economy but is applicable to both. In the UNEP 2011 report, 'Towards a Green Economy', however, it is no accident that there is no elaboration on what a state-led model could achieve compared to a privatised model precisely because of the bias towards the latter, hence the report's focus on 'growth'. The UNEP report insists 'that the greening of economies is not generally a drag on growth but rather a new engine of growth'. Is it not true, as purported by leading scientists, that in ecological terms, the economy has already grown to such an extent that we have surpassed the boundaries of climate change, biodiversity and the nitrogen cycle? Is it not also true that this ecological crisis has as its primary source, the accumulation of capital by a few at the expense of nature and society as a whole? Is it not common knowledge today that growth has led to increased inequality and a general decline in living standards and increased precarious forms of employment on a global scale?

It appears therefore, that not only is there climate change denial, but even more dangerous is that those who do believe in climate change reduce the ecological crisis to a problem of a 'gross misallocation of capital'. In so doing, the globalised system of monopoly capitalism, as a system of infinite expansion and continuous growth of capital, is pardoned. According to Foster there is an abstract focus on 'green growth' rather than a concrete analysis of capital accumulation and how greater efficiency leads to greater economic growth. It is therefore not difficult to understand why the call for a Green Economy is universally accepted by business and governments alike, precisely because it merely tinkers with the system and 'going green' is the new cash cow to be milked mostly through public funds for green subsidies for green investments, green procurements and green finance!

Similarly, the International Trade Union Council (ITUC) calls for 'orienting financing towards investments generating green and decent jobs and transforming traditional sectors into 'greener' ones'. In fact, ITUC in its 2012 report, 'Growing Green and Decent Jobs' demonstrated that investments of 2% of GDP in the green economy over each of the next five years in 12 countries could create up to 48-million new jobs. In this way, 'Investing in "green" measures during these times of economic crisis may deliver a "double-dividend" by providing jobs and revitalising the economy, while also contributing to the improvement of the environment'. The changes will require workers to be 'trained in new, sustainable processes and technologies'.


*March for renewable energy: Workers take to the streets at COP 17 in Durban 2012. Credit: William Matlala.*

The perspective of ITUC is consistent with the 'technological fix' approach which does not see a conflict between 'protecting jobs and protecting the environment' and that a low carbon economy can be realised through 'orienting financing' to ensure growth and technological innovation write Ra¨thzel and Uzzell. The ITUC position is therefore consistent with the 'gross misallocation of capital' thesis of UNEP. However, the ITUC and UNEP position is based on a confusion concerning its demand for 'increased investments in green technologies and strategies' as a means for 'protecting jobs and protecting the environment'.

## TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE AND JAVON'S PARADOX

'It is wholly a confusion of ideas to suppose that the economical use of fuel is equivalent to a diminished consumption. The very contrary is the truth ... It is the very economy of its use which leads to its extensive consumption. It has been so in the past, and it will be so in the future'.

Stanley Jevon was a leading British economist and logician of the 19th century. In the 'The Coal Question: An Inquiry Concerning the Progress of the Nation, and the Probable Exhaustion of Our Coal-Mines' published in 1865, Jevon covered a breadth of concepts on energy depletion that have recently been revisited by writers covering the subject of peak oil writes Gottron. While studying the consumption of coal, Jevon observed that every new technological innovation in the production of steam engines had resulted in a more thermodynamically efficient engine. However, every succeeding model that was more efficient actually led to a higher demand for coal since, the more efficient the use of coal became the more its price dropped leading to increased demand. Greater efficiency derived from technological development translated into a better economic use of coal in a blast furnace which allowed for increased iron production which, in turn translated firstly into an expansion of industrial production and secondly, improved capacity to 'capture more of the world market — hence more demand for coal' write Foster, Clark and York.

Since the 1980s, in the United States, for example, the technological advancements in lowering motor vehicles' petrol consumption have increased the average miles per gallon used by 30% but have not reduced the overall energy consumed by motor vehicles. In other words, the reduction of fuel consumption

per unit of use (gallon) at the same time leads to 'its extensive consumption'.

An empirical study, *The Weight of Nations* released by the World Resources Institute in 2000, on material outflows in recent decades in five industrial nations (namely, Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, the United States, and Japan) showed that 'efficiency gains brought by technology and new management practices have been offset by [increases in] the scale of economic growth'.

A closer look at alternative energy will show that it operates under the same paradox. Alternative energy is essentially a high-tech manufacturing process on which the full supply chain from raw materials to manufacturing is still very fossil fuel dependent. Alternative energy manufacture relies heavily on the exploitation of rare-earth elements such as platinum, palladium, gallium, indium and lithium argues Fridley. If we take the example of the ground-breaking thin-film solar panel invented by the University of Johannesburg (and manufactured by Bosch) which is more cost efficient and flexible than silicon panels, it is reliant on indium which is also widely used in flat-screen monitors. However, the estimated reserves of indium are only 13 years. In order to move to an alternative high-tech energy society, the demand for a range of metals would go well beyond the levels of world production today and the extraction and production of the minerals themselves are reliant on fossil-fuel inputs.

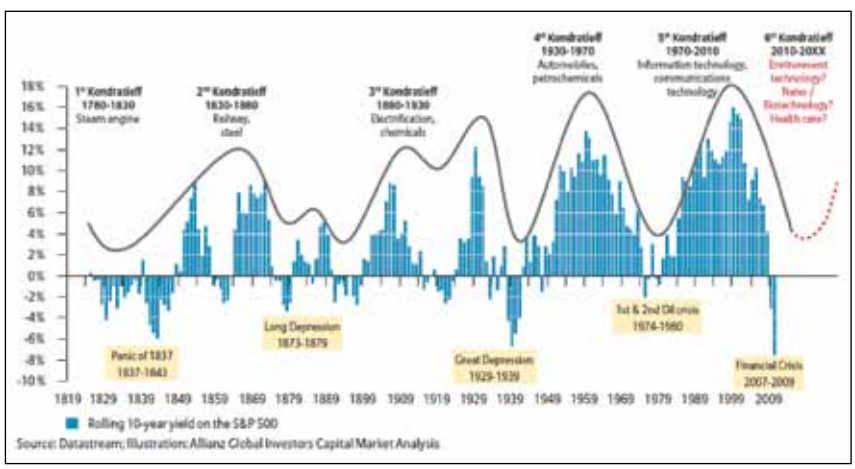
Furthermore, it takes up to 20 to 25 five years for the full commercialisation of new technologies to be marketed. As mass production produces cost savings thereby lowering the price of technologies, this leads to increased demand for those technologies which in turn will lead to increased resource extraction instead of conservation, thereby accelerating economic growth and consequently also carbon emissions. As Jevons's Paradox would have it, green growth and indeed green technology are dependent on increased fossil fuel consumption for the 'mining of raw materials, transport, manufacturing, construction, maintenance, and decommissioning'.

## CAPITALISM AND TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

It is important to note that savings in materials and energy, in the context of a given process of production, are nothing new and are part of the history of capitalist development. According to Dicken the long waves of capitalist development known as the Kondratiev Wave of more or less 50 years' duration have each brought about significant technological changes with each having its own techno-economic paradigm. For example, the first Kondratieff was sparked by the textiles industry leading to the development of the steam engine. The second was steel manufacture which sped up the expansion of railway systems for mass transportation. The third was the transition to electricity and chemicals' production on a mass scale. Fourth, we have the mass production of automobiles and petro-chemicals to allow for mass individual transport. Fifth, there is the information and communications technology of today. There is now consideration that we may be entering a sixth Kondratieff based on new environmental technologies, nanotechnology and bio-technology. According to the World Energy Council, the market for renewable energy was estimated to be US$635-billion in 2010. By 2020, it is expected to grow to US$1.9-trillion.

According to the IPCC 5th Assessment Report 'Climate Change 2013: The Physical Science Basis': 'It is certain that Global Mean Surface Temperature (GMST) has increased since the late 19th century. Each of the past three decades has been warmer than all the previous decades in the instrumental record, and the decade of the 2000s has been the warmest.' Each of the technological long waves or Kondratieff waves were dependant on the consumption and production of fossil fuel energy for economic growth and each of the waves brought about greater amounts of carbon emissions as the capitalist system expanded and has contributed immensely to climate change. Will a sixth Kondratieff be able to develop technologies that are able to ensure growth while also protecting jobs and the environment?

**Figure 1: Kondratieff cycles – long waves of prosperity. Rolling 10-year yield on the S&P 500 since 1814 till March 2009 (in % p.a.)**



**The Montreal Protocol is a good example of how governments can ensure the implementation of technology-forcing regulation in reducing CFCs. On the other hand, the Montreal Protocol also demonstrates the limitations of leaving technological changes in the hands of the capitalist class, who, with even the most limited changes required in substance substitution and air conditioning redesign, took about nine years to do so.**

## MONTREAL PROTOCOL

Indeed, the much heralded 'success' case was the Montreal Protocol (1987) which provided for the regulation of chloro-fluorocarbons (CFCs), where affected industries 'recognised that product and process improvements can often simultaneously enhance environmental performance, while improving quality and lowering costs,' write Rothenberg and Maxwell.

'Large multinational electronics firms considered the global restrictions a challenge, and moved swiftly to develop alternatives to CFC-based chemicals. Their counterparts in the automobile industry, however, delayed making a commitment to air-conditioning systems which run on CF substitutes. The differences between the two industries can only be explained by a complex mix of technical, organisational, and institutional factors.'

The electronics industry moved more easily to the use of newer no-clean fluxes when soldering or using aqueous cleaning on printed circuit boards, printed wiring assemblies and other electronic assemblies. The industry had used assemblies that are cleaned either by CFC-ll3 spray, immersion in liquid or immersion in vapour. In this way production processes not only reduced cleaning costs but meant that the electronics industry did not have to invest in new capital equipment. The South African company, Northern Telecom led the electronics industry in 1998 to use substitutes, followed by the American AT&T and IBM.

Through investigations conducted by Swedish companies, Volvo and Saab, the automobile industry decided to use HFC-134a which has zero ozone depleting potential (ODP). The downside was that it has a global warming potential for use as the alternative coolant in automobile air-conditioning systems. It was utilised because ozone depletion was an immediate threat, and there were no other alternatives at the time with a zero ODP. In 1988, two large chemical manufacturers, DuPont (American) and ICI (Dutch), began to accelerate their commercialisation to meet the needs of the auto industry. Redesigning the air-conditioning system however took more time than the switch made by the electronics industry. Companies only started phasing out old technologies in 1992 and a complete phase-out was not achieved until 1995 due to the higher costs associated with introducing a new air-conditioning system.

The Montreal Protocol is a good example of how governments can ensure the implementation of technology-forcing regulation in reducing CFCs. On the other hand, the Montreal Protocol also demonstrates the limitations of leaving technological changes in the hands of the capitalist class, who, with even the most limited changes required in substance substitution and air-conditioning redesign, took about nine years to do so. This despite the fact that in both industries the phase-out of CFCs did not require radical breakthroughs in technology or radical changes in workplace organisation. According to Morales despite all the efforts by government and business, the result has been that, although the HFCs are less damaging to the ozone layer than CFCs, they add significantly to global warming and are more than 11,700 times more powerful than CO2. UNEP, adds 'the closing of the hole in the world's stratospheric ozone layer is still many decades away and the effects and interactions of ozone depletion on climate change are just starting to be understood'. The Montreal Protocol, while dealing successfully with CFC reduction, at the same time contributed to global warming.

The first lesson to draw from the Montreal Protocol is that it took the auto-industry nine years to adapt and phase-in an existing parallel condenser (radiator) already developed by Nissan to reduce costs. Despite the fact that many governments had readily signed the Protocol leading some commentators to argue that capitalism could indeed resolve serious ecological questions through social dialogue, technological change and innovation. In other words, the Montreal Protocol did not disrupt the imperative of capital accumulation, despite governments' technology-forcing regulation. It is this factor that is the key to the success of the Protocol. The second lesson is that it took considerably long for the auto-industry to phase-in a 'minor' technological adjustment to its cooling system due to the 'cost factor'. This demonstrates that capitalist accumulation cannot be managed in a sustainable manner merely through 'orienting financing' and technology-forcing regulation if we are to contain global warming.

From a historical perspective,


the Montreal Protocol pales in significance as a technology-forcing regulation when compared to making an industrial shift as in the war-time measures and conversion of production to that of armaments. In 1941, more than 3-million cars were manufactured in the United States. The government banned the production of cars, commercial trucks, or auto parts from February 1942 to October 1945. To the resentment of the auto industry, they were also given one month's notice to ensure a full conversion of production to wartime manufacture. Furthermore, the US government had not only forced car manufacturers to comply and convert production in line with wartime manufacture but also cooperate where much of the work took place in government-owned plants. Godwin states that a totally new kind of economic cooperation emerged to secure the 'planned' objectives of the government.

Thus an entire automotive industry was completely transformed almost overnight with a complete change in the type and quality of goods manufactured, changes in the further development of new technologies, reorganisation of production processes, full employment and the increase in the number of manufacturing plants. The technological changes were dramatic as the state invested heavily in research in order to win the war. The most important of these were, 'jet engines, computers, navigation systems, microwave ovens, synthetic materials and the technology to put man on the moon'. All these innovations came from technology invented and developed for the war effort. All these gave great impetus to the Fordist mass production Kondratiev starting in the 1930s.

What this example shows is that under capitalism it is only possible to place a ban on the activities of a highly pollutant industry through authoritarian measures in times of a war. I am attempting to demonstrate how it is possible to place a ban on the highly pollutant private auto manufacturers and put in their place a real substitution – a public transport system and research programmes for the development of viable alternatives, a measure which will in itself dramatically reduce CO2 emissions. The key finding of the UNEP report is that, based upon current global emissions, it is now less likely that the climate change threshold of 2°C will be maintained until 2020. Under capitalism, economic output normally tends to grow, except in periods of economic crisis. But if we take as our starting point that economic growth has already outstripped the capacity of the

environment and it is at a dangerous crossroads, then surely we should not be slowing down economic growth but reversing it. Despite the new state-subsidies for green production (read private accumulation), green jobs or green technology under the current 'paradigm shift' will still be subject to the laws of the capitalist market – a case of 'business as usual'.

## LABOUR AND JUST TRANSITION

Rosemberg's labour's demand for a Just Transition (JT) is defined as a 'tool the trade union movement shares with the international community, aimed at smoothing the shift towards a more sustainable society and providing hope for the capacity of a green economy to sustain decent jobs and livelihoods for all'. The six enabling conditions for a JT to take place are:

1. **Investment** – reorientation of finance in the public and private sectors towards a low carbon future.
2. **Research and early assessment** – increase research on the social dimensions of climate change linked to environmental impacts and economic sectors.
3. **Consultation and social dialogue** – prioritises good governance to involve parties concerned with and deciding on appropriate policies for sustainable development
4. **Education and training** – in mitigation and adaptation skills of workers for the structural shift to greening the economy.
5. **Social protection and security** – as the green transition will lead to job losses in areas which may shed jobs, social security is a condition for sustainable economic and social development
6. **Economic diversification** – a certain level of planning to ensure effects of adaptation and mitigation policies do not undermine social development goals.

The enabling condition merely builds on social aspects of the notion of 'sustainable development' (Olsen, 2010). This is no accident since the six enabling conditions for the JT have their foundations in the combined report of UNEP, ILO, the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) and ITUC titled, 'Green Jobs: Decent Work in a Low-Carbon World' published in 2008. The essence of the green jobs concept in UNEP, 'Towards a Green Economy' is the endorsed position of labour. The most glaring omission from a JT is the lack of a strategy of de-commodification which is the only realistic means to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

While ITUC does provide a critique of the excesses of neo-liberal capitalism it offers a social democratic solution which itself is still bound by the hegemony of growth, the market and the instrument of class collaboration, that is, social dialogue. This 'social-democratic unionism' as Hyman described evolved from its genesis of anti-capitalist opposition which became a rival, 'as social democracy itself shifted – explicitly or implicitly – from the goal of revolutionary transformation to that of evolutionary reform'. It is for these reasons that the ITUC position is trapped in the 'gross misallocation of capital' thesis and offers no alternatives at a time when the private sector is openly producing a major jobs crisis as well as an environmental catastrophe.

## WHAT STRATEGY FOR LABOUR?

First, labour should start developing perspectives and struggle for a democratic-ecosocialist-state. The global crisis is not over and the private sector will therefore increase its competition for the earth's resources despite paying lip service to sustainable development imperatives. Over the past 30 years the role of the state has been cut back as direct financier, energy developer, energy supplier, researcher and inventor of technology. The state should once again reclaim its position. Job creation should therefore depend on an expanded public sector and also extend the public sphere into high carbon emitting industries which are considered as traditionally private, such as auto manufacturing, argues Ginden. An example of this is during the second world war when the US closed car manufacturing completely (as did Russia, Britain and Germany) and within three months started producing tanks and war planes. In this case we should prioritise public transport only. Thus an active state-led de-commodification strategy is central to a low carbon future and only jobs that form part of this strategy will be called climate-jobs and counter the reformist concept of 'green jobs.

Second, the financing of a renewable energy path cannot be led by the private sector or be left in the hands of the World Bank, IMF and other financial institutions who are committed to the market imperative and corporatisation of the public sector. Not only will this lead to the increased debt of countries, especially in the Global South, but will ensure that a public roll-out of renewable energy is hampered, delayed or unaffordable for citizens. The global crisis is a private sector crisis. There has to be an alternative, public sector driven financing arrangement in which the profit motive does not prevail but where there is an understanding of 'a shared but differentiated future'. The need for a publicly driven financial alternative is paramount and will make ecological reparations to the Global South attainable.

Third, many economic sectors, including energy, were privatised and managed under expensive and wasteful public-private partnerships especially in the water and energy sectors where short-term shareholder interests dominate. The state should (re)nationalise

**The need to control carbon emissions and protect and regenerate our ecosystems implies a democratic planned system where all citizens are able to participate from local community to international level. This will ensure effective planning of life's basic needs all over the world, sharing the resources equitably amongst different countries and embarking on a process of sustainable development for all.**

industry in the public interest especially in the construction, water and energy sectors for the sake of the common good. The re-development of the building sector within government, especially at municipal level, is central to begin a programme of upgrading energy efficiency, and energy renovation of existing buildings. State investment programmes should therefore be to build and develop public capacity so that dependency on so-called green procurement from the private sector is dramatically reduced or eliminated. Countries of the Global North should not create new investments because of their ecological overshoot and instead only focus on low rates of maintenance, while countries of the Global South should be allowed to invest in socially necessary new investments and maintenance. Thus, in the Global North, a strategy of planned rate of de-growth should be employed.

Fourth, eco-technology development should in principle be for the collective good and not for the market which seeks to make a profit, otherwise the price will prohibit most countries from affording an alternative renewable energy path. Public sector production is necessary as an avenue to ensure sustainable roll-out of an alternative planned energy production and supply sector. In this situation the market-based notion of intellectual property rights will have to be challenged and the state should resume its leading role in developing alternative research and development on renewable energy, renewable materials, energy-efficient facilities management, and waste management.

Fifth, the need to control carbon emissions and protect and regenerate our ecosystems implies a democratic planned system where all citizens are able to participate from local community to international level. This will ensure effective planning of life's basic needs all over the world, sharing the resources equitably amongst different countries and embarking on a process of sustainable development for all. The global fetish with growth defined in gross domestic product (GDP) as a means for job creation should give way to a measurement of 'social de-commodified growth' (SDG) in terms of targets for housing, health, education, access to services, and even in terms of leisure, happiness and well-being. It demands a transformational change in global production and consumption systems to make our societies and workplaces sustainable and to safeguard and promote decent climate jobs for all.

The Global South must be given the space to develop their productive forces in an environmentally sustainable way as many countries still lack adequate infrastructure for basic service provision such as water and sanitation, roads, social housing, safe and affordable public transport and electricity generation based on renewable sources. This kind of SDG will only happen if economic life is made more democratic and more responsive to social and environmental needs. This clearly means that the labour movement should be working towards fashioning a democratic-ecosocialist-state.

Finally, Eco-Socialist Education and Training which focuses on the production for needs (use-value) rather than profit (exchange-value) and the labour process within the human-nature dynamic. This involves the overall transformation of the use-value structure of production and so too that of the transformation of all the sciences and educational institutions so they meet the objective of implementing a new production model that is more sustainable for the environment.

## CONCLUSION

It is undeniable today that economic growth is the main driver of ecological catastrophe but it has to be recognised that it is at the same time underpinned by capital accumulation. The irony is that even those progressives who believe in a green economy can imagine the collapse of our planet but cannot imagine a life without capitalism.

According to the Living Planet Report, the only living example of sustainable development is in Cuba which not only has high human development but also a sustainable ecological footprint. Is there a reason that the UNEP environmental economists forgot to mention the advances of this state-led democratically planned economy? For, if they looked closer, they would have discovered that the main driver of this sustainability is social de-commodification. LB

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# Knowledge through deep, systemic study and community engagement

Whether the knowledge we seek is academic or not, especially in regard to important social issues, good understanding can be augmented by respectful scholarly engagement with communities, especially those that are directly implicated in such social issues. In this regard some basic principles to inform thinking and action should be considered, writes **Enver Motala**.

One of the conditions for producing useful knowledge has to be that it is based on deep and systematic analysis and study. The idea that we need to study things deeply and systematically is not only applicable to academic knowledge. Especially when studying societies, superficial knowledge is almost useless and can actually be harmful. There are many good reasons why deep study is important in understanding societies, or communities within them. Superficial studies generally examine one or other aspect of a social or community issue. For example, in relation to the schooling system a great deal of attention is paid to the matriculation examination at the end of each year. There is considerable media coverage about the examinations and the results achieved. The general picture we get from the media is about the poor results achieved in a number of provinces, the low passes especially in mathematics and the sciences, the wonderful symbols obtained by a small number of high performing students, 'good' and 'bad' schools and such similar information.

Academic researchers who follow these results dwell on the data and are called upon as experts to make judgments and pronouncements about the examinations, the education system, and governments' role in the schooling system and other such issues. Sometimes academics are even called upon to make comparisons between different schools, parts of the system or in 'comparative international studies'. Too often this is done without any real and systematic understanding of many of the complex factors that have to be taken into account. In effect, except for a few serious researchers, very little attention is paid to the deeper underlying reasons which could enable us to understand why students perform in the way they do in their various learning contexts.

To understand schooling (and other social) issues we have to understand not only the matriculation results themselves but a whole range of related social, economic, historical, and contextual issues. Ultimately, even issues relating to the personal circumstances of individual learners, their emotional and psychological states need understanding. Comparisons must be avoided unless we are absolutely clear about what is comparable and why.

For instance, making comparisons between the matriculation results obtained in well-resourced, stable, urban, middle and upper middle-class schools and schools in rural poor communities with no or little educational resources is simply untenable and seriously blighted. Sometimes comparisons are made where the language of teaching and learning and the home language are not the same with homes where, in addition, the language of teaching and learning is the same as the language used at home. Rural homes are not 'print rich' as it might be in middle-class homes. Similarly learning in a general environment provided by a social democratic political regime cannot easily be compared with that provided in a dictatorial political system. Indeed these comparisons cannot be made with ease even across seemingly similar political systems.

Good research and useful understanding requires much deeper analysis and the recognition of the complex issues which affect education. These include the socio-economic environment in which schooling takes place, the language of teaching and learning in relation to the language used in the homes of learners, the resources that exist in the home, the in-class strategies used by teachers, the resources available for learning, class-room sizes, the competencies and availability of good teachers and administrators, the stability of the school and even the habits, attitudes, culture and histories of the communities in which the research is located and other factors.

Importantly, the policy and political environment that frames the educational system as a whole at any particular period in the history of a society is critical. Without such deeper understanding only a superficial picture will be obtained. Such superficial understanding invariably gives rise to superficial 'solutions' which are not likely to have any beneficial effects and might actually worsen social problems. This means that good social knowledge can only be constructed by deeper and more thoughtful study in which a wide range of factors and fields of understanding are used.

## RECOGNISING DIRECT EXPERIENCE

Useful and systematic knowledge can be produced by engaging with and recognising the direct experience of individuals and their communities. There are many ways of ensuring the knowledge that has been developed by communities over many generations can be understood and used. This knowledge can hugely enhance our understanding of the kinds of issues that affect communities. This has to be done carefully and thoughtfully so that the knowledge which communities have is properly understood, acknowledged and not abused. Above all, this requires careful attention to the modes and purposes of such engagement so that the underlying issues and assumptions implied in the scholarly engagement are made explicit and has mutual value. Too much social science research violates the rights and dignity of the communities which have been researched. Too many communities have simply been used as objects for study without any consideration of the interests and perspectives, ideas and experiences of such communities.

Engaging meaningfully with communities can enhance our understanding of social issues and of society hugely. Communities are a valuable source of knowledge based on their direct experience, their attempts to solve the problems facing them and the struggles which they have faced over the years. Think of the communities that have endured and survived apartheid and it is obvious that they survived through finding ways to deal with its ravages and used their social, cultural and historical knowledge to do so. This knowledge will remain important for many communities given the continuity of the problems that have still not been resolved. That is how scholars who are socially engaged do their work – by being engaged with and in the issues that affect the communities they are a part of, by paying attention to the knowledge that such communities have developed over many years through their direct experience of the social issues. Even that is a complex process.

Associated with the idea of local knowledges, there is now an increasing body of critical thinking and writing arguing that a great deal of academic knowledge produced even in 'post-colonial' institutions exclude other and particularly local or indigenous ways of knowing. Ignoring the knowledges of local communities and whole 'nations' and continents has been the experience of most peoples of the world resulting from the violence of colonialism and conquest. This violence has mostly been written and talked about in relation to its political, economic and social effects experienced through economic exploitation, poverty, the denial of political and social rights, etc. What is not often referred to, is the tremendously negative impact of western colonialism on the knowledge systems, ideas, languages and traditions of communities and civilisations throughout the world and particularly in Latin America, Asia and Africa. The effect of this violence, that is, on the systems of knowledge of local communities, has been written about by writers like Dani Nabudere, Odora Hoppers, Shiv Visvanath, Howard Richards, V Y Mudimbe and many others.

Also the argument or view that only people who are university trained can produce knowledge which is deep and thoughtful is highly contestable. Several justifiable criticisms can be made about this view. It is very important to produce all kinds of knowledge and to be curious even though sometimes we might not know the immediate implications, meaning and effects of the knowledge we produce. Curiosity is very much a part of human life and it is strongly related to human imagination. Throughout human history many things have been learnt through the curiosity of ordinary people and these have inspired our best minds. Through it many great discoveries have been made and some of these have been accidental.

In societies like ours where we have so many difficult social challenges, so much to learn about what can be done about these social challenges, and such urgency to solve these issues because of their effects on so many people. It is vitally important that we also

rely on the curiosity, creativity, imagination and experience of communities to produce directly useful social knowledge. We cannot only be pre-occupied with our own 'curiosities' and regard them as superior to other knowledge. Minding our own 'curiosities alone would mean that we remain uninterested in the many challenges which society places before us as academics and scholars.

Can we really be indifferent to the condition of life of so many who are unable to exercise their basic human rights and can we be uncaring about the plight of so many in our societies who simply do not have the basic necessities of life? Regardless of whether we are called scholars or not, we cannot. Indeed if we are true scholars in and of society we will not avoid these issues and use our scholarship to address them. We know that there are many sources of good and reliable knowledge and that these could produce very useful ideas. We know also that we should be skillful and serious if we are to produce such useful knowledge because such knowledge must be produced with thoroughness, with careful attention to detail, with creativity and concentration and through the help of others in a collective process. Often the best social knowledge is produced collectively and through collaboration since the world is a complex place and many heads are better than one.

All knowledge is related even though for some academics it does not appear to be so. So even though some might be regarded as 'social and human' knowledge and others as 'natural' and 'physical', it is in reality relational knowledge since it relates to issues affecting human societies as part of the planetary ecological system. However, the way in which we enquire into the issues that are defined in these different ways can differ quite considerably. The rules of research and scientific knowledge production cannot apply in the same way to nature and physical objects as to human beings and their communities. There are real differences, for instance, in understanding galaxies, the stars and planets, the chemical composition of these bodies, gravity, electromagnetism and atomic particles as compared to how you understand human beings and their societies. These differences speak not only to the specific methods of research and enquiry but also to the technologies – social and scientific – available for the purposes of such enquiry. For instance while telescopes are essential to the study of space they are not necessary for understanding human behaviour.

Unfortunately many researchers who are interested in human beings and their societies attempt to emulate the methods of research used in doing research in the natural sciences. Bernt Flyfberg rightly calls this 'physics envy' and explains how unproductive this approach is to the social sciences since we should understand that it is impossible to attain the direct causal relationships and certainty about social and human phenomena that the natural sciences often aided by mathematics seeks to achieve. Even there it is now accepted by many physicists that the kind of certainty which was aspired to earlier is simply not achievable:

'The claim of P.S Laplace at the beginning of our period – that anybody knowing the position and velocity of every particle in the universe would know the past and the future – becomes empty: nobody in principle could know these things.'

Steven Rose, world renowned Professor of Biology and Neurobiology at the Open University was a co-founder member of the Society for Social Responsibility in Science in the period when biological and chemical weapons were used in Indo-China. He has written extensively about bad science in the service of bad politics and especially that, 'You can't solve unemployment with gene therapy or targeted drugs. The causes of misery are not predominantly biological.'

Generalisations which may be possible in the natural sciences – for example about the effects of gravity all over the universe cannot be made in the social sciences because societies are so different in the histories, contexts, traditions, social structure and other characteristics as compared to the characteristics of the cosmos. What is useful in examining natural phenomena is not automatically applicable to the study of analysing social systems and issues.

Knowledge which is produced through controlled experiments done in laboratories is very useful for understanding some phenomena but the forms of experimentation useful in the natural and biological sciences cannot be applied in the same way in the study of societies. Moreover, scientific experimentation is not the only means of acquiring knowledge used by scientists since we also use careful observation, make deductions based on these observations, and develop hypotheses and theories from them to produce useful explanations about phenomena. In fact, the use of mathematical techniques to identify specific causes has considerably increased the volume of non-experimental empirical studies that are based on observation conducted in recent times. This means that we should not be fixated on any particular method of study as different methods and techniques are more or less useful depending on the particular situation.

We need to understand many approaches to any idea or issue that is relevant to society. Careful attention therefore must be paid to the variety of ways of

understanding scientific issues across the divide of scientific disciplines so that these different methods of enquiry to make them complementary and useful more widely. Too much of science is done without a clear understanding of both the differences and the potential complementarities of the various fields of knowledge and this has meant that usefully integrated understandings of science and society remains unattainable.

It is also true that particular fields of study only ask questions and examine issues from the perspective of those fields of study and leave out other perspectives and fields of knowledge and the direct experience of individuals and communities. Since all social issues relate to complex questions in society, knowledge of a particular field of study is never enough even if it is produced carefully and thoughtfully, and structured according to the rules and traditions of that field of study.

Academics, who insist on the pre-eminence of their own fields of study, without understanding how it is connected to other fields of knowledge and to human experience can only produce partial knowledge. Although deeper study within any field is important it is even more important to understand the connections between the various fields of study to understand human and social systems, their systems of thought as they evolve. It means that we have to transcend the limits of academic knowledge and its ways of theorising by also paying attention to the value of such human experience to augment theoretical knowledge which while critically important it does not constitute all knowledge.

Moreover, even theoretical knowledge is dependent on a variety of strategies which include careful experimentation, observation and even logical deduction which sometimes relies on mathematical approaches. More encompassing knowledge is therefore obtained by using a wide variety of sources of knowledge than what is required for theory-building alone. A critical source of such wider knowledge lies in the experiences, traditions, activities, languages and histories of communities. In other words the knowledge developed by communities – sometimes over many generations is a key source of knowledge. Ignored, it impoverishes us all. Used properly it empowers society and researchers too.

Similarly, the idea that only specialised academic knowledge is useful is also problematic. This may be useful in some cases such as the study of a particular drug and its application to particular medical conditions or in the study of the chemical properties of plant matter for medicinal usage. It is useful in studying animals in a laboratory to see how they react to certain stimuli or to a study of weather patterns over a period of time. Through using these very examples it is also possible to show the deep store of social knowledge obtained through direct experience, 'ordinary' observation and social learning over time. But it is not the same as the study of social issues which are made complex by the behaviour of social beings acting on their own or as organised communities. For instance, the study of educational issues in our society requires knowledge of our society, the history of education in it, the nature of our society, value systems and issues which affect learning in and out of the classroom. Having specialist knowledge in a particular field is useful but not enough. The idea of specialist knowledge also places strong limits on whose knowledge is regarded as important and excludes those who fall outside its boundaries, excluding some very important insights especially on social questions.

There are far too many university-trained academics whose knowledge, even of their own subjects, is extremely limited, superficial and untested. There are some academics that have very little understanding of the relationship between their special areas of study and social and human issues more generally and who believe that their discipline or area of study should be privileged relative to other areas of study. This false idea has a longer history than many academics realise. In the Middle Ages (the period up to the 15th century) for instance, four of the seven liberal arts subjects taught in medieval universities, were considered more important than others. These were arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy and were called the quadrivium.

In the same way a raging debate about the relative importance of the natural and social sciences and humanities was started by the English physical chemist and novelist C P Snow in his 1959 lecture on these areas of study as the 'two cultures' which he saw as quite separate. His arguments were also interpreted to mean that the natural sciences were more 'scientific' than the knowledge produced by social scientists and in the humanities. Aspects of this debate were reproduced in the 1990s in what has come to be known as the 'Sokal' affair. Today similar debates continue amongst some academics. These are informed largely by the prejudices and self-interest of those academics that argue the primacy of their own fields of study and research and are problematic since all human knowledge can have value if it is understood and used in particular ways. LB

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# Struggle for SA's liberation

## Success and failure

One of the ways to make sense of South Africa's liberation is to invoke Franz Fanon's concept of 'false liberation' in which the ruling elite were 'intermediaries' of capital, writes **John S Saul**.

### FREEDOM CHARTER

The launch of the Freedom Charter occurred in June, 1955, and the anniversary occurred a month ago. But since I wasn't here a month ago to sample the full range of opinion expressed, I felt free to harken back to an earlier occasion, precisely 30 years ago to be exact – to the moment of the 30th anniversary of the Freedom Charter and to a book of the time, one edited by Raymond Suttner and Jeremy Cronin, that marked that event. In that book was a text by Steve Tshwete, a Robben Island graduate and an African National Congress (ANC) National Executive Committee (NEC) member who died in 2002. This important text, although it is little noted now, was titled 'Understanding the Charter Clause by Clause,' and it is one that can help me to bridge from the Charter to the present moment of possible recasting of the politics of a new South Africa. For Tshwete, speaking of the Freedom Charter, pointedly wrote:

'This is a document of minimum and maximum demands – maximum for the progressive bourgeoisie ... and minimum for the working class [and the poor?]. In other words, the bourgeoisie would not strive for more than is contained in the Charter, while the working class will have sufficient cause to aspire beyond its demands.

What happens after the implementation of the people's charter – whether there is a socialist democracy or not – will certainly depend on the strength of the working class itself in the class alliance that we call a people's democracy.

If the working class is strong enough, then a transition to a working class democracy will be easily effected. At that point in time there will be realignment of forces. Mobilisation will be on a purely class basis and the working class ideology will constitute the engine of transition.

But if, on the other hand, the working class has not been prepared for this historical role and is thus weak in the people's democracy, the bourgeoisie will turn the tables. There will be a relapse to pure capitalist relations of production. The Freedom Charter takes the working class a step nearer to its historical goal, while it does not tamper much with the bourgeois order.'

I also found a further quote to my purpose from no less an authority than Thabo Mbeki – as cited by William Gumede in his book entitled *Thabo Mbeki and the Battle for the Soul of the ANC*:

'Thus as early as the late-1980s' writes Gumede, Mbeki could be found 'privately telling friends that he believed the ANC alliance with the South African Communist Party (SACP) would have to be broken at some point, especially if the ANC gained power in a post-apartheid South Africa ... [T]he ANC would govern as a centre-left party, keeping some remnants of trade union and SACP support, while the bulk of the alliance would form a left-wing workers' party'!'

Let me suggest then: Is this not, in South Africa, precisely the moment, anticipated by both Tshwete and Mbeki (although they would not have phrased the point quite as I do), when the country must choose between, on the one hand, the 'exhausted' and, for many intents and purposes, 'failed' nationalism of the ANC and, on the other, and however unclear its precise outlines may still be, the broad and inchoate movement-cum-party-in-the-making that is seeking to grope its way forward towards focusing the new and much more radical politics of South Africa's proletariat and precariat (what the Democratic Left Front (DLF), for one, is always careful to term, precisely, the politics of 'the working class and the poor'.

In short, I feel compelled, in talking about South Africa, to step outside the Freedom Charter. For far more promising of producing a deeper understanding of just what

*Democratic Left Front: One of the groups fighting for socialism in SA.*

happened here was to invoke the names and writings of militants from the sixties, in particular those of Cabral and Nyerere. Recall, for starters, Fanon's perspective on apparent African independence, an 'independence' that in his mind had merely produced a 'false decolonisation.' For he found that little had changed, with the new African elites comfortably stepping into privileged positions as mere 'intermediaries,' acting in their own class interests but also on behalf of capital:

'The national middle class discovers its historic mission: that of intermediary. Seen through its eyes, its mission has nothing to do with transforming the nation; it consists, prosaically, of being the transmission lines between the nation and a capitalism, rampant though camouflaged, which today puts on the masque of neo-colonialism. The national bourgeoisie will be quite content with the role of the Western bourgeoisie's business agent, and it will play its part without any complexes in a most dignified manner. But the same lucrative role, this cheap-jack's function, this meanness of outlook and this absence of all ambition symbolise the incapability of the national middle class to fulfil its historic role as a bourgeoisie.'

Indeed that, in Fanon's eyes, is why decolonisation came so quickly in the end in Africa north of the Zambezi: '[A] veritable panic takes hold of the colonialist governments in turn. Their purpose is to capture the vanguard, to turn the movement of liberation to the right and disarm the people: quick, quick, let's decolonise. Decolonise the Congo before it turns into another Algeria. Vote the constitutional framework for all Africa, create the French Communauté, renovate that same Communauté, but for God's sake let's decolonise quick.'

On this model, one might hypothesise, that when a capitalist-friendly ANC was beckoned, as Fanon had once said, to 'settle the problem' around 'the green baize table before any regrettable act has been performed or irreparable gesture made,' the stage was also being set for just such eventual accession by the ANC to formal power.

For consider also Cabral's scepticism about many if not most national liberation struggles themselves. Indeed, he went so far as to wonder whether, in the form it took, the 'national liberation struggle [was] not [in fact] an imperialist initiative,' suggesting that '... there is something wrong with the simple interpretation of the national liberation movement as a revolutionary trend. The objective of the imperialist countries was to prevent the enlargement of the socialist countries, to liberate the reactionary forces in our country which were being stifled by colonialism, and to enable these forces to ally themselves with the international bourgeoisie.'

Moreover, I also once heard Julius Nyerere make the following very Fanonist statement (as summarised in the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) newspaper, *The Nationalist*, of the time) at a large outdoor meeting in Dar es Salaam: in 1967 in invoking TANU's new Arusha Declaration, itself designed to begin to chart a socialist future for Tanzania, 'Nyerere called on the people of Tanzania to have great confidence in themselves and to safeguard the nation's hard-won freedom. Mwalimu [Nyerere] warned that the people should

not allow their freedom to be pawned as most of their leaders were purchasable. He warned further that in running the affairs of the nation the people should not look on their leaders as saints and prophets.

The President stated that the attainment of freedom in many cases resulted merely in the change of colours, white faces to black faces without ending exploitation and injustices, and above all without the betterment of the life of the masses. He said that while struggling for freedom the objective was clear but it was another thing to remove your own people from the position of exploiters.'

## STEVE BIKO AND BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS

Are such images of a presumed African liberation north of the Zambezi not also more accurate about what has actually happened in South and Southern Africa than anything to be found in the Freedom Charter. Indeed, one could start to paint a clearer picture of the liberation struggle and its outcome in South Africa not with the Freedom Charter but with something once said by – this time by a South African – Steve Biko, the key intellectual force behind the Black Consciousness Movement here in the 1970s.

Thus, in an interview of the time, Biko was asked to identify 'what trends or factors in it ... you feel are working towards the fulfilment of the long term ends of blacks,' and he responded that the regime's deep commitment to a racial hierarchy had actually acted as 'a great leveler' of class formation amongst the black population and dictated 'a sort of similarity in the community' – such that the 'constant jarring effect of the [apartheid] system' produced a 'common identification' on the part of the people. In contrast, he suggested that in the more liberal system envisaged by the Progressive Party of the time, 'you would get stratification creeping in, with your masses remaining where they are or getting poorer, and the cream of your leadership, which is invariably derived from the so-called educated people, beginning to enter bourgeois ranks, admitted into town, able to vote, developing new attitudes and new friends ... a completely different tone.'

For South Africa is, he continued, 'one country where it would be possible to create a capitalist black society. If the whites were intelligent. If the Nationalists were intelligent. And that capitalist black society, black middle-class, would be very effective at an important stage. Primarily because a hell of a lot of blacks have got a bit of education – I'm talking comparatively speaking to the so-called rest of Africa – and a hell of a lot of them could compete favourably with whites in the fields of industry, commerce and professions. And South Africa could succeed to put across to the world a pretty convincing integrated picture with still 70% of the population being underdogs.'

Indeed, it was precisely because the whites were so 'terribly afraid of this' that South Africa represented, to Biko, 'the best economic system for revolution'. For 'the evils of it are so pointed and so clear, and therefore make teaching of alternative methods, more meaningful methods, more indigenous methods even, much easier under the present sort of setup.'

Yet it is of crucial importance to note here that Biko was both correct and incorrect at the same time. 'Apartheid' did not in fact stay in place so firmly or so long as to teach the black population that 'black consciousness' would be, had to be, a necessary vector of transformation in South Africa. At the same time, he was correct in seeing that the one way open to the dominant classes was that of defusing black anger and growing resistance in South Africa by dumping apartheid and opting for a free-standing capitalist system of colour-blind class distinction. Then, and in line with Cabral's worst nightmares, they could even move to invite the ANC inside the tent of a new post-apartheid system of class power and distinction. Of course, on Biko's analysis, they quite simply could not follow such a course, of that he was confident. And yet, pace Biko, this is precisely the transition that did occur. In the end there were numerous complications, especially between 1990 and 1994 – as many whites of the Far Right of the National Party (including even De Klerk), the Freedom Front, and the AWB remained slow to accept the new logic of any settlement on capital's new terms. Nonetheless, up to a point, this process did produce a successful transition beyond apartheid and a step forward: I would be the last to argue otherwise. But what occurred, simultaneously, was a recolonisation of South Africa by capital, with the ANC/SACP acting as the crucial intermediaries in guaranteeing such an outcome and here the vast mass of the South African population are the real losers.

How else to explain the feeble result that the transition away from apartheid has produced in South Africa? How else, indeed, could we interpret it? Note on this latter subject the attempted explanation of no less a militant than Ronnie Kasrils. Thus Kasrils has written of the ANC and the SACP having 'chickened out,' identifying the period 1991–96, what he labels as having been the ANC's 'Faustian moment,' a moment when 'the battle for the ANC's soul got under way, and was eventually lost to corporate power; we were entrapped by the neo-liberal economy – or, as some today cry, we 'sold our people down the river.'

'[W]hat I call our Faustian moment came when we took an IMF loan on the eve of our first democratic election. That loan, with strings attached that precluded a radical economic agenda, was considered a necessary evil, as were concessions to keep negotiations on track and take delivery of the promised land for our people. Doubt had come to reign supreme: we believed, wrongly, there was no other option; that we had to be cautious ... [In fact, however], we chickened out. The ANC leadership needed to remain true to its commitment of serving the people. This would have given it the hegemony it required not only over the entrenched capitalist class but over emergent elitists, many of whom would seek wealth through black economic empowerment, corrupt practices and selling political influence ... [For] the balance of power was [then] with the ANC, and conditions were favourable for more radical change at the negotiating table than we ultimately accepted. It is by no means certain that the old order, apart from isolated rightist extremists, had the will or capability to resort to the bloody repression [anticipated] by Mandela's leadership. If we had held our nerve, we could have pressed forward without making the concessions we did.'

## PRISONER OF CAPITAL

The ANC 'lost its nerve'? 'Chickened out'? That's one explanation then. Meanwhile, an even more shaky explanation of the form South Africa's transition took is that offered by Canadian writer-activist Naomi Klein: ANC lost any accurate sense of just what was going on, and became, she suggests, the prisoner of capital; it was, in fact, short-sighted and naïve as regards the severe dangers of the capitalist entanglements it was taking on. She even summons up some strong South African voices to support this analysis. For example, she cites economist Vishnu Padayachee as arguing that 'none of this happened because of some grand betrayal on the part of the ANC leaders but simply because they were outmanoeuvred on a series of issues that seemed less than crucial at the time – but turned out to hold South Africa's lasting liberation in the balance.'

Similarly, William Gumede's view, as directly quoted by Klein, is that, 'If people had felt [the political negotiations] weren't going well there would be mass protests. But when the economic negotiators would report back, people thought it was technical.'

This perception was encouraged by Mbeki, who portrayed the talks as 'administrative' and as being of no popular concern. As a result, Klein says, Gumede told her, 'with great exasperation, 'We missed it! We missed the real story ... I was focusing on politics – mass action, going to Bisho ... But that was not the real struggle – the real struggle was over economics'.

True, Klein further notes, Gumede did 'come to understand that it was at those 'technical' meetings that the true future of his country was being decided – though few understood it at the time. But she herself can still register apparent surprise that 'as the new government attempted to make tangible the dreams of the Freedom Charter, it discovered that the power was elsewhere.' Really? But surely here one can be permitted to ask: had Padayachee, Gumede, and even Klein not read their Fanon? For it is, in fact, impossible to think that the ANC leadership, having sought assiduously to will just such an outcome, such a 'false decolonization,' from at least the mid-1980s, could itself have 'missed it' – missed, that is, the main point as to what was happening to South Africa.

'We missed it!' Not quite good enough, then, and certainly not as an explanation of the ANC's own actions. But take one further example, that of long-time SACP and ANC activist (and a minister in the present Zuma government), Jeremy Cronin. Thus, in a 2013 speech titled 'How we misread the situation in the 1990s,' Cronin presents a markedly weaker argument about the 'errors' of the 1990s than Klein, even though it does, nonetheless, bear a strong resemblance to hers. For naïveté is again presented as being the key, Cronin also seeing the ANC as merely having taken its eye off the ball – albeit for 19 years! His variant of this argument: 'In particular, we vastly overestimated the patriotic credentials of South African monopoly capitalism (and its soon to emerge narrow BEE [Black Economic Empowerment] hangers on)'; these advised us 'to open all our doors and windows to attract inward investment flows.'

The result: 'Almost the exact opposite has occurred. Surplus generated inside South Africa, the sweat and toil of South African workers, has flown out of the open windows and open doors. Between 20% and 25% of GDP has been disinvested out of the country since 1994. Trade liberalisation in the first decade of democracy blew a cold wind through our textile and clothing sector, through our agriculture and agro-processing sector and by 2001 a million formal sector jobs had been lost.'

As for the 19 years just mentioned, it is actually Cronin himself who raises this spectre, asking precisely 'Why had it taken us nearly 19 years to appreciate the need for a second, radical phase of our democratic transition?' But he really gives no answer to his own question nor makes any attempt to explain two decades of what, on his analysis, must have been an extraordinary level of official naïveté as to the progressive propensities of 'South African monopoly capitalism.' Why indeed?

Thus, for Kasrils, the ANC/SACP

lost its nerve, for Klein, the ANC was 'short-sighted,' and for Cronin the ANC simply 'misread' (for 19 years!) the situation ... while waiting, no doubt, for the much discussed second phase of the 'national democratic revolution' to kick into action!

But surely a more straight-forward explanation in terms of class dynamics is the more potent one: a new class, politically victorious as centered and represented by the ANC, gained power on the back of the liberation struggle broadly defined (a struggle that took place both outside and, principally, inside the country) and used that power in both its own interest and in the interests of global capitalism. Thus veteran ANC/SACP hand and former MP Ben Turok can admit that he is driven to 'the irresistible conclusion ... that the ANC government has lost a great deal of its earlier focus on the fundamental transformation of the inherited social system,' and to the assertion that 'much depends on whether enough momentum can be built to overcome the caution that has marked the ANC government since 1994. This in turn depends on whether the determination to achieve an equitable society can be revived.' Cautiously phrased perhaps, but an important point. A second long-time ANC/SACP loyalist, Rusty Bernstein, was however – in writing to me not long before his own death in 2002 – prepared to go even further, asserting that:

'The drive towards power has corrupted the political equation in various ways. In the late 1980s, when popular resistance revived again inside the country led by the UDF, it led the ANC to see the UDF as an undesirable factor in the struggle for power, and to fatally undermine it as a rival focus for mass mobilisation. It has undermined the ANC's adherence to the path of mass resistance as a way to liberation, and substituted instead a reliance on manipulation of the levers of administrative power. It has paved the way to a steady decline of a mass-membership ANC as an organiser of the people, and turned it into a career opening to public sector employment and the administrative 'gravy train'. It has reduced the tripartite ANC-Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu)-SACP alliance from the centrifugal centre of national political mobilisation to an electoral pact between parties who are constantly constrained to subordinate their constituents' fundamental interests to the overriding purpose of holding on to administrative power. It has impoverished the soil in which ideas leaning towards socialist solutions once flourished and allowed the weed of "free market" ideology to take hold.'

Buried in this statement is one about the transition, of course: why and how was the United Democratic Front (UDF) persuaded merely to fold its tent and disappear? It was by no means a straightforward occurrence, even though for Jeremy Seekings, an important historian of the UDF, it's a no-brainer. Quoting Peter Mokaba, then president of the South African Youth Congress, as stating: 'Now that the ANC can operate legally, the UDF is redundant.' Seekings then argues that such willed demobilisation of the popular factor in the political equation occurred simply because it had become 'apparent that the UDF [actually] had no choice but to disband in the aftermath of the ANC's unbanning.' Indeed, he calls it 'a logical, unavoidable, even unremarkable event'.

But was it? It was certainly not that for Bernstein, as quoted. And in fact many voices were raised in disagreement at the UDF's final conference that voted for the dissolution of the UDF. Indeed, as Ineke Van Kessel notes, the marked support – if, nonetheless, that of a minority – that existed in the meeting for the retention of the UDF as an effective organ of 'people's power.'

'Proponents of this view [she writes] envisaged the UDF's role as one of watching over the government, [and] remaining prepared to activate mass action if the need should arrive. Many leaders and activists emphasized that the preservation of the UDF was imperative to ensure that participatory, rather than merely representative, democracy prevailed in South Africa.'

She also records the very tangible 'demobilising effect' of the UDF's demise – with the ANC doing little or nothing, in the longer run, to sustain people's waning spirit of active militancy. She quotes Alan Boesak as making a sharp distinction 'between the UDF years and the early 1990s': 'He noted a widespread nostalgia for the UDF years. 'That was a period of mass involvement, a period when people took a clear stand. That had a moral appeal. Now it is difficult to get used to compromises ... Many people in the Western Cape now say that 'the morality in politics has gone.' The 1980s, that was "clean politics", morally upright, no compromises, with a clear goal.'

In sum, we have 'mass involvement' trumped by knee-jerk vanguardism. For vanguardism (also known as residual Stalinism) doesn't sit comfortably with genuine active popular democracy from below. Nor need it come as a great surprise that the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) and others name their challenging new political initiative the United Front and actually name check the UDF in doing so, promising to '... lead in the establishment of a new United Front [UF] that will coordinate struggles in the workplace and in communities, in a way similar to the UDF of the 1980s. The task of this front will be to fight for the implementation of the Freedom

Charter and be an organisational weapon against neoliberal policies such as the National Development Plan (NDP).'

More generally, might it actually be just as simple as Rusty Bernstein suggests. For what Bernstein has offered us is some pretty tough stuff – tough Fanonist stuff. Indeed, if his insights are taken as seriously as they must be neither historians nor politicians can easily get away with merely absolving the ANC for its key role in the defeat of the liberation struggle – even though the collapse of the Soviet bloc, the strength of South Africa's pre-existent, indigenous, and primarily white capitalist class, and the power of global capitalism must also be given their proper weight within the explanatory equation. But don't forget for a moment the 1985 statement by Gavin Relly, the chairman of Anglo-American, after his meeting in Lusaka with the likes of Oliver Tambo, Thabo Mbeki, Chris Hani, Pallo Jordan, and Mac Maharaj that 'he had the impression the ANC was not 'too keen' to be seen as 'Marxist' and that he felt they had a good understanding 'of the need for free enterprise.' Time was to demonstrate fully just how perceptive was Relly's 1985 reading of the ANC top brass's own emerging mind-set even at that early date.

No, the fact is that Fanon is closer to the mark than anyone else in interpreting, albeit avant la lettre, developments in Southern Africa: The national middle class-in-the-making, the nationalist elite, did indeed discover its historic mission: that of intermediary. And, in the end, as seen through its eyes its mission has had very little to do with transforming the nation; instead, it has consisted, prosaically, of being the transmission lines between the nation and a capitalism, rampant though camouflaged, which today puts on the masque of neo-colonialism and, indeed, of recolonisation.


*United Front: bringing together unions and social movements.*

## WHAT NEXT?

As for what next? Assuming no one would disagree with what I've said so far (but I'm obviously not so naïve as to really assume that) the next question must be: what will Biko's 70% – left out, left behind – do about it?

Will they stick, on balance – in declining numbers, with clearly diminishing enthusiasm and for want of an as yet convincing alternative – with the ANC: the party of Mandela and, ostensibly, of liberation. Or will more of them begin to drift even further to the right, to the increasingly black-appearing and possibly more competent-seeming DA. Or will they increasingly be enveloped in the demobilising folds of xenophobia, right-wing evangelical religions, and the like with incalculable continuing costs to the country.

Or, on the other hand, many may continue to veer left. Here one can allude to the dramatic sustaining of the 'rebellion of the poor' in South Africa; to the further radicalisation of some segments of the labour movement (epitomised, notably, by the break of South Africa's largest union, the Numsa, from any affiliation whatsoever with either the ANC or the SACP!); to the chaos (itself perhaps promising, in and of itself, of new possibilities) that Cosatu itself has become; to the first signs of electoral success that have greeted Julius Malema's quite unapologetically populist Economic Freedom Front; to the seeds of a new feminism implied in such actions as the 'RhodesMustFall' initiative in Cape Town in 2015; and to the initial stirrings of the 'United Front', first instigated by Numsa but with a broad appeal to other workers and to civil society activists.

Of course, it remains far too early to predict with absolute confidence that such initiatives will continue to flourish and even cohere into an effective and politically viable counter-hegemony to the ANC's present grip on power. And yet the game is clearly afoot as at no other time since 1994 as, slowly but surely, the struggle for a more equal and more genuinely liberated South Africa continues. But to turn left? Some have, more will, many, eventually, might. Let's see. LB

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# Corrupted anti-corruption war in Nigeria

More needs to be done to curb corruption in Nigeria and all culprits should be brought to book irrespective of who they are. Institutions fighting the scourge should also be strengthened, writes **Denja Yaqub**.

No doubt, the dawn of the Mohammadu Buhari presidency in Nigeria has changed the corruption surge, even as anti-corruption laws and institutions are still very weak and lacking in both capacity and will to curb the spate.

Corruption is unarguably Nigeria's worst problem, every other problem including unemployment, sits on the trivet of corruption. All we urgently need is a serious government that is committed, beyond words, to the battle against the plague.

President Buhari's promise to fight corruption during his campaigns and his anti-corruption pedigree certainly gave him the majority of votes that shot him to power. Most Nigerians are eager to clear the global dent on our collective image and he needs to ensure that he goes beyond mere declarations by strengthening all structures and institutions that can effectively wipe off corruption or at least reduce it.

Since his election as president, the only weapon that has been fighting corruption is simply his name which has become anti-corruption law, agency and court. Individuals, organisations and government agencies have adopted a culture of self-control: some people who had diverted public funds to their private vaults have been reported to have quietly returned the funds to government. Indeed, the governor of Kaduna State, Nasir El-Rufai, publicly said a former public officer, whom he didn't name, had contacted him to facilitate the return of the money he stole while in government during Goodluck Jonathan's presidency.

The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), a party that ruled this country to economic ruin for 16 years but now in the opposition is swamped with hallucinating fright as most of those being questioned for stealing are members of the party. The party believes the anti-corruption battle is directed at its members. It would be strange if the majority of those being investigated or facing prosecution are members of any other political party anyway. The global community, not just Nigerians, know clearly that the majority of those in possession of our public funds belong to the PDP, though members of other political parties cannot be let off.

The PDP as a ruling party must be courageous enough to admit that corruption was like its cardinal principles as stealing of public money went on massively and was treated with the same impunity the Nigerian people were treated.

For instance, according to a report by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) between 1999 and 2012, a total sum of one trillion, three hundred and fifty billion, one hundred and thirty-two million and four hundred thousand naira (N1,354,132,400,000) was swiped off our collective treasury. Nigeria was under PDP's leadership during this period. The amount stolen in 16 years can be unimaginable.

One of the party's key national leaders was indeed jailed for stealing funds belonging to the maritime industry. Former ministers who were flying around in private jets with public funds are members of the party.

If the present administration is serious about fighting corruption, the majority of those ultimately heading for the prisons would be members of Africa's 'largest' political party who had promised to rule Nigeria for 60 years.

The party and some of its key leaders didn't see anything wrong with venality. A former minister during the Obasanjo regime, Sunday Afolabi once publicly chided Chief Bola Ige, who was eventually assassinated, to stop being critical of the PDP under whose government he was minister of Justice and attorney general of the Federation. He told him he was invited to government

'to come and chop'. This is the concept of public service driving most Nigerian leaders, and it's not limited to those of PDP extraction: it's about the only concept common to public officers in Nigeria.

And for this reason, when a public office holder is accused of corruption related offences, his tribesmen or recruited adherents drizzle into the streets with claims of ethnic persecution. A major ethnic group in the Niger Delta has already publicly accused the Buhari administration of pursuing an anti-Ijaw agenda in the anti-corruption steps the administration has taken so far. Possibly referring to alleged ongoing probes of former ministers who served under President Jonathan (also from the Ijaw national group). It is not important to them how corruption has unleashed mass poverty in the oil producing region.

Indeed, according to the National Bureau of Statistic, as at 2004, 32.8% of the South-South population live in extreme poverty. The figure could be higher. In decent climates, the region should be leading anti-corruption struggles since most of our national wealth, which has been massively plundered and diverted to private vaults, is dependent on oil produced from the region.

The Jonathan administration may have come under public focus as being the most corrupt, only because corruption reigned more with open latitude under his administration, but administrations before his, including the Obasanjo regime cannot be exonerated. In any case, corruption assumed governance in Nigeria from independence and became more common under unaccountable military regimes, especially the General Ibrahim Babangida regime that entrenched it.

*Denja Yaqub addresses a Ditsela Conference at St Georges Hotel, Irene, near Pretoria in 2013.*

The battle against corruption will be unsuccessful if limited to the immediate past: it has to be all encompassing and in all sectors.

Institutions such as the judiciary and law enforcement are evidently too compromised for any anti-corruption efforts to succeed. For the 'war' to succeed, the starting point should be these institutions.

Law enforcement officers, especially the police still openly guard those accused of stealing public funds. In fact, some even have siren blaring escort vehicles filled with armed policemen while accused persons confidently challenge the state to arraign them before the judiciary where they are sure of being exonerated, until they get caught in foreign countries where the rule of law cannot be manipulated.

Apart from urgent interrogation of the judiciary and law enforcement agencies, the duplicated anti-corruption commissions should be merged into one strong and independent agency with incorruptible operatives.

Corruption is not just a scourge but an overbearing octopus with its tentacles in nearly every facet of our lives. Despite the beauty of individual and societal cultural foundations, it has invaded our physiological psyche and permeated all arms of our society such that fighting it will require not just an overhaul but an upturn of the entire society. But, there can be mollifying steps that may get us closer to a more decent society if we don't have legislators who still believe in being above the law, with mastery in the manipulation of the judiciary and law enforcement.

The National Assembly needs to show commitment to the anti-corruption resolve of the majority of our people: the 90% others who bear the brunt of the cramps resulting from societal flop, which corruption, the unregulated money machine of the powerful 10% of our population, have unleashed on us all. The above-the-law attitude and politicisation of corruption by legislators at all levels is a key obstacle to the battle against corruption.

The battle against corruption must not be partisan and culprits must be arrested without class, ethnic or political consideration.

So far, the battle seems corrupted with partisan and other considerations soaked in obvious vengeance. Such selective approaches can only make the battle a mere flash in the pan. LB

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# Mozambique at 40

## Past and present challenges

Mozambique's history has been fraught with problems. **Fredson Guilengue** looks at how different political systems – colonial, Marxist-Leninist and now neo-liberalism – have shaped the politics. He also analyses the country's civil war and its devastation as well as the current peace.

On 25 June 2015 Mozambique celebrated 40 years of independence. The south-east African country gained its independence in 1975 following 10 years of armed struggle (1964-1974) against its old colonial masters, Portugal. The struggle for liberation was led by the Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (Frelimo), the ruling party since independence.

In four decades the country has experienced important political and economic transformation. It went from a single-party state (1975-1992) to a multiparty democracy which also coincided with its transition from a devastating civil war (1976-1992) to peace. Since the mid-1980s, Mozambique has undergone yet another transition from having a centrally-planned economy to a market-driven one. Since the introduction of political and economic reforms, Mozambique has become one of the fastest growing economies in Africa. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has consistently grown at 7% per annum. Since the implementation of reforms, Mozambique has been regarded as the darling of donor countries, signalling that multiparty democracy and market reforms equated to economic growth and some social development.

However, recent events in Mozambique seem to have clouded its sparkling image in Africa. The ongoing military and political crisis which started in 2012 (the clash between Frelimo and the main opposition party Renamo), its former adversary in the civil war, including the taking up of arms again, put a question mark behind the political stability of Mozambique. On the economic side, another question mark appeared alongside sustainability of the economic bonanza derived from the exploitation of natural resources (mining) mainly coal and gas, considering the lack of adequate infrastructure and the poor impact this has had on poverty reduction.

In this article I shed light on the political and economic evolution of Mozambique by looking at the structural political and socioeconomic challenges the country inherited in 1975 as well as at the prevailing principal ones. I try to discuss the extent to which the progress achieved (for example 20 years of a multiparty democratic system and economic growth) can be seen as a positive political and economic evolution. By evolution I mean the gradual process in which political and economic institutions are invented and re-invented leading to a qualitatively better democratic process (more effective and inclusive) and economic development.

### DIFFICULT COLONIAL LEGACY

At independence in 1975 the new republic inherited a challenging social, political and economic situation. Portugal itself (with Greece and Ireland) was amongst the three poorest countries in non-communist Europe. It had little to speak of without the resources and land of its colonies like Angola and Mozambique. In Mozambique, the population was growing at 2.5% per annum (7.6-million in 1960 and 9.4-million in 1970). The colonial education system was characterised by poor infrastructure, shortages of qualified staff, and explicit regional and gender inequities. As a result, by 1975, nearly 95% of the country's total population of 11-million was illiterate and less than 4% could speak Portuguese.

Not more than 5% of the black population lived in around the white major towns.

The health of the majority of the population was also considered extremely poor. With the exception of some health programmes, very few or no health services were provided by the colonial state outside the country's major towns. Most of the existing health-care services were provided by church groups or traditional medical practitioners. Shortly after independence, only 80 of the 500 doctors remained in Mozambique. In terms of the Human Development Index (HDI), in 1975, Mozambique ranked 172 out of 177 countries. Life expectancy at birth (in total years) was 43.21.

During the colonial years black Mozambicans were totally excluded from any kind of political activities. Economically, the population was almost entirely dependent on remittances from migrant workers within South Africa and Rhodesia (numbering 100,000) as well as from a plantation and settler-dominated export-oriented agricultural sector, where cash crops accounted for more than 80% of the country's foreign exchange. This context of structural economic challenges was further exacerbated by the exodus of 200,000 Portuguese who (fearing Frelimo's Marxist–Leninist policies) left Mozambique resulting in a dearth of capable administrators and skilled labour in almost all sectors from production to service activities.

In terms of the regional politics, the newly independent Mozambique was surrounded by two white minority governments – Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and South Africa, neither willing to co-exist with a socialist-oriented neighbour open to supporting independence struggles in both Rhodesia and South Africa. At the global political level, although Mozambique gained its independence in a relatively good period (characterised by the temporary weak interventionist role of the United States), this global context changed five years later in 1980 with the election of the vociferously anti-communist US president Ronald Reagan.

In retrospect, colonialism had resulted in a weak state, underdeveloped infrastructure and inefficient bureaucracy, a culture of authoritarian paternalism and a limited human resource base. This was aggravated by the adoption of a Marxist-Leninist one-party-state system by Frelimo in 1977, its strategic position in Southern Africa and having a neighbour as powerful, aggressive and ruthless as apartheid South Africa.

This bore heavily upon Mozambique's future until 1994 while the vestiges and consequences still impact the country's development path today.

## COLD WAR AND ITS DYNAMICS

Although with minimal reach, Mozambique was also a battlefield of the cold war. Less than a year after independence, the county fell into one of the most brutal civil wars of the 20th century which lasted for 16 long years. Understanding the complexities of what pushes a country into a civil war is a difficult task. However, one cannot avoid the factors below when trying to understand Mozambique's descent into civil war in 1976.

Some schools of thought point to Frelimo's socialist (then Marxist-Leninist) policies adopted just after independence as having created significant disgruntlement amongst the rural population. This mainly from northern and central Mozambique where the population felt marginalised by these policies and the manner in which they were being implemented. There was also a sense of ethnic and regional domination of the northerners and those in the central regions by the southerners and the heavy-handed attempts by the Frelimo government to rapidly displace existing social and economic relations they encountered without prompt and effective replacement of the colonial legacy.

Regionally, the existence of majority rule in Mozambique threatened the continuity of the apartheid regimes both in South Africa and Rhodesia. These two regimes worked incessantly to destabilise Mozambique. Amongst other reasons, Ian Smith was threatened by Samora Machel's government because Mozambique supported both the Zimbabwe National Liberation Army (Zanla) and the United Nations sanctions against Rhodesia.

The same applied to the apartheid government because Mozambique also strongly supported the struggle against apartheid offering shelter to African National Congress (ANC) operatives.

Globally, as mentioned above, Mozambique gained its independence in the context of the cold war. Frelimo's struggle against colonialism was backed mainly by the Eastern bloc and after independence, support came from the Soviet Union, Cuba and some Nordic countries. Mozambique's alliance with the Soviet bloc served as a good argument for some western governments and their pro-western allies to side with any kind of political and military opposition to Frelimo.

It is against this domestic, regional and global background that in 1976 the Rhodesian Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO) organised some former Portuguese and Frelimo operatives to form the Mozambique National Resistance (MNR, today Renamo) to lead the struggle against Frelimo. After the death of André Matsangaíssa in 1979, Afonso Dhlakama took over the leadership of Renamo.

By the end of the war in 1992 the social and economic impact had reached devastating proportions: 100,000 people are said to have been killed in the conflict. Nearly one million indirect casualties

were registered; 13% of the total country's population (of 15-million in 1990) was forced to become war refugees and nearly 4.5-million people were internally displaced. The country's GDP was estimated to be US$1.969-billion. This is only half of what it would have been without the impact of the war. The economic infrastructure of the country was also in tatters. 60% of all primary schools were either destroyed or closed; roads, bridges and communication systems were extensively damaged. Furthermore, Mozambique's debt had grown from US$2.7-billion in 1985 to US$4.7-billion in 1991 marking the country as one of the most aid dependent nations in the world.

## REFORMS, PEACE, DEMOCRACY AND GROWTH

At the time of independence Mozambique was one of the world's poorest countries. It maintained this uncomfortable status up until the end of the civil war in 1992. Nevertheless, Mozambique's economic situation started improving with the attainment of peace, macroeconomic reforms, foreign aid and, more recently, significant increases in foreign direct investment mainly in the mining sector.

Privatisation was at the core of the macroeconomic reforms. In terms of the number of privatisation transactions, until 1990 Mozambique's privatisation programme was the largest in Africa and a decision was made to further expand and accelerate the trend in 1992. The World Bank classified Mozambique's privatisation process as a success story, despite the disastrous impact it had on the cashew production sector in the 1990s.

Privatisation resulted in the creation of national oligarchic families or a national bourgeoisie. But domestically, under the new dispensation, only the 'comrades' deserved entry to this group. The reason being they were (and still are) regarded as the most patriotic and capable of defending the national sovereignty by controlling national wealth. In this context, privatisation allowed for the rapid transformation of Mozambique from the so-called 'grave of capitalism' into its actual nursery. It allowed the creation of a political capitalist class in terms of its heavy dependence on the state for state-capture and rent-seeking opportunities. This new dynamic brought about economic growth.

Meanwhile, in 1990 Mozambique adopted a new constitution which, coupled with the new international political and economic context (brought by the end of the cold war and some domestic factors like drought), paved the way for the end of the war and the signing of the General Peace Agreement (GPA) on 4 October 1992. The GPA also created the necessary legal and economic conditions for the transformation of the former guerrilla movement, Renamo, into a political party.

Since 1994 Mozambique has undertaken periodic multiparty elections. The country organised five general elections (presidential and parliamentary). Two provincial elections and four local elections have taken place. At national level the president and 250 national parliamentary members are elected. Frelimo won all the general elections held so far (Joaquim Chissano – 1994 and 1999; Armando Guebuza – 2004 and 2009; and 2014 – Filipe Jacinto Nyusi) and most of the provincial and local ones. All these electoral processes have been highly contested by the main opposition parties.

## 'VICTORY IS PREPARED; VICTORY IS ORGANISED'

Behind Frelimo's apparent electoral hegemony are factors such as neopatrimonialism, electoral fraud and Frelimo's machinery and financial robustness. Added to these factors is a lack of financial and organisational capacity by the opposition parties. Although since the 1990 constitution, there has been no formal connection between state and party, Frelimo continues to dominate all spheres of state. The relationship between membership of the party and access to the state and wealth is undeniably deep, multifaceted and multilevel. Active membership or possession of Frelimo's membership card can ease access to a job, career advancement, promotion, business, and services. On the other hand, Frelimo's control over the state provides it with human and material resources to run the party and its electoral machinery effectively. The opposition parties, however, struggle to provide minimal adequate oversight.

These factors are omnipresent in Mozambique's democracy but played a major role during Guebuza's term of office. His advent as Frelimo's candidate in 2004 and his re-election in 2009 seemed to rekindle the party's domination formerly weakened during the Chissano period. Based on a politics of total marginalisation of opposition parties, he further strengthened the party apparatus and reward to faithful members.

Although, downplayed by political analysts, Frelimo's internal cohesion plays another important role in maintaining its electoral prowess. Amongst others, the party's capacity to manage internal friction particularly after independence and more visibly since the 1990s, includes the strategy of 'one generation after another'. This strategy entails allocating and/or prioritising access to political power and wealth within the party, state, government and economy according to established generational groups, one after another. It gives members of the so-called generations the idea that their time will come to easily access power and wealth without having to fight for it. At present, Frelimo recognises the existence of three different generations (25

September, 8 March and Geração da Viragem). While Samora, Chissano and Guebuza belonged to the first generation, Nyusi is said to belong to the 8 March generation. Meanwhile, the cadres of the Geração da Viragem are in waiting.

## PYRRHIC VICTORY

Judging by Renamo's electoral performance, the years 1999 and 2014 indicated an important change in Mozambique's politics. These years also coincide with the most contested electoral process and generalised political crises in Mozambique. In 1999 while it's possible that Renamo may have lost the elections, it's highly probable that the party presidential candidate was a victim of extensive fraud. In the presidential election the difference between Chissano and Dhlakama was only 2.3% of the total votes. Though Renamo vehemently rejected these results they were, however, confirmed by the Supreme Court. Renamo demanded to appoint governors in the provinces in which the party had obtained a majority vote. This was rejected by the government and no concession was made to Renamo. A political crisis followed was averted by the floods in early 2000 which diverted national and international attention.

Renamo's protests against the fairness of the electoral processes came to a head in 2012 when, after 20 years of apparent peace and stability, it returned to armed struggle to, amongst others, demand a revision of the country's electoral legislation which it said and is generally accepted, to favour the ruling party. The electoral legislation was amended. Although a cease-fire agreement was signed between Renamo and the Mozambican government on 25 August 2014, which seemed to reduce volatility, at political level instability still prevailed and was further aggravated by the results of the 2014 general elections that Renamo and a local civil society consortium classified as not free, unfair and unjust (fraudulent).

Although this time the difference in official results between the two presidential candidates was much wider (20:42%) they too were contested by Renamo and it again demanded appointing governors where it obtained a majority even if it meant using force.

However, while it may seem that political crises in Mozambique are simply products of complete distrust in the electoral institutions and organisations that clearly favours the ruling party, in reality the roots are more profound. In fact, there is a general crisis of political representation exacerbated by the imposition of a system in which 'the winner takes all' in a territory where there is a 'country without a nation' according to Michel Cahen. The result of this system is a recurrent situation in which the people are governed and represented by whomever they failed to elect (for example Sofala, Nampula and Zambézia).

## POVERTY V ECONOMIC GROWTH

The government's attempts to estimate poverty can be backdated to 1996/97 when 70% of the population was considered to be living below the poverty line. Between 1997 and 2003 the country experienced a significant decrease in poverty of 14% (56% in 2003). By contrast, between 2003 and 2009 poverty fell by only 4%. Meanwhile Mozambique's GDP has been growing at a constant rate of 7% since 1994. This rate in GDP growth is considerably above the 2.5% population growth rate.

While the World Bank is of the opinion that the weakened relationship between growth and poverty reduction in Mozambique is caused by the changing pattern of growth (which in the past decade was driven by capital-intensive, import-dependent sectors) for economist, João Mosca, this is a result of a narrow pattern of economic growth. The economic growth is mostly confined to the mining sector and to the areas such as services and infrastructure which are associated with the extractives. This growth pattern is relegating the agriculture sector, for example, which could have a tangible impact on poverty reduction.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

Mozambique has achieved considerable progress in 40 years of independence, the right of self-determination arguably being the most important gain. A crucial and relevant question is how inclusive and pro-poor are the political, social and economic decisions the country has made or is making since 1975.

Emphasis should be placed on the last 20 years, with the advent of peace, a multiparty democratic system and economic growth. Nevertheless, the state of political and economic evolution of Mozambique is reflected in its major prevailing challenges which are: the consolidation of peace, effective democracy and the transformation of economic growth into development.

The future of the country should be viewed long-term. Most of the political, economic and social challenges the country is currently experiencing derive from the normal transitions from an extremely centralised colonial administration system to a radicalised socialist system (Marxist-Leninist) and then to a radical neo-liberal system (mixed with economic populism) with successively questionable policy options. All these transformations in Mozambique are part of the formation of an evolutionary process. LB

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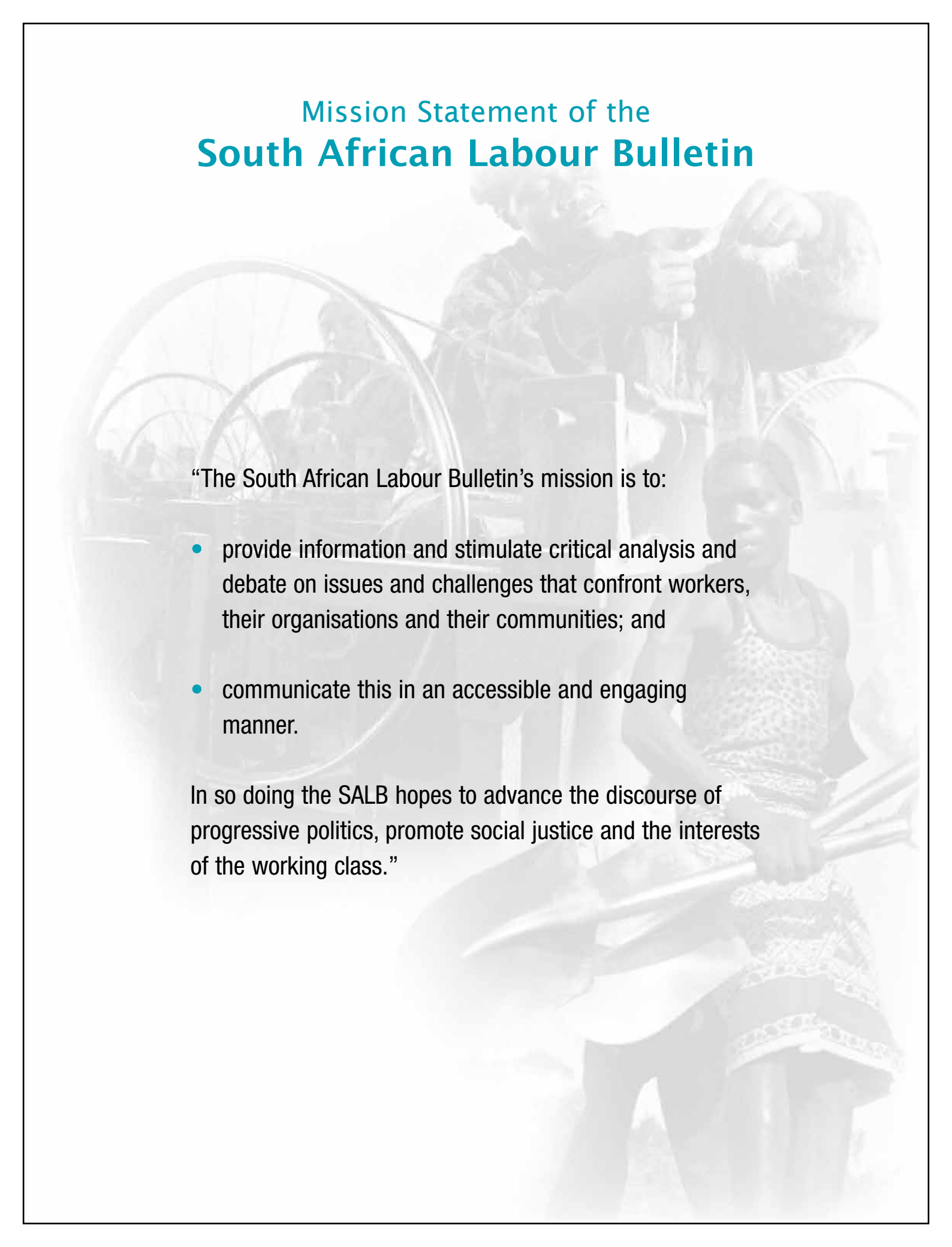
## Mission Statement of the
# South African Labour Bulletin



"The South African Labour Bulletin's mission is to:

- provide information and stimulate critical analysis and debate on issues and challenges that confront workers, their organisations and their communities; and

- communicate this in an accessible and engaging manner.

In so doing the SALB hopes to advance the discourse of progressive politics, promote social justice and the interests of the working class."