

Editorial



FROM THE EDITOR

The crisis facing the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) is broader than just the labour federation and is rather about the contradictory relationships within a multiclass and unstructured Alliance led by the African National Congress (ANC) and to which the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the South African National Civic Organisation are part, writes Zwelinzima Vavi. The crisis also engulfs the entire liberation movement including youth formations – the ANC Youth League and the Young Communist League – as well as the Congress of South African Students and the South African Students Congress.

The Pikitup strike in Johannesburg showed that workers' militancy is not only found on the platinum mines in Rustenburg or the De Doorns farms in the Western Cape but on the streets of Johannesburg as well. Filthy and ugly as the street corners and building fronts became with piles of uncollected refuse, the workers were simply fighting for a living wage. Even after the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration brokered settlement the struggle for better wages continues.

#FeesMustFall has spun other struggles into orbit, such as the demands by workers working for companies contracted to clean

universities for insourcing which comes with other benefits including medical aid, pensions, and housing given to workers at these academic institutions.

Migrant workers toil under deplorable conditions in Lephalale, Limpopo Province as farmers flout every provision in the Labour Relations Act, as a recent visit by civil society organisations found out. In some instances the farmers even commit criminal acts with impunity. Janet Munakamwe writes about Edias Ndlovu who was assaulted for asking for a wage increase. She argues that the issue of being undocumented worsens the plight of migrant workers from neighbouring countries including Zimbabwe.

Demands by communities of Baphiring, Matebeleng, Number 9 informal settlement, and those from Luka village around mines in Rustenburg are not only about land but include pollution, safety of buildings from mining blasts, water pollution and jobs for locals, writes Joseph Mujere.

Unions including the South African Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union continue to fight against precarious work that is brought about when employers such as Woolworths choose to either casualise or retrench workers so as to maximise profits.

The education and work debate is complex, writes Stephanie Allais.

Answering questions including how curricula can help people access work, do well at work, or make work socially useful is not easy. Looking at professional work versus knowledge-based work is important.

Related to this, Gugu Mahlangu found out that the National Certificate Vocational offered by technical vocational education and training colleges is not easily recognised by employers and not necessarily a ticket to a job for the youth.

Food insecurity is a by-product of capitalism, writes Khwezi Mabasa. The global agro-political economy with its large-scale extractive industry is responsible and it is time to start thinking of building a democratic people's food system.

The capitalist crisis of overproduction and over accumulation is in full swing, writes Shawn Hattingh and developing countries like South Africa are being taken on a roller coaster ride. Attacks on the working classes are the order of the day with retrenchments and austerity. So working classes must dismantle capitalism and build a democratic economy based on meeting people's needs. Massive defensive struggles that have started in China and South Africa must be supported. **LS**

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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Pikitup strike

Workers show resilience

The industrial action started as demonstrations in November 2015 before ripening into a strike this year. The workers from the City of Johannesburg (CoJ)'s waste management company Pikitup demanded salary adjustments and other benefits such as housing subsidies to enable them to meet the high cost of living, writes **Elijah Chiwota**.

One of the striking workers, Thabo Hloko, said the workers wanted wage adjustments that made it possible for them to afford basics including food, medical bills, and school fees for their children. He said better wages would improve their creditworthiness and so enable workers to buy houses.

Besides the picketing and marching, one of the trademarks of the Pikitup strikes has been trashed streets with bins turned upside down and uncollected rubbish piling on street corners. This is obviously a strategy to attract the attention of an increasingly intransigent employer said the workers. However, the strike did not start this way.

According to Hloko when the strike began it was a 'holy' strike – workers would assemble to picket, sing and dance. With the employer refusing to budge on the workers' demands, the strike became 'unholier' when streets were trashed. The CoJ then raised concerns around 'health' and the environmental effects of uncollected rubbish.

WORKER-LED STRIKES

Political and labour analyst, Ebrahim Harvey writing in the *Mail & Guardian* describes the strike as

showing 'leaderless disorganisation'. He argues: 'Simply put, the union's membership is without a strong, united leadership. It is likely that in such a situation, especially when many of its members at Pikitup do not earn a 'living wage', dissatisfaction and frustration will spontaneously erupt in the form of wildcat strikes and violence.'

Since the Marikana strike (2012) which led to the massacre, the De Doorns strike in the Western Cape (2012/2013), and the Association of Mining and Construction Union (AMCU) platinum strike (2014) workers have shown resilience by embarking on long unprotected strikes in which they lost wages. In the case of Marikana and De Doorns, these were worker-led strikes without any union leadership involved – at least initially during the early phase of the strike before unions were roped in.

In the case of the Pikitup strike, it was led by shop stewards, and this explains why the CoJ singled them out in the disciplinary cases. The workers also ignored calls by their union, the South African Municipal Workers Union (Samwu), to go back to work. In a letter to Gauteng provincial office bearers the Samwu general secretary, Simon Mathe,

pleaded: 'Kindly be informed that National Office Bearers are hereby instructing your respective offices to ensure that Samwu members at Pikitup return to work as a matter of urgency. This is done so with compliance with the two currently existing court orders granted against your structure in Gauteng.' But the plea fell on deaf ears as the strike continued. Samwu conceded that going on strike is a worker's right.

There have been debates on whether the collective bargaining system is still serving workers' interests or it is time to revamp it. Why are workers' shunning the system and opting for unprotected strikes?

NEGOTIATING IN BAD FAITH

Earlier attempts to end the stalemate did not achieve desirable results for the workers. For example, a 3 December 2015 Political Facilitation Agreement between the Member of the Executive Committee (MEC) for Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs in the Gauteng provincial government did not hold water and the uneasy peace it brought only lasted for a month or so. This was caused by the CoJ's actions of negotiating in bad faith.



Marching and singing: Pikitup workers in Braamfontein.

The hiring of scab labour by CoJ during the strike angered the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu). 'The federation also finds it unacceptable that the municipality is prepared to spend R1-million a day hiring scab labour and security instead of sitting down with the workers and listening to their grievances'.

Pikitup took disciplinary action against the workers for going on the unprotected strike and for being absent from work for the three strikes in December 2015, February and March 2016. The company alleged that 'no dispute had been declared and referred for conciliation to the relevant dispute resolution forum prior to employees embarking or participating in the strike action; and the company had not been given any 48 hours' strike notice either by employees or their representative trade union prior to employees embarking or participating in the strike action'.

The Samwu Johannesburg region questioned the manner in which the hearings were conducted. 'We are particularly concerned that disciplinary hearings were held at the office of the City's Member of the Mayoral Committee (MMC) Matshidiso Mfikoe's offices, the city should explain to us how and from when political office bearers are dealing with disciplinary issues of employees which makes us question the interest that she has on these issues'.

CoJ's mayor Parks Tau alleged that striking workers intimidated those who wanted to go to work. This was also repeated in the disciplinary charges where the striking workers were accused of 'harassing, intimidating and threatening with violence' those workers who chose to report for duty during the strikes. The striking workers threatened to 'cut off the balls' of those who chose to break the strike.

According to the Cosatu Workers'

Survey (2012) it is a common tradition to enforce a strike with intimidation and violence especially against scabs. 'Around half of Cosatu members involved in a strike thought the violence by workers was necessary ... The highest level of violence by strike supporters was reported in local government strikes, mostly in the form of damage to property, local government was the sector where members were least likely to say it was necessary'. Over 40% of Samwu members interviewed in the Survey thought violence was necessary 'to take their demands forward'.

ENTER THE CCMA

The Commission for Conciliation Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) eventually managed to bring the workers and the CoJ together and an agreement was reached. The CCMA also promised to resolve the 'benchmarking dispute' in due course. The agreement called for a



Show of force: Striking workers assemble outside the CoJ offices in Braamfontein.

‘new remuneration philosophy’ based on ‘common job grading, external benchmarking, common salary key scaling’ among other things. A commitment to resolving ‘all disputes between the parties in relation to benchmarking and/or the application of remuneration policies and practices of the CoJ’ was also made. However, the agreement is complementary to the Main Collective Agreement with the South African Local Government Bargaining Council.

The agreement also recognised the need for continuous engagement in the Local Labour Forum which is a ‘foundational platform on which to build a framework of cooperative governance and trust. As such the parties commit to participate, contribute and consult and share information in good faith ...’

The settlement figures that workers got were mostly above the annual Consumer Price Inflation which according to Statistics South Africa was 6.3% in March 2016 and ranged from 10.6% to 21.7% with only one exception where the increase is 3.51%. The minimum wage moved from R6,015 to R7,157 where experienced workers with more

than 13 years earned more. The increases were also dependent on other variables such as salary scale bands.

DISQUIET WITH CORRUPTION

Workers were not happy with the management style of Pikitup managing director, Amanda Nair, and also not satisfied with the way allegations of corruption against her were handled.

‘We have issues which have not been resolved between ourselves and Pikitup management. We believe that management is doing all they can to protect the managing director Amanda Nair. We are convinced that the criminal charges against her which were mysteriously dropped should be reinstated. We are therefore in the process of ensuring the criminal charges against her are reinstated. We believe that these charges are serious and yet she is being protected while Samwu members, shop stewards and leaders continue to be victimised by management. We anxiously await the day that Amanda has her day in court,’ read a Samwu Johannesburg region statement.

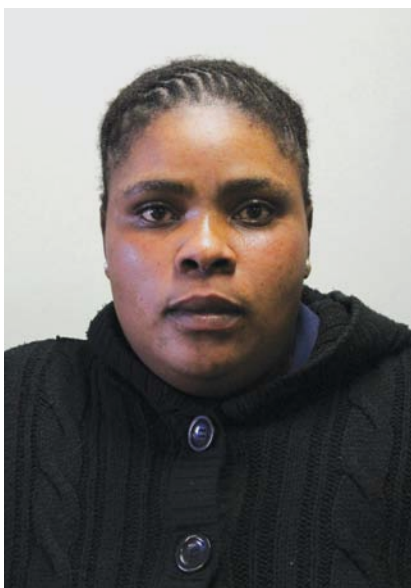
Weighed in Cosatu on the issue: ‘We support the workers in their

demand for R10,000 a month minimum wage and we also call on the municipality to listen to them, with regard to the issues surrounding Pikitup managing director Amanda Nair. She has proven to be a very polarising figure and her leadership style has resulted in the development of the existing antagonistic relations between the institution and the workers. The municipality’s approach to blindly defend her is not a prudent approach. We call on the CCMA to help bring all the parties together and assist them find a workable solution to these issues because the disciplinary action is not a solution,’ said the federation in a statement.

‘These workers provide a very important service to the City of Johannesburg and they deserve to be paid decent wages and also have their working conditions improved. The uncollected refuse also poses a health hazard for the city and its residents. A big and congested city like Johannesburg cannot afford any disease outbreak and those entrusted with the mandate and responsibility of providing leadership to the city should do so immediately before the situation gets worse’. ^{LB}

For UJ workers

Struggle for better wages continues



Cynthia Mbadla is one of the 141 workers who were arrested at the University of Johannesburg (UJ) Auckland Park Kingsway Campus at the heart of the #FeesMustFall campaign against outsourcing of work in which students and workers formed a formidable alliance in 2015. However, a few months down the line the workers are still waiting for the increases, writes **Elijah Chiwota**.

Although the charges against the workers were dropped, the struggle is still on-going as the workers' wages have not been increased. Mbadla, like most workers in the cleaning sector, still earns a paltry R2,500 and enjoys no other benefits. Obviously this is not enough for her to meet her basics such as food. For instance, she does not have money for her unemployed son, Zuko, who passed Grade 12, to continue to tertiary education. She also has to pay fees for her daughter, Emily, who is in Grade 7.

Despite earning little Mbadla's working day is a long one. She catches the train from her home in Katlehong, Johannesburg East at 3am. Her shift starts at 4am and finishes at 3:30pm. She is back home at 6 or 7pm depending on whether the trains are running on time.

Her low income gives her no other choice but to use the train which costs her R200 monthly. If she were to use taxis she would pay R42 per day which is way too expensive for her.

A member of the National Education Health and Allied Workers Union (NEHAWU), Mbadla has been employed by Impact Cleaning as a cleaner since 2010. The company's services are contracted by UJ where she has worked at three campuses: Soweto, Auckland Park Kingsway, and Doornfontein.

It is this outsourcing of cleaning services that workers and students are campaigning against, but it seems little has changed on the ground. Outsourcing of cleaning takes the responsibilities of workers' wages and working conditions away from the universities. Instead workers are left at the mercy of contract

holders who are often after profit and unwilling to pay benefits such as pensions, housing loans, and medical aid.

If the workers were directly employed by UJ, for instance, they would enjoy better wages, benefits and also job security. 'Insourcing' that the workers are demanding, will improve their livelihoods.

According to the National Minimum Wage in South Africa (NMWSA) a worker needs to earn at least R4,125 to live out of poverty. 'Poverty lines measure how much an individual needs, in monetary terms in order to just survive'.

Unfortunately for South Africa, writes the NMWSA: 'Every day approximately five and a half million workers across South African do arduous work in jobs that cannot keep them and their dependants out of poverty; these are the working poor'. **LB**

Deplorable working conditions

For migrant farm workers

Little has changed for farm workers in Lephalale. Despite the existence of the Labour Relations Act (1995) (LRA) as amended and other laws, wages remain low, child labour is rife, employment of undocumented migrant workers common, and harassment of unionised workers the order of the day. A fact-finding and humanitarian mission by civil society organisations and government officials from South Africa and Zimbabwe to the Lephalale Disaster Management Centre in Waterberg Municipality District, Limpopo in January this year unravelled some of the appalling working conditions at the farms in the area.

In September 2015, migrant farm workers, predominantly from Zimbabwe, embarked on a wage protest at Johannesburg farm in Lephalale, demanding an increase of R10 per day on top of the R60 to R70 they were getting paid. Obviously the employer was underpaying the workers as the sectoral minimum wage for farm workers in 2015 was pegged at R120.32 for eight hours by the Minister of Labour Mildred Oliphant. Unfortunately, workers at Johannesburg still earned paltry wages of between R70 and R80 per day.

The farm workers also worked for long hours – from 6am to 11pm without any breaks, and against the stipulated eight hours a day in blatant violation of South Africa's labour laws and regulations.

According to the dismissed workers, the strike did not go well with the employer, P. van der Walt, who allegedly responded harshly by using force: firing rubber bullets, pepper spraying, kidnapping and

severe physical attacks. As a result, some workers were permanently injured. One male worker is now partially blind as a result of the pepper spray, whilst others were bitten by dogs. Another worker lost part of his ear and yet another, who was severely beaten with the butt of a gun, can no longer carry heavy loads.

At least four workers were allegedly abducted and taken to Baltimore game reserve for torture. The shacks of several of the farm dwellers, along with their passports and personal belongings, were also burnt by the farm owner. Women (some pregnant), children and men fled for their lives and spent the festive season in an open space exposed to the hot and sometimes rainy weather. Eventually, House of Hope – Ithemba, a community-based organisation heard about their plight and came to their rescue by relocating the workers from the bush to the Lephalale Disaster Management Centre.

At the Centre, the shocked and anxious 90 men and 60 women with 25 children were housed in flimsy tent structures where they lived on donations while waiting for support from human rights and labour organisations.

However, the employer was detained in a cell for only one night on criminal charges but was later released on bail. So far, he has appeared twice in court with further postponements.

The labour matter has since been referred to the Department of Labour (DoL) with an official confirming that calculations on outstanding wages were being done although workers said they were not consulted, arguing that face-to-face interactions with the affected workers to establish the length of time worked was critical. Despite the harsh working conditions and employer's brutality, some workers are back at work for the same farmer whilst others are contemplating doing the same.

The sector experiences problems ranging from poor working conditions, appalling infrastructure, low wages, and employment of child labour, use of undocumented immigrants, illegal work, and harassment of unionised members through the use of trespassing laws to keep away trade unions.

WORKING AND LIVING CONDITIONS

Dismissed female farm workers complained that sometimes they bathed once a week and went to work smelling. Leaving home early in the morning and coming back late in the evening meant there was no time to fetch bathing water from a river on the farm. To make matters worse the water was contaminated with faeces, especially when it rained.

While a few were in possession of passports, they hid them as the employer favoured undocumented migrants. Although the employer used to assist workers to get permits a few years ago he has since stopped. Unexpectedly, the Department of Home Affairs intervened and issued temporary short-term permits meant to regularise the dismissed farm workers' stay in the country as they awaited the outcome of their labour dispute with the former employer.

In South Africa, the agricultural sector is covered by the LRA although some workers were still deprived of their freedom to participate in industrial actions. The majority of employers have devised measures to discourage workers from joining unions and have put in place drastic measures to thwart any efforts to engage in industrial action like strikes or protests. For instance, it remains common practice for workers to be dismissed once the employer knows they have joined a union.

The sector experiences problems ranging from poor working conditions, appalling infrastructure, low wages, and employment of child labour, use of undocumented immigrants, illegal work, and harassment of unionised members through the use of trespassing laws to keep away trade unions. According to Kimani Ndungu, the sector has one of the 'lowest union densities in the country and in the

post-1994 period, the union density has rarely reached 10% yet the sector employs over half a million workers'. In a 2011 report Ndungu stated that union density was around 6.6%.

Accordingly, a 2000 report by Alternatives to Neoliberalism in Southern Africa (ANSA) the apartheid social and economic legacy of an enclave economy still affected the labour relations in agriculture. Additionally, Ndungu and other writers characterised the sector as one with 'highly skewed power relations with relations of dependency, deference and authority defining the lives of many workers'. Furthermore, Ndungu argues that it will be 'extremely difficult to transform the current hostile climate that exists on farms, to one conducive to unionisation'. What this simply means is that it is difficult to organise and mobilise farm workers (both locals and immigrants) and to ensure participation and representation from within or outside their workplaces.

CONCLUSION

Government officials from South Africa and Zimbabwe who visited Lephalale became aware of rampant labour and human rights abuses in the area. While Van der Walt has been charged for the abuses, the farm workers worry that justice will not be done because of his reported connections.

An interaction between the workers and unions – Migrant Workers Union of South Africa (Miwusa) and Food and Allied Workers Union (Fawu) revealed that workers were keen to go back to the farm and to work. The ambivalence of these workers on whether to go back to work or seek other alternatives demonstrates the desperate situation migrant workers

were exposed to – where their agency is down played by socio-economic circumstances, which capitalism thrives on.

The fact-finding mission recommended the following:

1. Comprehensively inspect the conditions of farm workers in Limpopo and elsewhere.
2. Properly investigate and impartially prosecute reported instances of human rights abuses and alleged torture on farms without fear or favour.
3. Ensure that wages for all farm workers are paid in terms of gazetted minimum wages.
4. Fine and shut down the farms of repeated violators.
5. Assist with the necessary documentation to enable workers to earn a livelihood until their court cases for pay and compensation are finalised.
6. Partner with civil society, organised labour, and farmers to carry out a comprehensive education campaign on the rights and conditions of workers under labour legislation and the South African Constitution.
7. Address the immediate and urgent health needs of the displaced farm workers. ^{LB}

This article is based on a report of the visit to Lephalale by South African and Zimbabwean government officials and civil society organisations which came to the rescue of the displaced workers. These included the Gift of the Givers, House of Hope - Ithemba, African Diaspora Workers Network (ADWN), Solidarity Centre, Zimbabwe Exiles Forum (ZEF), Food & Allied Workers Union (Fawu), and Migrant Workers Union of South Africa (Miwusa).

Migrant worker exploitation

Beaten in wage dispute



Seeking legal recourse: Edias Ndlovu with Advocate Gabriel Shumba.

Shot and beaten for asking for a wage increase, Edias Ndlovu's (23) plight is a too common story for migrant farm workers in South Africa, writes **Janet Munakamwe.**

Raised by his grandmother who has since passed away Ndlovu from Gwanda, Zimbabwe does not know his parents. He came to South Africa when he was only 12-years-old and never had a passport. On arrival, he worked for a relative at a chicken farm in Thohoyandou.

In 2014 he moved to Johannesburg farm in Lephalale where he worked long hours – from 7am to 11pm. In September 2015 he was fired. This happened after Ndlovu and fellow workers demanded an increase of R10 on top of the R70 per day that they were earning then. During the wage protests, he was accused of being a ring leader, shot in the head with rubber bullets, kidnapped for six hours and assaulted with the butt of a gun together with three workmates – Amo, Showzi, and Ishu. The four were taken to Baltimore

Game Reserve where they were brutally whipped with sjamboks and pepper sprayed. They suffered from internal injuries and were taken to Anthony Hospital by the police, where they were observed for only an hour despite the severe injuries. Unfortunately, he lost the doctor's card when his belongings were burnt by the farmer during evictions. As such, he does not have medical proof to provide a detailed report of injuries incurred. He later learnt that the instruction was to kill them and just dump their bodies in the game reserve with wild animals. Other protesters reported missing persons to police and insisted that they would not leave the farm until they were found.

The employer, P. van der Walt, then gave in and instructed his 'hitman' to release the victims. Two of his colleagues (who were

kidnapped with him) went home and another is paralysed. The four reported their cases separately to the police but were not given case numbers. So far, their former employer has appeared in court on criminal charges in general, but has not been charged with kidnapping.

Ndlovu can no longer lift heavy loads and this will negatively affect his future livelihood strategies. Farm work is labour intensive and because of injuries from the assault one wonders if he will still be employable in the sector.

DOCUMENTS

Ndlovu never possessed a passport and relied on a permit which was issued by the employer. Currently, he is in possession of a short-term permit issued by the South African Department of Home Affairs (DHA) as he and colleagues await the outcome of their labour dispute.

Ndlovu pointed out that he is keen to go back home to obtain a passport and work permit but expressed ignorance about the process. However, he mentioned that the Zimbabwean consulate team who are involved in this case, have only explained the process to those who lost their passports on how to acquire replacements, but did not provide information on how to obtain new ones. If he gets his passport and permit, Ndlovu aims to seek work in Johannesburg although he did not specify the sector he is targeting.

LEGAL ADVICE

Advocate Gabriel Shumba, of the Zimbabwe Exiles Forum (ZEF) has pledged to voluntarily pursue the kidnapped four's case as part of the steps aimed at realising justice for the despondent farm workers.

He advised Ndlovu to contact his colleagues who went back to Zimbabwe so as to establish if they are interested in pursuing their cases in the courts of justice. Advocate Shumba also indicated the need for a confirmatory affidavit.

Ndlovu mentioned that other than his relative in South Africa, he is only left with some cousins and other extended family relatives back in Zimbabwe. In terms of marriage, he pointed out that he was in a relationship with a South African woman from Pypurus, Limpopo where he used to work and they have a nine-month-old son. Ndlovu said his partner's parents are not keen on their daughter marrying a 'kwerekwere' (foreigner from the African continent). ^{LB}

Janet Munakamwe is from the Africa Diaspora Workers Network (ADWN).

Unlocking labour laws

Breach of procedure in retrenchments unfair, not unlawful

When a dismissal is found to be procedurally unfair by the Commission for Conciliation Mediation and Arbitration or the Labour Court, the arbitrator or judge has a discretion as to whether reinstatement, re-employment or compensation is the appropriate remedy. Normally, if there is a good reason for the dismissal and the dismissal was flawed only because of a procedural irregularity, compensation is awarded, writes **Ingrid Lewin**.

The Labour Appeal Court decided in the case of *De Beers Group Services (Pty) Ltd v NUM* (2011) 4 BLLR 319 (LAC), that a breach of the procedural requirements for large-scale retrenchments contained in s 189A of the Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995 (the LRA) rendered the retrenchment unlawful as opposed to unfair.

This meant that the employees concerned were automatically entitled to return to work with full back pay, even if there was a good reason for the retrenchment. However, the Labour Appeal Court (LAC), in *Edcon v Steenkamp* (2015) JOL 33383 (LAC), found that the *De Beers* case and other decisions which followed

in its wake, were wrongly decided. The employees were denied leave to appeal and, together with their union, took their matter to the Constitutional Court.

At issue was the fact that Edcon, when it retrenched over 3,000 employees in 2013 and 2014, gave the employees notice of the termination of their contracts of employment, prior to the expiry of the prescribed time periods contained in s 189A. About a third of the employees decided to challenge their dismissals in the Labour Court, purely on the basis of the principle established in *De Beers* arguing that, as a result of the breach of the provisions of the LRA, the dismissals were invalid

and therefore they were entitled to reinstatement with full back pay. However, because of the significance of the principle involved, the judge president of the Labour Court decided to exercise his powers in terms of s 175 of the LRA and directed that the matter be heard by the LAC sitting as a court of first instance. Had the judge president not done so, the Labour Court would have been obliged to follow the decision in *De Beers*.

The employees' argument was that provisions of s 189A were prescriptive (it uses the word 'must' with regard to the procedures to be followed) and the employer was obliged to comply with the time limits before dismissing the employees. Its failure to do so rendered the dismissals invalid. Edcon argued that whilst its failure to adhere to the time limits might render the dismissals unfair, it did not mean that the dismissals were invalid.

The majority of the Constitutional Court agreed with Edcon finding that the LRA did not contemplate invalid dismissals and that the procedures which Edcon failed to follow related to the procedural fairness of the dismissal. Therefore the employees' remedy lay within the unfair dismissal provisions of the LRA.

PROCEDURAL BREACH

The Constitutional Court gave two reasons why the appeal should be dismissed. First, the employees' cause of action was related to a breach of the procedural requirements laid down in s 189A of the LRA, therefore the relief which the employees may be entitled to, for that breach (if they make out a proper case) should be sought within the LRA. The employees contended that Edcon's non-compliance with the s 189A(8) procedure before the workers were dismissed rendered their dismissals invalid. They did not contend that the non-compliance rendered their dismissals unfair.

The court stated: 'The LRA created special rights and obligations that

did not exist at common law. One right is every employee's right not to be unfairly dismissed, which is provided for in s 185. The LRA also created principles applicable to such rights, special processes and for the enforcement of those rights ... invalid dismissals and a declaratory order that a dismissal is invalid and of no force and effect fall outside the contemplation of the LRA. Such an order cannot be granted in a case based on the breach of an obligation under the LRA concerning a dismissal.'

The second basis for its conclusion that the appeal should be dismissed was a principle that it called an 'LRA remedy for an LRA breach'. The court stated that, if a litigant's cause of action is based on a breach of a provision of the LRA, its remedies are limited to those provided for in the LRA. Section 189A of the LRA, provides adequate remedies for a breach of its provisions. Section 189A(9) of the LRA allows the employees to give the employer notice of the commencement of a strike if the employer dismisses or gives notice of dismissal before the expiry of the prescribed time

periods and, in terms of s 189A(13), employees are entitled to make an application to the Labour Court for an order:

- compelling the employer to comply with a fair procedure
- interdicting or restraining the employer from dismissing an employee prior to complying with a fair procedure
- directing the employer to reinstate an employee until it has complied with a fair procedure and
- making an award of compensation.

If they have the stamina and the resources, all is not lost for the employees, as the court indicated the employees can go back and start again by challenging the fairness of their dismissal in the normal course, provided that condonation is granted. ¹⁸

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Woolworths retrenchments

Saccawu welcomes judgment

On 4 April 2016 the Labour Court handed down a landmark judgment in the matter between the South African Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union (Saccawu) on behalf of its members and Woolworths. The judgment reinstated members retrospective to the date of dismissal and awarded costs against the company, writes **Saccawu**.



The essence of the case arises from the company's decision to retrench long serving full-time employees and replacing them with non-fulltime and exploitatively flexible types of jobs, as the company believes in operating through flexible employees. The Labour Court has found the retrenchments to be procedurally and substantively unfair, hence its order for Woolworths to reinstate workers retrospective from their date of dismissal without loss of pay.

This judgment is significant in the current context of the job loss bloodbath in the wholesale and retail sector where most employers do not engage in a meaningful joint consensus seeking process envisaged in s 189(2) of the Labour Relations Act.

We have noted that Woolworths has signalled its intention to appeal against the judgment and hope they will not go this route as it will lead to unnecessary delays. We hope the company will regard the judgment as a wake-up call, for a serious

introspection into management's conduct and attitude towards processes whose end product is condemning workers to the ever increasing pool of joblessness. Whilst Woolworths has a bad record of super-exploitation of workers, we hope they will use this judgment as an opportunity to repent and embrace the decent work agenda and further make a positive contribution towards addressing the country's developmental challenges of eradicating poverty, unemployment, and inequality. **LB**



Credit: William Matlala

Saccawu versus Woolworths: Case summary

In *South African Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union (Saccawu), C. Moeng v Woolworths* (Case numbers: J 3159/12 & JS 1177/12) acting judge Nkutha-Nkontwana of the Labour Court of South Africa ruled that the dismissals were not 'operationally justifiable' and 'procedurally unfair'. Woolworths was ordered to reinstate the workers 'retrospectively from date of their dismissal without loss of pay' and to pay costs.

The dismissals were not operationally viable because 'it is incompetent for an employer to seek to address unfair pay differentiation through an operational requirements process and thereby circumventing its obligation under Chapter III of the Employment Equity Act'.

The workers had agreed to work 'flexible hours'.

The dismissals were unfair because the employer dismissed the employees in order to make a profit. 'Employer did not produce evidence on the costs associated

with the employment of affected employees; total amount of targeted cost reduction and whether such a target had been achieved - it is not possible to decide if the employer's decision is a rational or reasonable one'. The employer also failed to consult with the trade union - in this case Saccawu.

According to the judgment Woolworths stopped employing full-time workers in 2002 in favour of flexi-time workers. 'By 2012, the Woolworths' workforce comprised about 16,400 flexi-timers and 590 full-timers, about 3.5% of the workforce, throughout its 200 corporate stores. The categories of full-time contracts were found to be inflexible and no longer suitable to meet Woolworths' operational requirements. In July 2012, Woolworths embarked upon a staff career paths project which culminated in the adoption and implementation of a formal grading and remuneration system, and plotting a career path for employees within corporate stores,' read the judgment.

'Correspondingly and as part of the career path project, Woolworths sought to convert the remaining 590 full-timers to flexi-timers to standardised terms and conditions of employment. Woolworths contended that the conversion of the full-timers was premised on three operational requirement drivers, that is, flexibility, cost efficiency, and equality. The applicants, on the other hand, conceded the need for flexibility but disputed the other two drivers'.

When the company concluded the 'voluntary' retrenchment phase-out of 590 full-timers, 413 accepted and 177 rejected the offers. Woolworths then proceeded to dismissals and the 177 'were issued with notices in terms of s 189(3) of the Labour Relations Act'.

'During the s 189A phase, 85 out of 177 full-timers accepted one of the voluntary options. Ultimately, only 92 full-timers were retrenched and 44 thereof are the affected employees'.

Saccawu represented 51 of its members. **LB**

Platinum mining and community protests

Demanding better lives around mines

The struggle between mining companies and communities in Rustenburg has been going on for a long time especially over land, cracking houses, noise pollution, and access to clean water. **Joseph Mujere** investigates some of the protests that communities have organised.

One of the initial impacts of the establishment of mines in the North West Province in the 1950s was the loss of farming and grazing lands. According to Bozzoli, although the decline of peasant agriculture in Bafokeng had started in the 1940s the establishment of mines in the 1950s marked the end of the golden age of peasantry as people lost their lands to mines. This was worsened by the fact that peasants were not compensated for their loss of land. Bozzoli quotes Evelyn Rakoka, one of the Phokeng women she interviewed, who said the mines were 'situated exactly where it used to be our fields. And it was the chief, not the people who benefited from them.'

One of the issues at the centre of the disputes between Luka residents and the Royal Bafokeng Administration (RBA) has been the fact that they lost their land to pave way for mining but were never compensated. They claim that only the Bafokeng royal family benefit from mining activities because they get royalties from companies mining in the area and have also ventured into mining themselves through the Royal Bafokeng

Holdings (RBH). Baphiring and other clans in Luka romanticise the period before mining activities in the area started to demonstrate the devastating effects of mining. They argue that, 'before the commencement of mining in and around Luka village, the Baphiring community was residing in a crime and pollution free environment. They owned large tract (sic) of land which they used for crop as well as cattle farming.'

Apart from the loss of land, the establishment of mines attracted migrant workers in the area which had an impact on the local moral order. The coming of migrant workers caused much anxiety in the communities around the mines. As Naomi Setshedi notes, 'when the mines started we left farming in fear of mine workers. A woman would not have dared walking alone to the fields ... we were scared of the mineworkers who used to roam about.' This shows that the impact of the establishment of mines was not confined to loss of land but even those people who still had land to till began to find it difficult to continue engaging in agricultural activities because of the presence of migrant mineworkers. This also reflects how

the locals felt about the presence of migrant workers in the area.

Luka village has had a longer history of settlement and felt the impact of mining activities for a longer period as compared to Number 9 and Matebeleng informal settlements. Number 9 and Matebeleng informal settlements emerged in the late 1980s and early 1990s and grew rapidly in the post-apartheid era largely as a consequence of the disbandment of the compound system and the introduction of 'living out allowances' for mineworkers. As a result, most of the people living in these communities are actually migrants who settled in the informal settlements because of their proximity to the mines.

Residents of Matebeleng and Number 9 informal settlement believe neither the municipality nor the mining companies operating in the surrounding areas cared about their welfare. Their greatest frustration comes from the fact that they see the mines as exploiting the area's mineral wealth and polluting the environment yet do very little to support the local communities. The community leaders also make similar complaints.



The Royal Bafokeng Administration is against unregulated construction: Homestead near Marikana.

Number 9 informal settlement is located between Impala Platinum's Number 8 and Number 9 shafts whilst Matebeleng is surrounded by five chrome and platinum mines which include Xstrata, Samncor, and Murray and Roberts (Aquarius). They cite the high rate of unemployment in the community as evidence of the fact that the mines are doing very little to support local communities. Their key demands are that the mines should support community development projects and help provide basic social services such as water and electricity as well as alleviating the high rate of unemployment in the community by giving first preference to members of the community in job vacancies.

Luka village is surrounded by many Impala Platinum mine shafts as well as open cast mines. The lives of people living in this village is one which is punctuated by the everyday realities of the effects of mining which include noise pollution, air pollution, contamination of water, and cracking of houses caused by mining operations. The residents of the village have to engage

with the RBA and the Rustenburg Local Municipality (RLM) which administers the area as well as the mining companies. However, because of the historical land disputes between clans such as Baphiring and the Bafokeng, the RBA has been reluctant to use mining royalties to develop the village. This has only helped to exacerbate the tensions between the residents of Luka and the RBA.

One of the livelihood options available to people living around mines is informal trade, operating spaza shops and renting out backyard shacks and m'khukhu. However, the spaza shop business is dominated by Chinese and Somali traders who rent m'khukhu from more established residents. The main reason why this business is dominated by Somalis and Chinese is that these groups establish networks of traders and when they order stock they do so as syndicates so as to get discounts from wholesalers and they are also quiet frugal. Because the spaza shops are mostly run by foreigners they are targeted in xenophobic violence. For example, in 2012 many spaza shops in Number 9 and Matebeleng settlement were

looted during the Impala Platinum mine strikes which, when it spread to the informal settlements, turned into xenophobic violence against owners of spaza shops.

Although just like in other communities around Rustenburg spaza shops in Luka are run by foreigners, the local landlords see them as an important source of livelihood. Usually the landlord invites a Chinese or Somali trader to construct a spaza shop in his yard and charges him monthly rentals. In some instances landlords build the spaza shops which they then rent out. However, the RBA has outlawed these spaza shops and backyard dwellings arguing that they are unsightly and that landlords needed to seek approval before constructing them. This has also been one of the ways through which the RBA seeks to maintain its hegemony and determine what is orderly and what is not.

According to Caldwell, 'the RBN has created policies discouraging the practice of backyard-dwelling, in which Bafokeng rent portions of their stands to migrant workers who then construct tin shacks, or m'khukhu, to live in.'

One of the major impacts of extractive industries across the world is their damage on the environment. Mining pollutes the environment, underground water, air and affects the general vista of the area leaving the environment scarred.

In spite of this however, residents of Luka construct backyard dwellings which they rent out to mineworkers and other people to get extra cash. This has created problems for the residents of Luka as the RBA is generally against the unregulated construction of these spaza shops and also the fact that most of them are run by 'foreigners'.

The 2010 demolitions of spaza shops in Luka is illustrative of the RBA's aversion to spaza shops and its use of the rhetoric of order to impose its hegemony on the people of Luka. It also showed the RBA's distaste for migrant workers although it benefits from royalties from mining operations in its area and is also involved in mining through the RBH. In September 2010, with very little warning, the RBA bulldozed spaza shops in Luka village. According to various reports, at least seven spaza shops were demolished within a week as the RBA moved in with bulldozers (earth movers) and armed security personnel. The RBA also threatened to stop water supplies to the village and demolish backyard rooms on the grounds that 'foreigners' were staying in these rooms and using resources meant for the locals. On its part the RBA claimed the operation was meant to 'pre-empt the operation of illegal businesses.' Those whose spaza shops were demolished reacted by demonstrating and approaching the courts seeking compensation from the RBA.

One of the major impacts of extractive industries across the world is their damage on the environment. Mining pollutes the environment, underground water, air and affects the general vista of the area leaving the environment scarred. Contamination of river and

underground water, for example, has been one of the major impacts of mining activities in Rustenburg. In Number 9 and Matebeleng settlements, which for a long time relied on river or water supplied by water vendors, there has been a danger of people drinking contaminated water. Moreover, apart from contaminating water sources mining activities also lead to the depletion of underground water.

In Luka village residents, including Phistus Megkwe, complain that most of their boreholes no longer have water because of the massive mining activities around the village. The blasting in both underground and open-cast mining activities also cause a lot of noise pollution and the resultant tremors lead to the cracking of houses. Residents of Luka point out that, 'a survey that was conducted a few years ago, concluded that mine blastings were responsible for most of the cracked houses in Luka. Sadly, Impala Platinum has vehemently refused to take responsibility for the damages, let alone, compensate the owners.' Some of the houses have become a health hazard to their occupants due to the cracks caused by blasting at the mines.

In spite of living in the shadows of a multi-million industry and in spite of having to deal with the impacts of mining on a daily basis most communities living around the mines do not benefit from mining. As a result they engage the mining companies to help them through their corporate social responsibility programmes. Yet in most cases the assistance such communities get from the mining companies is usually tokenistic. Consequently, most communities turn to protests to get the attention of mining companies and the government. As Dovelli argues, 'the lack of

engagement with local communities is at the root of many conflicts arising in the extractives industry'. For communities living around the mines community protests are usually the only available option to force the municipality and mining companies to provide them with basic amenities.

Although there are local peculiarities, the environmental impact of platinum mining has caused a lot of disquiet among people living close to mining operations. Residents of Luka reacted to the environmental impacts of mining operations by establishing grassroots organisations such as the Luka Environmental Forum (LEF). LEF's main mandate is to assess the impact of mining on the environment such as cracking of houses, pollution of water, drying up of boreholes, and noise pollution among others and engage the RBA and mining companies to do something to address these issues. The emergence of such grassroots movements was a direct result of the community's dissatisfaction with the RBA which they view as working with mining capital. According to Sonwabile Mnwana, 'village forums provided an opportunity for residents to voice their dissatisfaction over the manner in which the ruling elite distributed mineral wealth.' Residents see the RBA as prioritising the interests of mining capital at the expense of their own welfare.

Open-cast mining is one of the main mining operations which causes serious damage to the environment and leaves the landscape scarred. In 2005 Impala Platinum opened an open-cast mine between Shafts 7A and 5. The open-cast mine was close to Luka village and as a result houses cracked and windows shattered during blasting. The residents of Luka approached

the mine management and implored them to stop mining so close to the village because of its impact on the environment and on the villagers. Impala Platinum, however, defied the residents and continued mining. Consequently, the residents resolved to stage a protest with the aim of forcing Impala Platinum to halt its open-cast mining.

As one of the residents recalled: 'We went to the open-cast mine at around 4pm and waited until they charged up the dynamite. We then entered the open-cast mine. We were approximately 200. We did a sit-in there. They could not blast because we were there. We told them that we would even bring our food and cook our supper in the mine. The mine management asked us to come and engage them at 5 Shaft and we went there and gave them our grievances. We highlighted our concerns about the impact of the mining on our community. They could not blast that day and no mining took place because of our intervention. Afterwards they just blasted the shots they had charged and the open-cast mining was stopped at that site. This was a small success on our part. But they continued with open-cast mines further from the village. The sit-in was led by the Magotlane (Magokgwane) section people because they were the ones closest to the mine and the most affected by mining activities.

What the protest showed was the villagers' resolve to fight the mining companies as well as RBA to force them to recognise that the mining activities were damaging the environment and affecting the living conditions of the people living around the mines.

However, the residents of Luka were only able to stage a sit-in at the mine because the community is organised and the people have a historical attachment to the area which gives them a sense of entitlement. Such organised community protests are less likely in areas like Number 9 informal

settlement which are loosely structured and the people don't have a strong attachment to the land. Number 9 informal settlement faces similar problems to those of Luka as it is located between two mine shafts. However, the major pre-occupation of the residents of this community has been getting basic amenities such as water. Their demands have centred on their plight as people living close to the mines and not as people with a historical attachment to the land. Thus, although they claim to be 'locals' their claims are not based on being indigenous but on more recent history.

Getting access to clean water is one of the key demands of the people residing close to platinum mines. This demand is premised on the fact that mining activities pollute water sources and lead to the depletion of underground water. For a long time residents of Number 9 and Matebeleng informal settlements did not have access to clean water and had to dig up wells along stream banks or resort to buying water from water vendors. As Rajak has observed, most of the informal settlements have no access to tap water, electricity and such services as refuse collection. Residents of Number 9 and Matebeleng informal settlement purchased water from vendors who sell it for anything between R5 and R10 for a 25-litre container whilst those who cannot afford just use the contaminated river water. In 2009, one of the residents of Matebeleng stated:

'We have many problems in our area. There is no permanent water supply. Twice a week a water truck contracted by the Kroondal municipality fills these tanks with water. If you are not around when the tank is filled, then you don't get water. Many families are forced to buy water from private sellers. These sellers bring the water from Mfedikwe in Bleskop, a neighbouring village. If you don't have money then you are forced to

use the water from the river. The majority of the families use the river to wash their clothes. People know that this water is dangerous but they say that they have no alternative, so they continue to use the water from the river. A lot of sickness comes from this river, especially among school children who play in the river on hot days. The river has Bilharzia'.

Against this background, residents of the community felt that it was crucial for them to continue to engage the mining companies as well as RLM to provide them with clean running water; failure of which would result in community protests.

In 2010 the community leaders of Matebeleng applied for the formalisation of the settlement so that it would be integrated into the RLM. This was granted in November of the same year. As part of this formalisation process, the settlement began to be included in the Rustenburg Integrated Development Plan (IDP). The settlement's name was also changed from Matebeleng to Ikemeleng. This transformation encapsulated the community's desire to formalise their settlement and to fight against poor service delivery. As part of its corporate social responsibilities Aquarius mine contributed R10.4-million towards the upgrading of the informal settlement to a formal settlement. One of the major projects funded by the company has been the installation of a community-wide water reticulation system. By the end of 2012 community water taps had been installed. This was arguably a sign of how, through unity and constant engagement, the community was managing to convince some of the mines to partner with the RLM in developing the community. ^{LB}

Joseph Mujere teaches history at the University of Zimbabwe and is a former research associate at the Society and Work Development Institute at the University of the Witwatersrand.

Community struggles

For clean water and jobs

Community struggles around Rustenburg mines have also been about water and jobs, writes **Joseph Mujere**.

Although developments in Number 9 followed almost the same trajectory as those of Matebeleng contestations of ownership of land became a stumbling block in the community's desire to have running water and other amenities. In 2012 Lungisile Joy, the Community Policing Forum (CPF) chairperson and the *de facto* leader of the community had this to say on the water problems in Number 9 settlement:

'For the past five years we have been trying to get water from the Rustenburg Local Municipality (RLM) and the mines with very little success. Last year the RLM contracted a company to install those two water tanks you see but the RBA stopped it. They were claiming that the land belongs to them and the municipality could not go ahead with service delivery without their consent. What surprises us is that during elections the Bafokeng issue does not come up. We believe that this land belongs to all South Africans. The overall owner of land is the South African government. Who are the Bafokeng to say that we cannot have water here? We are all South Africans and we have the right to be here and we cannot survive without water. What surprises us is that the majority of people selling water here are Bafokeng.'

In the end the contentious issue of land ownership impeded on the process of the gradual integration of Number 9 informal settlement into the RLM as well as the provision of clean water. In spite of a constant engagement between the community and the RLM the issue of who actually owns the land continued to be a stumbling block. In the end Number 9 informal settlement remained in the zone of uncertainty with no authority willing to take responsibility for service delivery. Because of the uncertainty in land ownership the informal settlement has remained in limbo, neither able to get support from the RLM and the Royal Bafokeng Administration (RBA) nor considered a 'host community' or 'legitimate stakeholder' with entitlement to services from the mining companies.

It is interesting to note that being aware of the fact that they have no strong claims to being a 'local community' residents of Number 9 informal settlement have opted to pull out the citizenship card by claiming that 'we are South Africans and we have the right to be here,' added Joy. Although this claim failed to yield immediate results as the rhetoric of 'local community' is quite strong among mining companies, it is a legitimate

claim which is actually backed by the South Africa Freedom Charter.

Although the RBA installed yard connections of tap water in Luka village the politics of land ownership and land claims have continued to affect the community. The residents of Luka were not paying for water up until 2011 when the RBA suddenly demanded that residents start paying for the water. The understanding was that the mining companies were the ones paying for the water because they had contaminated the water sources around the village and that mining activities had led to the depletion of underground water. However, in 2012 the RBA announced that residents of Luka should start paying for the water and immediately started issuing out monthly water bills. The main reason it gave for this was that there were too many people staying in backyard dwellings, which significantly increased the rate of water use per household. The reaction of the residents was that of defiance. As one of the residents retold:

'We refused to pay for the water. Our argument was that mines are the ones which are supposed to pay for our water because they contaminated our water sources. If it was not for these mining activities we would be accessing



Mining near Marikana: Extractive industries destroy the environment.

clean water from our boreholes and from rivers. Moreover, not every homestead in Luka has backyard dwellings. For example, I do not have a backyard dwelling at my house and I am not renting out any room,' said Tsepo Godwin Megkwe.

It is evident that such arguments are a result of the community's sense of entitlement which emanates from the knowledge that mining activities are responsible for the contamination of their water sources. Consequently, refusing to pay for water was, in their reasoning, quite justifiable.

To counter the community's defiance, the RBA responded by trying to implement a pre-paid water system in all the 29 villages of the RBN. The RBA announced in February 2012 that it would replace the old meter system with a new pre-paid token system which would mean that one would only have access to water after buying the tokens. Again the residents resisted and demonstrated against the RBA's attempt to force them to pay for water. In the end this proposal was shelved. Although some residents of Luka pay their water bills under the old system, most of them, especially those in the Phiring section, have continued to defy the RBA in spite of it sending them bills of varying amounts.

Some of the informants found it rather ironic that the RBA complained about the presence of migrant mineworkers in places like Luka when it was a shareholder in Impala Platinum, a company which employs migrant labour. Thus, although struggles for the supply of clean water in Luka and Number 9 and Matebeleng informal settlements may seem like just part of the everyday struggles of communities living close to mines they also reflect broader struggles around land ownership, entitlement, citizenship as well as politics of belonging.

Although loss of livelihoods and environmental impacts of mining are often cited by communities living close to the mines as the key issues at the centre of community protests usually unemployment is the major reason why people engage in community protests. In most cases communities living close to the mines consider themselves to be legitimate stakeholders who should be the first to benefit from mines through getting preferences in job vacancies and access to services. When residents make demands to the mining companies one which is always on the agenda is jobs. Residents usually make such demands on

the basis of claims of being local and therefore being entitled to getting services from the mining companies.

In January 2012 the residents of Luka formed an organisation which they called Luka in Action. The main objective of the organisation was to engage the mining companies and the RBA to help in service delivery and also to provide jobs for the locals. After failing to achieve anything through peaceful engagement Luka in Action organised a community protest in March 2012. Youths barricaded roads and stopped people from getting into or leaving Luka. The result of this protest was that the RBA agreed to help youths from Luka get jobs at Impala Platinum mine. According to one of the organisers of the protests: '1,100 youths submitted their CVs which were then forwarded to Impala through the Royal Bafokeng Institute. Not everyone got a job but a significant number got employed.'

Similarly, one of the key demands made by the residents of Matebeleng has been that the mines give first preference to residents of the community when recruiting workers. As one of the residents, Alfred Mkheu, of Matebeleng noted: 'It is very difficult for us to get jobs with

these mines yet we continue to see the mines employing people from Eastern Cape and other provinces. We see buses bringing people from Lesotho and Mozambique as if we do not want jobs as well. We have protested against this practice in the past and we will continue to do so.' Consequently, they have also had to resort to community protests to force the mines to give them preference in job opportunities. In October 2011, the community engaged in community protest largely targeting the mines which were accused of being reluctant to employ the locals (members of the Matebeleng community) preferring instead to recruit foreigners and people from other provinces such as the Eastern Cape. Although the protest did not achieve much in terms of alleviating the unemployment problem in the community, most of the mines agreed to liaise with the local councilor when recruiting local labour. The arrangement they reached with the community was that when a mine had vacancies especially for unskilled and semi-skilled jobs it would inform the councilor who would in turn forward names to the mine human resources manager.

However, because of lack of organisational capacity, but mainly because of land disputes, the residents of Number 9 informal settlement have not been able to engage with the mining companies. The community is hamstrung by the fact that they have no claim to the land and have failed to convince the mining companies that they are legitimate stakeholders who should benefit from the mines' corporate social responsibility programmes. ¹⁸

HIV and AIDS in SA

According to **Statistics SA** figures for 2015, the number of people living with HIV and AIDS in South Africa is 6.19-million out of a population of 54.95-million. The HIV adult prevalence is 16.6% and AIDS-related deaths in 2015 were 162,445.

In 2013 UNAIDS reported that there were 330,000 new infections in the country. A Human Sciences Research Council Survey found that more young women in the 15 to 24 age group were four times more likely to be infected than men in the same age group. These accounted for 25% of new infections in the country.

Over two million were orphaned due to AIDS in 2011.

However, some progress has been made as SA has the largest antiretroviral (ARV) treatment rollout programme in the world with over two million people receiving treatment in 2012 according to the World Health Organisation.

The pandemic is happening in a country with a high unemployment rate of 34% and the highest global inequality.

The spread of HIV is caused by many factors including 'poverty, inequality and social instability, high levels of sexually transmitted infections, the low status of women, sexual violence, high mobility (particularly migrant labour), limited and uneven access to quality medical care and a history

of poor leadership in the response to the epidemic,' says the AIDS Foundation of South Africa. Poor leadership refers to the HIV and AIDS denialist policies during the presidency of Thabo Mbeki.

Furthermore, the AIDS Foundation says there is a disconnection between levels of knowledge and behaviour.

'Research shows high levels of knowledge about the means of transmission of HIV and understanding of methods of prevention. However, this does not translate into HIV preventive behaviour. Behaviour change and social change are long-term processes and the factors that predispose people to infection – such as poverty and inequality, patriarchy and illiteracy – cannot be addressed in the short term. Vulnerability to, and the impact of, the epidemic are proving to be most catastrophic at community and household level.'

South Africans have been affected by HIV and AIDS in a number of ways.

'The hardship for those infected and their families begins long before people die. Stigma and

denial related to suspected infection cause many people to delay or refuse testing, fear and despair often follow diagnosis, due to poor-quality counselling and lack of support.'

'Poverty prevents many infected people from maintaining adequate nutrition to help prevent the onset of illness, limited access to clinics, waiting lists for ARV treatment programmes and eligibility criteria for access to ARVs mean many people become seriously ill before accessing treatment,' argues the AIDS Foundation.

Other ways in which society is affected include 'loss of income and support when a breadwinner or caregiver becomes ill, and the diversion of household resources to provide care exacerbate poverty, the burden upon family

members, particularly children and older people caring for terminally ill adults, and the trauma of bereavement and orphanhood compromise the physical and mental well-being of entire households,' it adds.

BURDEN OF CARE

The burden of care and support for the sick in some instances falls on poor rural communities. Argues AIDS Foundation: 'For many years, the burden of care and support has fallen heavily on the shoulders of impoverished rural communities, where sick family members return when they can no longer work or care for themselves. Community-based care has been promoted as the best option since it would be impossible to care properly for hundreds of thousands of people

dying from AIDS in public hospitals.'

'The resilience and capacity to care for dying people and provide for those they leave behind in impoverished communities is extremely overstretched. There remains an acute need for social protection and interventions to support the most vulnerable communities and households affected by this epidemic.'

'The challenge we still face is that people are not testing timeously therefore only once they are very ill at quite a late stage of disease progression do they only realise that they are HIV positive. The central focus remains that we continue to mobilise an increased uptake in HIV testing and counselling, behaviour change, communication and combination prevention and treatment.' ^{LB}



HIV and AIDS learning at TVET colleges

Innovative public-private sector collaboration

The first study ever conducted to ascertain capacities among South African technical and vocational training colleges (TVET) to teach and support learning about HIV and AIDS is complete and the results are already being used for new projects.

This baseline study was conducted in 2015 by the Higher Education and Training HIV/AIDS Programme (HEAIDS) of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET).

The study made some critical findings with the overall conclusion that the current HIV and AIDS policies for TVETs are outdated, that the curriculum needs strengthening, and that action plans are urgently needed.

The greatest gap across TVETs is that their curricula are almost entirely technical and focused purely on vocational training. They lack varied content and while some do offer life-skills training, there are many weaknesses that need to be addressed.

This translates into a lack of teaching about health and wellness, exacerbates risky sexual behaviour, substance abuse and gender-based violence, and more specifically the inability of students to deal with HIV and related issues in their places of work. These gaps may further have the combined

effect of preventing many students from completing their training or entering the job market.

HEAIDS implements a two-pronged approach across 50 TVETs and 26 universities: it supports the roll out of comprehensive campus-based health and wellness initiatives to ensure students and graduates remain healthy. It also strengthens teaching and learning about personal and professional competencies so students can compete as part of a productive labour force.

TVETs are ideally placed to address students on the issues of HIV and AIDS, health and related social challenges because of their location and the central role they play in social and youth development, and as the source of graduates ready to enter various industries.

In explaining the aim of the study, Dr Ramneek Ahluwalia, director of HEAIDS said: 'Investment in our youth is an investment well placed.'

The findings are being used to inform strategies on how to improve life orientation teaching

in colleges. Essentially, this will be done by reviewing and strengthening the curriculum and capacitating lecturers to teach it.

A number of stakeholders and partners are already part of the initiative including the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the Department of Mineral Resources (DMR), the Chamber of Mines, and the South African Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS (SABCOHA).

HEAIDS intends to share the findings with other role players including the Departments of Labour and Agriculture and Business Unity South Africa (Busa) in order to strengthen collaborations and maximise the opportunity to improve student through-put rates and the national economic outcomes.

'These organisations and their stakeholders have recognised that the HIV/TB co-epidemics take a heavy toll on the labour force – where many recruits are TVET graduates,' continued Dr Ahluwalia. 'So while the students are in the higher education and training environment, we have the

Credit: World Bank



Credit: Mike Barwood



opportunity to build their skills and competencies to contribute to the management of HIV/TB and related issues in their worlds of work.'

Deputy minister of higher education and training, Mduduzi Manana said: 'Together, DHET, HEAIDS, our stakeholders and other role players have a keen interest in improving the knowledge and competency of young graduates to protect their own health, and enhance the well-being of families and communities.'

In line with the HEAIDS's commitment to ensure more people have access to HIV/AIDS knowledge, prevention and treatment, the study has already reached out to economic sectors which have for decades struggled to mitigate the effects of HIV/TB co-epidemics.

Two pilot projects have begun in the mining and agricultural sectors – South Africa's major industries. It is important to first look at these two sectors as they are seen to be major employers of labour that come from the TVET colleges. Research suggests that while HIV/AIDS impacts on these particular sectors significantly, TVET curriculum has not yet addressed the need in the training of its students.

South Africa is estimated to have

the world's fifth-largest mining sector which contributes about 18% to the GDP and is one of the top employers in South Africa.

Agriculture is also an important economic sector – largely because of its potential to create jobs. It is estimated that around eight million people are directly or indirectly dependent on agriculture for a living.

Hence, TVETs operating in the mining areas of Gauteng, Limpopo and the Northern Cape will be incorporated into the HEAIDS National Skills Fund programme with ILO, SABCOHA, the DMR and other stakeholders helping to develop and implement richer curricula.

Agricultural courses into which HEAIDS and partners will incorporate new teachings on HIV, TB, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and the mainstreaming of gender relations and entrepreneurship will be piloted in TVETs based in KwaZulu-Natal, while mining curriculum will be strengthened with technical guidance on managing the HIV and TB co-infections.

Dr Ahluwalia concluded: 'This approach and curriculum relevance bodes well for giving the student a competitive edge as he or she enters the labour market.'

As part of an increasingly comprehensive HIV/TB/STI mitigation programme in the higher education and training sector, HEAIDS implements the following projects in partnership with a range of public and private sector role players:

- First Things First HCT/TB/STI general health and wellness programme
- Men's Health and Empowerment programme
- Women's Health and Empowerment programme
- Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention programme
- MSM and LGBTI programme
- Academic Capacity Development programme
- Future Beats Youth Development and HIV prevention through campus radio and social media. ^{LB}

HEAIDS, a national facility, aims to develop and support HIV/TB/STI mitigation initiatives and promote health and wellness across South Africa's public higher education institutions (HEIs) and TVET colleges. It is a programme of the DHET that is undertaken by Universities South Africa (previously known as HESA), the representative body of the 25 HEIs, in partnership with the South African College Principals Organisation (SACPO), the representative body of TVETs.

Labour and democratic transition

Dreams and nightmares

The labour movement played a critical role in the struggle against the apartheid regime. Together with the youth and students, it delivered the most lethal blows to a system declared by the UN as a crime against humanity. But today South Africa faces a different struggle against neo-liberalism and corruption, writes **Zwelinzima Vavi**.



I don't claim to be an authority on the topic – no single person is. Yes, individuals play their roles, but it is the masses who write history. The working class is the reliable class and its history is written in blood and sweat. We speak about its aspirations – tribulations, anger, and frustrations.

We struggled because we were oppressed. During the nightmare of apartheid we had aspirations; we had dreams – that the land and wealth

be shared. More importantly the Freedom Charter declared:

There shall be work and security!

All who work shall be free to form trade unions, to elect their officers and to make wage agreements with their employers; The state shall recognise the right and duty of all to work, and to draw full unemployment benefits; Men and

women of all races shall receive equal pay for equal work; There shall be a 40-hour working week, a national minimum wage, paid annual leave, and sick leave for all workers, and maternity leave on full pay for all working mothers; Miners, domestic workers, farm workers and civil servants shall have the same rights as all others who work; Child labour, compound labour, the tot system and contract labour shall be abolished.

When this long and protracted conflict between progressive and reactionary forces could not be resolved notwithstanding efforts from both sides to do everything in their power to destroy each other, a negotiated settlement became unavoidable. Once again workers wrote a detailed plan to guide our democratic government. Developed as an idea of the progressive trade union movement, the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) was adopted by the congress movement and the entire society. The RDP had a clear vision to meet basic needs, develop human resources, build the economy and democratise the state and society.

The trade union movement under the leadership of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) played a catalyst role throughout the transition. In fact many argued that Cosatu punched above its weight. Not limited to defending the interests of members in thousands of workplaces, it understood its role to include developing intractable links with the broader struggles of the working class. Cosatu negotiated peace, fought for public transport, blocked unilateral attempts by the apartheid National Party regime to restructure the economy on the event of their departure from power, fought against the introduction of Value Added Tax (VAT), and supported the establishment of the National Economic Forum. When the first government was constituted, Cosatu understood that unions were the oven in which leaders of society were prepared.

It is this role that made the South African trade union movement celebrated internationally as the last hope for our democracy and a fearless speaker for the interests of the most downtrodden, a reliably for workers and peoples of the world in need of practical solidarity. Indeed, Cosatu is known as such by workers in Zimbabwe, Swaziland, Western Sahara, Cuba, and Palestine.

During the transition, workers achieved a lot under its leadership. These victories include entrenching worker rights in the Constitution, pro-labour and progressive labour legislation, creating conditions of peace, delivery of basic services such as water, electricity, housing, elements of social security, and better access to education and health care. It is these achievements that we can declare without any fear of contradiction that the SA that exists today is a far better place to live in than the one that existed under apartheid.

In stating these facts, we do not seek to create confusion with the correct conclusion Cosatu and the South African Communist Party (SACP) made on the occasion of the celebration of the first decade of democracy: that in economic terms, white monopoly capital benefited more than the motive forces of the revolution – the working class.

Based on this conclusion we committed ourselves to fight harder and ensure that the second decade of democracy would benefit the working class more in economic terms. That second decade ended in 2014. However, in economic terms white monopoly capital continues to reap disproportionately from the democracy fought by the working class.

During the struggle against Colonialism of a Special Type we had dreams. Regrettably under freedom and democracy we seem en route to a nightmare.

Our dream during the nightmare of oppression is captured in so many documents, especially the Morogoro Conference declarations: 'It is therefore a fundamental feature of our strategy that victory must embrace more than formal political democracy. To allow the existing economic forces to retain their interests intact is to feed the root of racial supremacy and does not represent even the shadow of liberation'.

It is this dream that has turned out to be a nightmare! By expelling hundreds of thousands of members from the federation and affiliated unions, Cosatu has imploded following years of neglecting its core mandate in favour of palace politics! Today it is a shadow of its former self and has lost credibility with most workers. As a result, the trade union movement is fragmenting with 184 registered and 300 unregistered unions representing a declining number of workers who remain in

unions now at a mere 26% from 30% in 2012. Employers and the government have wasted little time to take full advantage of this situation.

The Free Market Foundation has launched an attack on collective bargaining that may lead to the worsening of the current situation where already 54% of wages are imposed on workers without negotiations. Workers are being outsourced with former little secure jobs now non-core. The growth of precarious forms of employment directly contradicts the dreams we had under apartheid.

Government has entrenched the Growth Employment and Redistribution (Gear) programme into the National Development Plan (NDP). Privatisation is coming back. The austerity budget is running at full speed leading to less resources being made available to effect fundamental transformation or realisation of a dream for a better life for all. Neo-liberalism is now in full swing and false solutions being imposed, including youth wage subsidies. Commodification of the most basic services such as inner-city highways is being forced down the throats of everyone with such arrogance.

Welfare grants that 17-million poor people depend on are shrinking in value, after two successive budget speeches increased them by less than the rate of inflation. The child grant of R340 is worth about a third of what even the World Bank considers necessary to escape poverty.

The 'neo-liberal law enforcers' may tell our government that the assault on the standards of living of the poor and the working class is necessary to escape junk status.

We are deindustrialising at such a pace that whereas the manufacturing sector, contributed 23% to our GDP, it is now down to around 12%. There is a full-scale job loss blood bath. Thousands

of jobs are being lost in mining, steel and even retail and other commercial sectors of the economy. The shocking level of 34% unemployment will worsen. In many townships it is above 45%.

The share of wages in the national income has plummeted from 57% in 1991 to below 50% today whilst profits are rising. We take the gold medal for being the most unequal society on earth.

Capitalists are reportedly sitting on R1.5-trillion of investable cash but will not invest it, mainly because of lack of confidence in our collective future.

University of Cape Town economists tell us that StatsSA is wrong: poverty is inflicting 63% and not 53% of the population. Oxfam says 13-million South Africans, or twice the size of the Eastern Cape Province, go to bed hungry every night.

Food prices are setting new records pushing inflation for the poor who spend most of their income on food and transport by up to 11%. Yet the bosses, with record-breaking salaries, insist that workers' wages must be kept as close as possible to the country's inappropriate inflation target of 3% to 6%.

We are still waiting for the comprehensive social security and national health insurance systems. Our two-tier system in service delivery is getting worse, as the gap widens between the top-class provision of private education and health care for the rich, largely white minority and the pathetic service to the poor, overwhelmingly black majority.

We have an apartheid economy in full swing! If you have money you can escape dysfunctional schools, police stations, hospitals and you can contract out of the state and join the elites who enjoy first-class health, education, and protection by private security companies behind increasingly higher security walls and electric fences.

This is the 'Desert and Storm' scenario that the Cosatu September Commission predicted in 1997.

So what went wrong? Where is our Cosatu? Where is our working-class biased ANC that proudly called itself the disciplined force of the Left? Where is our vanguard of the working class for a struggle for socialism? Where is our South African National Civic Organisation (Sanco) when in 2014 14,700 service delivery protests took place in the country with Sanco nowhere to be seen? What happened to abo vukayibambe, the African National Congress Youth League and to the breath of fresh air – the Young Communist League? Where are the Congress of South African Students (Cosas) and the South African Students Congress (Sasco)?

South Africans must understand that the implosion of the trade union movement is not just a narrow division in Cosatu. The rupture is much broader.

We have rejected the lazy analysis that characterises the implosion of Cosatu as personal differences between leaders. For example, there is a suggestion that the general secretary fell out with certain leaders of the ANC and the SACP and/or him being opposed by leaders who support the dominant faction of the governing alliance. Even though there are elements of truth to that theory, it is not the full story.

The implosion is a class division occasioned by the fact that Cosatu found itself in contradictory class relationships within a multiclass and unstructured Alliance led by the liberation movement, the ANC. The crisis in Cosatu is a reflection of the class contradictions and class struggles that are broadly playing themselves out in SA and in the liberation movement and its formations between the black and African proletariat and the forces of colonial capitalism and imperialism.

The second basis is the failure of the liberation movement to resolve national oppression, class exploitation and the triple oppression facing women post-1994, and letting the black and African capitalists in the liberation movement win the day on the policy front. Consequently, the colonial and capitalist mode of production and its social relations have been strengthened in SA, thus worsening unemployment, mass poverty and extreme inequalities.

The failure to address the triple crisis of unemployment, poverty and inequalities in favour of the popular masses post-1994 threatens to overwhelm and destroy the liberation movement and Cosatu in particular.

Therefore, all those leaders of Cosatu and its affiliates who are fighting to save a socialist, revolutionary, militant, transformative, anti-imperialist, democratic, worker-controlled, anti-racist, anti-male chauvinist and a united federation must be understood as representing specific class interests and positions, and as proxies of the ongoing class struggles inside SA in general and inside Cosatu itself.

The crisis in Cosatu must be understood as reflecting the contradictions between those leaders who have been won over to the side of the defenders of a neo-liberalist South African capitalism under the guise of taking responsibility for the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) and those who are determined to continue pursuing a radical NDR and the struggle for socialism as the only holistic and viable solution to the national, gender, and class questions in SA and the world.

Using the prism of class analysis as advanced by revolutionary Marxism, it is thus easy to understand why the capitalist media and all forces of capitalism, being propelled by individual



No longer part of Cosatu: Metalworkers at a National Bargaining Conference in Boksburg, Johannesburg.

greed for personal gain, easily reduce the Cosatu crisis to one of relationships between individuals, and blindly refuse to recognise the class struggles taking place around them. There is a deep-seated rapture within Cosatu and society as whole, which is both ideological and political.

For instance, the deputy minister of finance, Mcebisi Jonas, held a press conference and confirmed what many leaders inside the Alliance have always said: that our country is being mortgaged to the highest bidder.

'ME FIRST; TO HELL WITH EVERYONE ELSE'

We have repeatedly warned that unless South Africans can stand up to reclaim their destiny, we are en route to a predatory state organised along the lines of a typical hyena family where the order of eating is organised through unwritten rules that dictate that the first family must eat first, followed by an order that moves from national to the local government. We have warned that this route, if unchecked, will deliver us into a full kleptocratic

capitalist order with new rules. All the rules and/or value systems that governed our heroic struggle ethos principally the selfishness will be replaced by 'me first; to hell with everyone else'. In this new order there will be no real democracy or accountability.

I am afraid that with every day that passes we are moving closer to this society of law of the jungle. The time bomb is ticking.

Many South Africans deny this reality but we are close to becoming a failed state. The fundamental error we committed was to take someone facing 783 charges of corruption, fraud and money laundering and install him as the president of a modern society. I have already apologised over and over for my role in this.

This president fears that one day he may face these charges again, and with his financial advisor sentenced to 15 years in prison already he knows the last thing he needs is to face the prosecutors in a court of law. Ever since he ascended to the presidency he systematically, tirelessly, and with military precision engineered and redesigned the state so that

he may never have to face these charges. Here are some examples that most have forgotten.

- The Scorpions were quickly disbanded and replaced by the ineffectual Hawks that enjoy no credibility amongst our people. Again we added credibility to this project when we naively believed that President Thabo Mbeki was using the Scorpions against his political opponents inside the ANC. Today the Hawks have been tamed: Anwa Dramat was given millions to leave so that a man declared a liar by a judge, Berning Ntlemenza, could be installed. It is this man that is relentlessly pursuing Minister Pravin Gordhan.
- The intelligence community were redesigned and all professionals from Umkhonto weSizwe (MK) ranks kicked out and replaced in some instances by the former apartheid security police. Gibson Njenje, Mo Shaik and Jeff Maqethuka, all senior MK operatives, were replaced by the likes of Richard Mdluli from the apartheid era.

- The South African Police Service (SAPS) was remilitarised after previous administrations had civilianised it. Old military ranks of general were brought back. Clueless civilians were appointed, the worst example being Riah Phiyega. It is this militarisation that led to the Marikana massacre, the cold-blooded murder of Andries Tatane, and the killing of protestors in Mothotlung amongst others. Yet according to their own statistics, SA was losing the war against crime with 49 citizens killed every single day. The minister of police revealed last year that they spent R34-million in golden handshakes. I suspect every professional police officer is being replaced by rogue elements that will help achieve the ultimate objective – ‘keep the president out of prison’.
- The judges and the office of the public protector have been subjected to sustained attack by many ANC leaders.
- State-owned enterprises are in a mess. Eskom, the South African Post Office (SAPO), South African Airways (SAA), PetroSA and others are staggering from one crisis to another, worsened by constant allegations of corruption and nepotism.
- Similar chaos and incompetence is to be found in public institutions: the SAPS, the National Prosecution Agency, the SA Revenue Service. Chapter Nine institutions have been undermined.

HYENAS LOOT RESOURCES

Corruption is running out of control in both the public and private sectors, despite strong resolutions at successive ANC conferences. It has become very difficult to do business with the government without greasing the hands of corrupt officials. Hyenas continue to loot resources intended to provide services to the poor.

Collusion and price-fixing by big monopolies keep coming before the Competition Commission. When the US Securities and Exchange Commission charged Hitachi, Ltd. with violating the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act by bribing the ANC, Hitachi agreed to pay \$19-million to settle the Security and Exchange Commission charges, which is an admission of guilt.

In 2013 alone \$29-billion was illegally taken out of SA in illicit financial flows. The South African Reserve Bank and the Treasury should have immediately investigated large multinational corporations and prosecuted those like MTN, Lonmin and De Beers, where research shows they looted SA.

What is to be done? The rot has gone too deep and so wide to be put on the shoulder of one person, President Jacob Zuma. When the Guptas landed a plane in the nerve centre of our defence mechanisms and used traffic officials to escort their friends to a family wedding, ministers defended the Guptas. Public servants were blamed yet the person who took responsibility, Eric Kholoane, was promoted ambassador to the Netherlands. Various leaders of the Alliance led the assault on the judges and the public protector. The ANC national executive committee and its members of parliament defended the spending of R250-million on the president's private residence, then scapegoated public servants instead of accepting political responsibility.

We reject the opportunism and factional manoeuvre by the likes of the SACP and some leaders of the ANC in a hue and cry over state capture only after they have fallen out of favour with President Zuma. These people lent credibility to this project to hollow out organs of people's power and domesticate institutions of democracy.

Precisely because of this agenda, workers and the youth have no voice today – they are fractured and weakened. Our people are sitting ducks to crime and the justice system is weaker. Our intelligence capacity to go after crime syndicates and espionage have been fundamentally weakened. This cronyism has transformed our South African Broadcasting Corporation into a state mouthpiece.

A respected union movement is now in shambles. Democracy itself has been weakened. We are also moving further away from the dream of a better life for all. It is in this context that I call on President Zuma, his cabinet and the ANC NEC to take political responsibility for this state of affairs and resign. South Africans have the responsibility to stand up and protect their future. If President Zuma and his backers won't leave on their own we must force them out. What we need under the current political and economic conditions is a fresh start to avoid where Zimbabwe is: 95% of its workers are in the informal sector.

We need new rules to fight a new game. These include moving away from the proportional representation system to a mixture of constituency and proportional representation systems where the president is directly elected by the citizens instead of being imposed by the winning party.

At the economic level we need nothing but a return to the ANC historic positions in particular the Freedom Charter and the 1969 Morogoro Conference.

Amandla ngawethu – ilizwe ngelethu! (The power is ours – the country is ours). ^{LB}

Zwelinzima Vavi is a former general secretary of Cosatu. This article is based on a speech he gave at the 1st SALB Public Dialogue in March in Johannesburg.

Working class and food insecurity in SA

Food security is linked to the global agro-political economy which is based on large-scale extractive agriculture and an alternative to this is to build a democratic people's food system, writes **Khwezi Mabasa**.

Financial and political commentators have cited the current drought as a major impediment to growth in the country. These analysts are primarily concerned about the negative effects it has on macro-economic stability, and subsequently discuss this crisis within the confines of macroeconomic data projections and trade policy. There is minimal commentary on the right to food or household hunger. This is surprising because our Constitution explicitly mentions the right to food. This paradigm is informed by conservative class-biased analysis, which reduces the food crisis to national production without exploring the question of equitable distribution. Oxfam and Jacklyn Cock have referred to this phenomenon as 'hidden hunger or slow violence'.

More worryingly, this perspective singles out the drought as the main cause of poor agro-economy performance. Climate change has a substantial impact on food security. However, it is misleading to discuss this challenge outside structural factors of food production. In other words, the main cause of the current food crisis – and heightened climate change – is the structure of the global and domestic food

system. Thus, interventions that seek to resolve the crisis must also focus on the 'rule-governed structure of production and consumption of food on a world scale,' argues Friedmann.

This article will illustrate that the structure of the post-apartheid food system, which is integrated into the global agro-political economy, is the main cause of the food crisis. I will argue that the working class has been confronted by the challenge of hunger for over a decade. But this socioeconomic injustice has been largely ignored in mainstream policy analysis, because of its bias towards large-scale extractive agriculture. The point of departure will be a brief discussion on global and regional hunger.

FOOD SECURITY IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Regional food insecurity is a product of the larger international hunger and nutritional challenge. According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), 868-million people in the world were chronically undernourished in 2012, and 1.52-billion people did not have sufficient food to meet their basic nutritional requirements. This figure declined slightly in to 805-million by 2014. Most of these

food insecure citizens reside in developing countries. It is estimated that 791-million people in the less developed and developing nations are food insecure.

Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) was ranked the lowest in the Global Food Security Index of 2014. 220-million people are expected to be undernourished between 2014 and 2016. According to FAO SSA region has made least progress on addressing food insecurity: one person in four is undernourished. Three out of four of the economically active population in the region are involved in agriculture. Most are small family subsistence farmers who live in poverty, argues Barrett. Women are more at risk of experiencing food insecurity than males. This is quite worrisome because females produce most of the food in SSA. Women make up over 50% of the workforce in agriculture in the region and produce 80% of foodstuffs consumed in households.

The policy-bias towards large-scale extractive industrial agriculture has exacerbated the challenges. Increased emissions and subsequent climate change has decreased access to food for a large portion of the citizenry. Industrial agriculture has also produced an ecological

crisis characterised by the following: soil degradation, water pollution, and commodification of global commons. It should be highlighted that this food crisis is part of a global macro-developmental impasse. Canadian activist and author Naomi Klein provides a succinct description of this phenomenon in her book titled: *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. The Climate*.

SILENT FOOD CRISIS

The most glaring shortcoming of the mainstream policy debate is its ahistorical approach to the crisis, which is informed by the class-bias. Most of these commentators ignore the history of the food crisis in post-apartheid SA by tracing it to the recent droughts. Empirical research on hunger dates back to the first National Food

Consumption surveys conducted in late 1990s.

The working class and poor have faced this challenge for over a decade since the transition. This indicates that the food crisis pre-dates the recent increased publicity on the drought. South Africa has maintained food security at a national level but it has always struggled to ensure household food security. The South African National Health and Nutrition Examination survey found that 46% of the population is food insecure. It also highlighted that 28.3% of the population is at risk of going hungry, and 26% of South Africans experience hunger every day. This means that 54% of the citizenry was classified as food insecure by 2013.

Mainstream policy-makers and commentators have always prioritised national food security

over food justice, which examines how socioeconomic inequality is embedded 'within the production, distribution, and consumption of food,' writes Alkon. These analysts have failed to explore how the current food system structure – based on a capitalist large-scale agro-industrial nexus is causing hunger. This explains the narrow conservative approach which reduces the causal factors to the drought, and ignores the systemic household food insecurity. The latter can only be addressed by identifying the underlying structural causes of hunger. This requires an examination into economic power relations in the food system and how they shape the patterns of food production and access. It is also essential to identify other social and political contributors to the food crisis.

Variable	NFCS 1999 (n=2,735) (%)	NFCS 2005 (n=2,413) (%)	SASAS 2008 (n=1,150) (%)	SANHANES 2012 (n=6,306) (%)
Food security	25.0	19.8	48.0	45.6
At risk of hunger	23.0	27.9	25.0	28.3
Experiencing hunger	52.3	52.0	25.9	26.0

CORPORATE CAPTURE

Government has attempted to address this crisis through a number of policy interventions. But these have produced minimal gains, as a result of inaccurate analysis. Liberal economist and state policy officials have adopted a narrow conception of food security, which reduces it to national production shortages or social security. This is partly due to the widely accepted definition used by the FAO. It over-emphasises consumption and ignores the relations of food production. Moreover, this definition reduces hunger to a social security or welfare issue, and promotes the expansion of food aid programmes. Oxfam argues that it is silent on the nature of power relations that reproduce international food regimes and systems.

This approach has not assisted in addressing the core drivers of hunger, which are related to economic liberalism and neo-liberal policy implementation. The post-apartheid government has supported deregulation, privatisation, and minimal state intervention in the agro-political economy. Mazibuko Jara and other agrarian scholars have pointed out that this policy-orientation has produced the following trends.

First, high food prices charged by the food industry. The cost of a basic food basket rose from R394 in October 2010 to R486 in October 2012. The Department of Rural Development and Land Reform has noted that commodity prices of staple food increased by 50% between February 2013 and 2014.

This has had negative effects on the livelihoods of working-class citizens. For example, farm workers spend over 40% of their total income on food and non-alcoholic beverages. A study conducted by the Bureau for Food and Agricultural Policy (2013) concluded that farm workers and their families cannot afford a 'balanced daily food plate' even after the sectoral determination in 2013, which increased the daily minimum wage from R69 to R105.

Second, economic concentration along the entire food value chain. By 2014 35,000 mostly large-scale commercial farming enterprises operated on 82-million hectares which is equivalent to 67% of the total land area. The other 2.5-million small-scale (mainly subsistence) farming units mostly operate in the



Community garden: Communities can grow their own food. Credit: William Matlala.

former bantustans, which make up 13% of the land area. These large-scale farms are reliant on an agro-industrial complex, characterised by the usage of fossil fuels for the production of pesticides and artificial fertilisers. This proves that the current model of farming is actually exacerbating the climate change challenge. Thus, it is surprising that the current drought policy intervention is reduced to finance or food aid, and does not even raise any point of inquiry into the structure of the food system.

Manufacturing and agro-processing is dominated by a few large entities, namely: Tiger Brands, Premier Foods, and Foodcorp. In 2010 these enterprises were charged with price fixing by the Competition Commission. The retail sector is also characterised by concentrated patterns of ownership, with four large retailers controlling 90% of the market share.

Third, the entire agricultural value-chain is essentially characterised by what the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) has described as an 'apartheid colonial' wage structure. Even the government has conceded to this fact by stating: 'the commercial farming sector

houses the lowest paid workers in the formal economy, with black agricultural workers, especially women, receiving lower wages than white co-workers'. This super-exploitation is also prevalent in the downstream segment of the value-chain. Retail workers are amongst the lowest paid in the economy and are employed on a precarious basis.

Fourth, the post-apartheid government has largely pursued an export-orientated agricultural strategy. This has been supported by trade liberalisation since 1994. According to the National Marketing Agricultural Council (2013), the country remained a net exporter of agricultural products between 1996 and 2012. It states that agricultural exports grew by 70% between 2007 and 2012. In 2007 agricultural exports were valued at R29.8-billion, and this figure reached R50.8-billion by 2012. This growth in exports coincided with high domestic levels of food insecurity, with over half of the citizenry being categorised as being food insecure by 2013. This means that policy-makers have prioritised national food production to support export, and over-looked the principle of food justice.

A DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S FOOD SYSTEM

Facts indicate that we need to build a new democratic people's food system. The South African Food Sovereignty Campaign has brought together various activists and organisations to build a grassroots agrarian movement, similar to the Movement of Rural Landless Workers in Brazil (MST) which is challenging corporate capture in the agrarian system. Both these campaigns draw from the traditions of the global food sovereignty movement, which advocates for the following key demands:

- restructuring the neo-liberal food regime that is based on large-scale extractive capitalist agriculture
- establishing democratic citizen's control over the production, distribution and consumption of food
- increasing access to land for landless people and farm workers
- promoting local food systems (production and consumption)
- introducing agro-ecology and defend environmental justice (including decreasing dependence on chemical inputs)
- promoting sustainable usage and decommercialisation of seeds, water and land
- challenging neo-liberal trade and industrial policy to decrease the economic dominance of multinational and transnational corporations
- ensuring food justice is at the centre of agricultural policy. ¹⁸

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Preparing for work?

What kind of education is needed

It is widely believed that education should prepare people for work. This belief seems to grow proportionately with rising levels of youth unemployment. But there is no agreement about what knowledge is required at work, or about the best ways of developing such knowledge, and the role of formal education in this regard, writes **Stephanie Allais**.

It seems self-evident that some curricula – the knowledge selected and sequenced in any programme of learning – seem better able than others at preparing for work – helping people to access work, doing well at work, doing work well, and doing work which does good. But many occupational qualifications do not help workers, argue Keep & Mayhew. How can we conceptualise what kinds of curricula empower those enrolled for them?

Research within the field of curriculum does not offer simple solutions. There is no agreement about the extent to which it should be based on bodies of disciplinary knowledge or subjects, and, particularly where practical skills are involved, the best ways in which these should be taught. Within educational debates there is a strong position that education institutions can best prepare people for work (or indeed just for the ‘real world’) by mimicking the workplace as far as possible, by ensuring that education is focused on ‘real life’ situations and problems. This is somewhat ironic as it seems to undermine what could have been the value of education in the first place – presumably the reason education is specifically

valued, and that there is increasing demand from people around the world, that offers something different than simply learning from experience.

One approach is to look at professional knowledge, because professions offer forms of decent employment: professionals do good work; they are reliable to a reasonable extent. They improve society (at least some of them). They are not based purely on narrow self-interest. The employment relationship is not a purely commodified one. There is an intrinsic sense of value and worth. But we then become trapped in a circular problem: something is only a profession to the extent that it has a strong knowledge base. It only has a strong knowledge base to the extent that it is a profession. Further, as Guy Standing reminds us, ‘The phenomenon of professionalism emerged in the nineteenth century as a means of protecting middle-class occupations from the insecurities of capitalist employment.’ Whether or not it can be extended to other occupations by strengthening their knowledge bases, and what else would need to be changed beyond strengthening bodies of knowledge,

would need to be explored outside of debates about knowledge and the curriculum.

Further, there are many forms of work today which are knowledge-based in various ways, but which do not enjoy the autonomy, status, and high salaries traditionally enjoyed by the professions, perhaps partly due to lack of control over the knowledge-base of their work but also due to power relations in labour markets and workplaces. There are also many forms of work which are high status and which enjoy high forms of social rewards, and enable high degrees of autonomy, but which are not based on powerful bodies of knowledge.

Part of the reason for the lack of clarity is that we are looking in the wrong place: relationships between curriculum, qualifications, labour markets, and work, are more complex than is often assumed. So what has worked well in the past may not work well in the present. Also, when one aspect of a system which has ostensibly good education/labour market relationships is transplanted from one context to another, it may fail because what appeared to be a key ingredient is in fact a secondary one.



Studying in class: But for what kind of job? Credit: William Matlala.

A popular discourse of educational irrelevance and the importance of work experience co-exists in many areas with obligatory and ever-rising qualification requirements, leading to the phenomenon we describe as 'qualification inflation'. When people lose their jobs we proclaim that the solution is education programmes to give them new 'skills'. Rising educational levels also coexist with rising youth unemployment internationally. While Brewer; and McKinsey & Company argue that this is due to inadequate skills, and poor educational preparation for work, other researchers including Cappelli suggest that the problem is more a lack of jobs than a lack of skills.

The ways in which education can reduce inequality is influenced substantially by the nature of the labour market and the ways in which it interacts with education and training. Where there is a huge gap between the top and bottom end occupations, there is an

intense struggle for the good jobs. According to Keep & Mayhew all education does in such a context is 'alter the number of competitors in the race'.

There is a difference between qualification requirements in terms of labour market access and knowledge requirements in terms of labour process. This difference has serious and often unfortunate implications for curriculum, as qualification inflation is one of the biggest forces in the labour market today, and is arguably in many (but not all) instances one of the major forces behind attempts to degree-ify and 'professionalise'.

The difficulty is that in the process of thinking about occupational curricula and occupational knowledge, whether vocational or professional, we are likely to, and often do, fall into the trap of not knowing enough about the various different factors which influence the relationships between education and work, specifically in relation to the labour market and economic and

social development. It is widely accepted that many occupational qualifications do not help workers. And there is a general discourse of dissatisfaction about graduates, whether of vocational or professional qualifications, even where they do gain employment. This is at least in part a curriculum problem, but if we are going to design curricula which are able to contribute to solving it, we must be able to separate out the ways in which and the extent to which it is a curriculum problem.

At a very broad-brush stroke level there are at least three key areas of theoretical debate, all of which are complex and contested in their own right, that need to be considered when thinking about curricula

1. Knowledge and work: here there are debates about the role of theoretical knowledge, powerful knowledge, professional knowledge, generic skills, learning at work and from experience, skills and competence.

Standing's definition of occupations, 'an evolving set of related tasks based on traditions and accumulated knowledge, part of which is unique' is built on a distinction between the concept of labour (an inherently commodified relationship) and work; Standing also argues that humanity has a 'predilection for work, which reflects a human desire to be creative, productive and regenerative, for the benefit of self, family and communities'.

2. Education and development: here there are debates about the political economy of skill formation systems, the role of skill formation systems in social and economic development and vice versa. There are a range of theories, showing the complex interrelations between social policy, wealth redistribution, labour market regulation, production regimes, industrial relations, industrial policy, research and innovation, and vocational education systems. Work and education are embedded in social and economic relations and systems. Certain types of education benefit people and society as a whole in specific circumstances and in different ways. What is needed to really gain insight into these are macro-perspectives both in time and place; as Randall Collins argues, '... whatever is large and widely connected can be brought into focus within no perspective but one larger still'. The alternative, which is the curse of much analysis of the relationships between education and society, is capturing the status quo at a particular moment of arrested movement, which leads to descriptions of contingent relationships attaining the status of theories; the long run perspective also shows that relationships between education and work are far more contingent than they appear by analysing any particular moment in time.

3. Labour markets and labour process: here there are debates about divisions of labour within and between occupations, about how people access labour markets and how they are rewarded in labour markets, industrial relations regimes. For example, Adam Smith saw the division of labour as key to the productive potential of capitalist organisation. Marx saw it as a key factor in creating alienating and exploitative work. Durkheim saw it as offering the potential for new and more powerful forms of social solidarity in which all people are valued more because they do specific and useful work, and he hoped for a future in which the social and political organisation of society would be based on occupational identities.

In each area of debate there is contestation. For example, what an occupation is, is not clear. Occupational classification systems vary dramatically based on purpose as well as theoretical orientation, write Lambert & Bihagen. Because they are descriptive of what exists in countries, occupational classification systems tend to reify divisions of labour between and within occupations which are the result of power relations. Such occupational classification systems are important for education systems because they provide the basis from which governments attempt to understand the skill requirements of their economy in coming

years, and plan for the supply of education. But they do not provide conceptual tools for thinking about relationships between knowledge and work, or even for really analysing work.

Standing's definition of occupations, 'an evolving set of related tasks based on traditions and accumulated knowledge, part of which is unique' is built on a distinction between the concept of labour (an inherently commodified relationship) and work; Standing also argues that humanity has a 'predilection for work, which reflects a human desire to be creative, productive and regenerative, for the benefit of self, family and communities'. He argues that in performing work, 'a person has agency, a sense of self-determination. By contrast a worker required to perform labour lacks agency ... And work done because a person wishes to do it, in the pursuit of self-chosen goals of development and social participation, is the essence of real decommodification'.

I argue that not only do we need to draw on all three bodies of knowledge and analysis to make sense of occupational curricula, but that in so doing, in forcing the different bodies of knowledge to talk to each other, we may in fact be able to gain better clarity on debates within each area, that have proved difficult to resolve. ^{LB}

Stephanie Allais is the director of the Centre for Researching Education and Labour, which is a member of the Education Policy Consortium.

National Certificate Vocational and employment

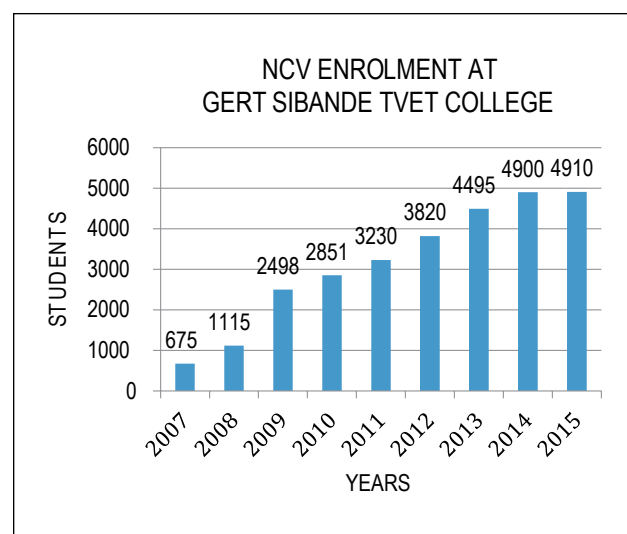
Gert Sibande TVET College case study

Is the National Certificate Vocational (NCV) the youth's ticket to a job? That seems not to be the case, as **Gugu Mahlangu** found out in a study of Gert Sibande Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) College in Mpumalanga.

The NCV qualification is a three-year approved qualification which was implemented in public Further Education and Training (FET) (now known as TVET) colleges in January 2007 at Level 2. The Gert Sibande College's website states that the NCV qualification replaced the previous N1 to N3 with courses 'to empower learners with skills to be employed to alleviate poverty and unemployment'.

According to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), in order for a student to enrol for the NCV, they should have completed NQF Level 1 which is equivalent to Grade 9 or Adult Education and Training (AET) Level 4. NCV Levels 3 and 4 followed consecutively in the two subsequent years. Students sat for the first Level 4 exam in November 2009. At the end of the programme, Level 4 graduates have a choice to either further their studies or to seek employment. In this article I use data from the Gert Sibande TVET College 2014 annual report. According to the statistical data from the college, 675 students were enrolled in the year 2007 for NCV Level 2 and in 2015, which is eight years after its inception, the enrolment stands at 4,910 students. These figures illustrate a rapid increase in terms of students entering the NCV programme. In terms of access the college is responding accordingly to the vision of the department. The question that arises is: does this guarantee employment if not employability and a sustainable livelihood at the end of the programme as the government anticipates? Providing skills for the youth is a government attempt to address unemployment, inequality and poverty.

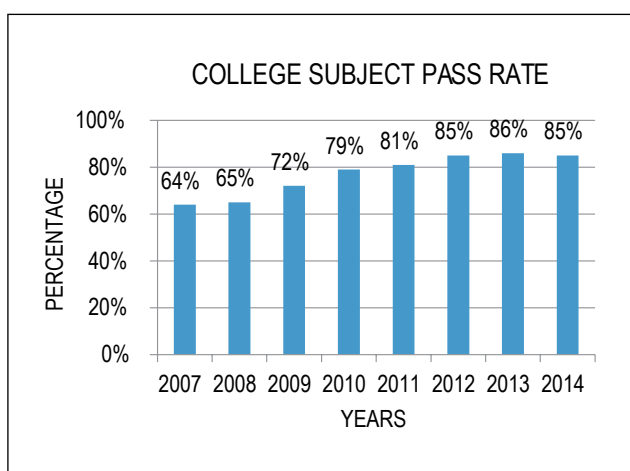
Table 1: NCV enrolment



The performance of Gert Sibande TVET College over the years has been remarkable as evidenced by the high percentage pass rates recorded (see Table 2). In 2014 Gert Sibande achieved an NCV certification rate of 55% (see Table 3). This figure indicates the number of students that have completed the NCV programme at the college and are now eligible to be employed, further their studies at universities or through the Report 191/Nated (National Technical Education) programme. When the NCV was introduced it was meant to replace the 'outdated' Nated programme offered according to the government.

After much resistance of the NCV programme by many employers, the government decided to let the two programmes run parallel such that students who have completed the NCV programmes are eligible to enrol for Nated. NCV graduates of business studies enrol at N4 and the engineering graduates can enrol at either N4 (leading to supervisory management), N1-N3 (artisanship). The candidates who pursue N1-N3 become eligible to train as artisans upon meeting the requirements of a trade test. Unfortunately, most students who take the NCV already have the National Senior Certificate (NSC) which according to NQF levels is the same as NCV Level 4, and this situation not only shows an inefficient use of public institutions, but also fails to exploit the opportunities for labour market specialisation offered by the current system.

Table 2: Subject pass rate



What do students hope for when they enrol for the NCV? Essentially TVET colleges have been stigmatised as a second-best option relative to universities. It has been observed that a significant number of students that enrol at the TVET colleges do so because of their socioeconomic background, limited access at universities and options to higher post-school education. Issues of accessibility are central to Gert Sibande TVET College; one of its campuses lies on the outskirts of Mpumalanga in a rural setting. In January 2015 the rural campus alone stood at an NCV enrolment number of above 1,000 students. At the end of 2015 it was projected that an average of 245 students from this particular campus would be eligible for university or to enter the job market in 2016. The fact that there are no industries and that the economic conditions of this small community are dismal means it is difficult to understand where the graduates are going to get jobs. As a result many of these graduates will be involved in urban migration in search of jobs and better opportunities. There is of course no guarantee that they will secure employment through urban migration.

SETAS AND JOB PLACEMENTS

On 3 March 2005 then minister of labour, Membathisi Mdladlana, re-established and replaced 33 training boards into Sector Education and Training Authorities (Setas). The Setas are concerned with education and training and their job is to help implement the National Skills Development Strategy and to increase the skills of people in their respective sectors. They cover every industry and occupation whereas the Industry Training Boards covered some sectors only and focused mainly on apprenticeships. Setas are concerned with learnerships, the internships, learning programme type matrix and unit, based skills programme.

The question of facilitating work placement for college students and graduates is at the heart of the Setas' function. According to the minister of higher education and training, Blade Nzimande, Setas are responsible for creating links between TVET colleges and employers. In view of this Gert Sibande TVET College like any other in the country, has established partnerships with the different Setas to place students at different workplaces. However the success rate of this exercise is low in terms of achieving its intended objective as most of the students end up not practising what they were essentially trained for. Based on my discussions with some of the graduates who have completed the NCV qualification and entered the Seta programme it is clear that during their period at the appointed organisations, they were not given the adequate exposure and responsibility in line with the training they received.

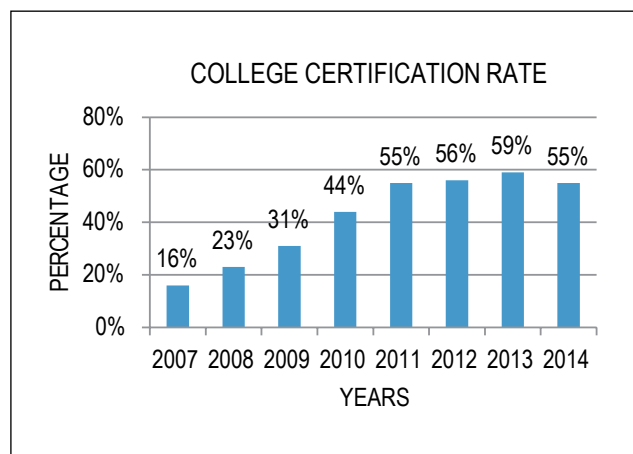
Here is a case in point: 'Tshepo is an NCV electrical engineering student from Gert Sibande, who completed in 2012 and now works as a petrol attendant at a filling station near one of the College's campuses. He is the third born in a family of five, and his mother is a widow who relies on social grants to survive.'

The case of Tshepo is one of many. It is one of unfulfilled dreams and with the passage of time, frustration will set in.

The NCV was originally designed as an alternative for the more academic grades 10, 11 and 12 – the idea being that these students could then leave colleges for vocational employment at the age of 18. In reality if a student has completed matric but does not meet the requirements to enrol at university or even for the Report 191 programme and he also does not have the necessary skills to enter the job market it would appear that the only option is for the student to enrol for NCV. The majority of the students who fall into this category come from disadvantaged backgrounds. However, these students are able to do NCV because it is funded by the National Student Financial Aid Scheme.

Hardly does one see a job advertisement with NCV being a requirement or even an alternative to matric since they are rated as being equal in terms of the NQF level.

Table 3: Certification rate



Looking at Table 4, most of the people under the Setas are on average a year's contract. What happens after the expiry of the contracts remains the big question. Of all the graduates that were placed in industry or Setas the table indicates only one person is employed on a permanent basis. The rest will have to look elsewhere for employment after the expiry of the contract.

Table 4: Sustained placements with industry and Setas

PLACEMENT PROJECTS	PARTNERS (INDUSTRY, SETA'S, OTHER)	NUMBER OF BENEFICIARIES
✓ CONTRACTS	LEWIS GROUP LIMITED - 2014 - (MoU in place) THULAHME BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT	42 (03 Months Contract) 03 (03 Months Contract)
✓ PERMANENT	STANDERTON - IAFLOC	01 Candidate
✓ INTERSHIPS / WIL	✓ FOODBEVSETA ✓ (SAGDA (FP&MSETA) ✓ IRISETA ✓ BAIKSETA ✓ SASSETA ✓ CATSSETA ✓ ETDPSSETA ✓ HSF ✓ SERVICESSETA ✓ LEKWA MUNICIPALITY (LGSETA)	30 (12 Months Contract) 40 (12 Months Contract) 30 (12 Months Contract) 08 (12 Months Contract) 100 (12 Months Contract) 30 (06 Months Contract) 17 (18 Months Contract) 72 (06 Months Contract) 87 (12 Months Contract) 24 (12 - 18 Months Contract)
✓ APPRENTICESHIPS	CLYDEBERGMAH AFRICA (PTY) LTD KELSTON GROUP LIMITED	02 Apps 04 Apps

Looking at Table 4, Gert Sibande College placed one third of its students in job placements as part of the programme initiated by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and Setas to provide students with the much needed work experience for the NCV students. Although the structure of the NCV programme consists of theoretical and practical/simulation, students still require real work experience. There has been an outcry from many students who

complain that, although they enrol for the NCV programme and aspire to getting employment after completing the three-year course most employers are not aware of the NCV programme. This poses a great challenge to the young hopefuls.

Hardly does one see a job advertisement with NCV being a requirement or even an alternative to matric since they are rated as being equal in terms of the NQF level. Through the years Gert Sibande College has been a champion in meeting targets for job placement not only for their students but also for their staff members as an attempt to educate and market the NCV programme to employers. However, most employers still prefer the old Nated programmes although this programme offers theoretical knowledge only. Perhaps there is resistance from employers due to this curriculum transformation that has taken place in the post-school education sector. If there is so much resistance from employers on employing NCV graduates, why are we encouraging our youth to do this programme? The minister of higher education and training announced a target of one million enrolments of NCV students by 2014. A thought that comes to mind is, does our economy have at least 60% of those one million jobs to cater for these NCV graduates?

Table 5: Job placements

CATEGORY	NATURE OF PLACEMENT	STAKEHOLDERS / FUNDERS	TOTAL NUMBER PLACED
Job Placement	Contracts or Permanent - Internships / WIL / Learnerships / Apprenticeships	SETAS (SASSE TA, ETDPSSETA, SAGDA), NSF, Public and Private Business	486
	Part - Time Jobs (Less than normal working days - during weekends / holidays etc.)	Shoprite (Std & Ev), Pap (Std), Custodian Guesthouse, Blue Entertainment, Vermark (Secunda), Private Stakeholders	538
	Temporary Placement (Less than 6 months)	Lewis, MacNet Zoro, Yakhakoko Construction	55

In Table 6, we see evidence of career guidance offered by the college. In recent years there has been a great influx of students into TVET colleges. We have heard in numerous speeches and interviews how the education minister is urging students to enrol at TVET colleges. Subsequently, one should question this increasing influx and support of TVET colleges as the alternative option outside of university and also the stigma that TVET colleges are of less quality and offer less employment opportunities.

Table 6: Career guidance and counselling

NAME OF CAMPUS	INTERNAL (CAMPUS LEVEL)	EXTERNAL (SCHOOLS, EXHIBITIONS ETC)	TOTAL NUMBER OF CLIENTS ASSISTED
Evander Campus	1337	1508	2845
Ermelo Campus	187	3473	3660
Sibanisefu Campus	126	1625	1725
Standerton Campus	53	2936	2989
Total Number of People Assisted by the College for Career Guidance			11219

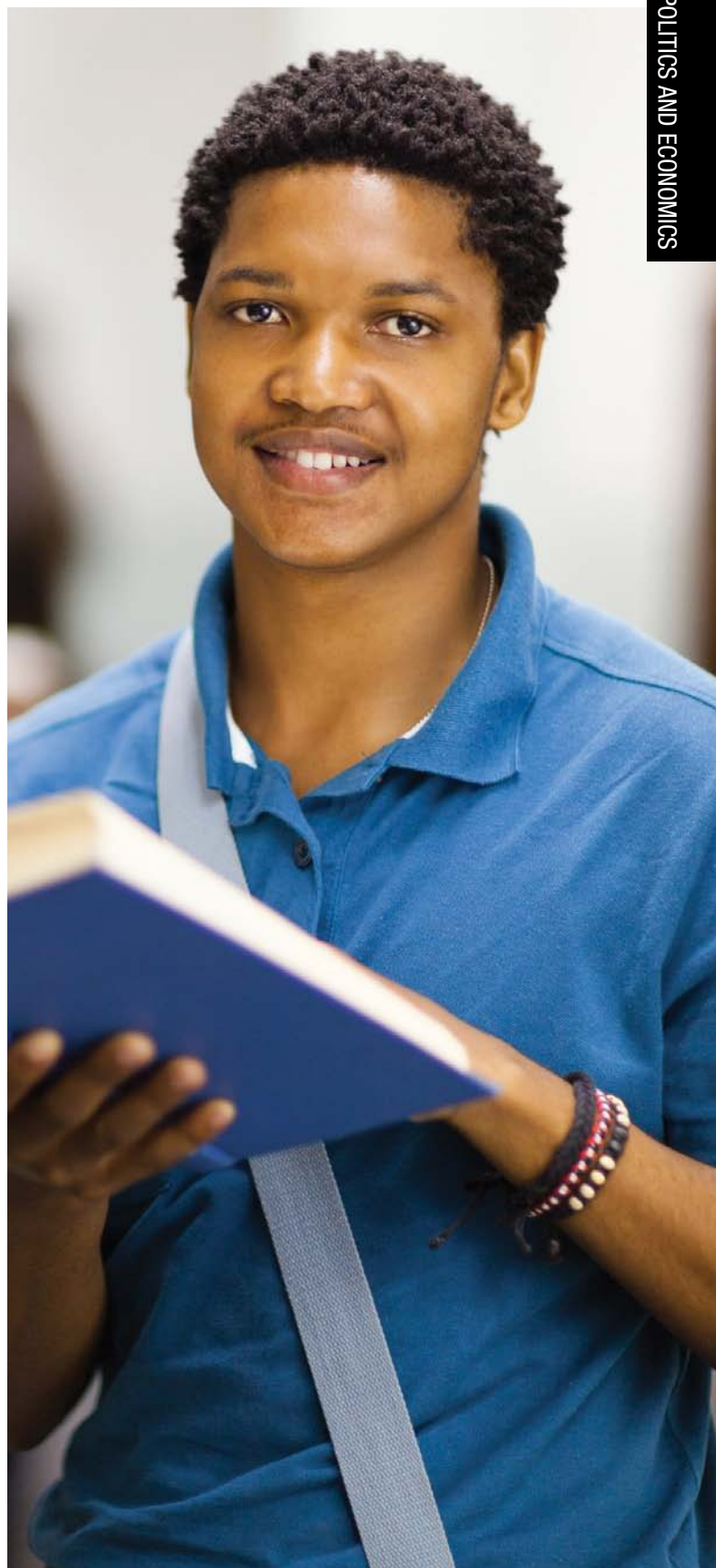
Potential students receive career guidance before they enrol at the college. Most of the career advice happens in the beginning of the year predominantly at a time when students are usually desperate to get admission at almost any programme. In my opinion, the career guidance is not worth much. I can imagine myself coming from a disadvantaged background, not meeting the requirements to enter university and coming to the college as my last option and I would accept almost any advice that would get me enrolled. I have rarely come across a student who feels they were aspiring to come to the college when they left high school.

In the beginning of every year I always start my lessons with my students by asking them why they chose the particular course. In a class of about 35 students only one or two would actually say that this is what they wanted to do but for the rest it would be because they could not get into university for financial reasons and the family could not send them elsewhere.

There has been an increase in enrolment at TVET colleges in recent years and especially since the inception of the NCV programme. The main goal of this programme is to prepare its graduates for employment. It is unclear whether the industry/ market in the country has sufficient jobs to accommodate these NCV graduates particularly because they have to compete with university graduates for the job opportunities available to them. ^{LB}

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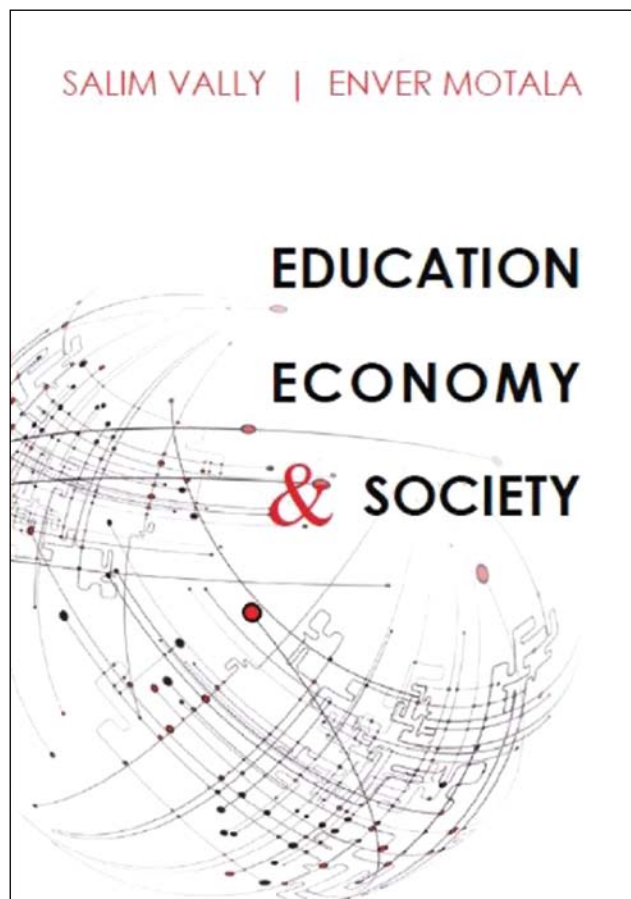
REVIEW

Education, Economy and Society

Unisa 2015

Salim Vally and Enver Motala (editors)

Reviewed by Enver Motala



University of South Africa (Unisa) Press last year published *Education, Economy and Society* – a book compiled and edited by Salim Vally (Centre Education and Transformation) and Enver Motala. The book has 13 chapters and a preface written by Professor Steven J Klees of the University of Maryland in the United States.

Most of the contributors to the book work within

the Education Policy Consortium (EPC) or have been active collaborators with EPC researchers over the years. With one exception, the researchers are all resident in South Africa and some have had a long period of experience working on education and training issues relevant not only to South Africa but more widely. Most importantly some young researchers were drawn into the writing of the book and made important contributions to it.

Without doubt the process of compiling the articles provided valuable experience in the rigours of producing academically acceptable contributions. This, they had to do through the various changes and drafts that had to be made and produced before the manuscript was finalised. It was then submitted to the publishers who, in turn, sent it to peer-reviewers through a double blind process before its acceptance and publication.

After its publication the editors were particularly keen to engage as many academics and community-based researchers and activists in the discussion of the main tenets of the book. To facilitate this, and after its publication, the book was sent to a number of other 'reviewers' with a view to soliciting their critical comments as part of the process of launching it and the dialogue and debate that followed.

Quite remarkably no less than 18 responses were received – some from the most established and well-known scholars and social activists in the field. Many of these are engaged both in education and a wider range of critical thinking about social justice research and practice. Their comments were both illuminative about the relevance of the issues canvassed in the book that were instructive and considered important in the debates concerning education's role in society.

Most of the commentators expressed the view that the book laid the basis for a broader debate about that role – especially through its critique of

The book requires readers ‘to think more creatively’ about education beyond its value as an instrument of the labour market asserting its role in the development of social, political and cultural goals. It was praised for ‘debunking’ the dominant global view about the supply of education as a panacea to economic failure based on a skills discourse that was unsophisticated. Some saw it as a call to action – beyond interpreting the world, while others remarked on its reach beyond the ‘reductive ways of thinking about education and development’.

the reductive role education is often ascribed in the ‘scarce skills’ mantra whose ideas dominate the debates on the purpose of education. It is in recognition of this that several commentators regarded the book as ‘compelling reading’ for academics, students and policy-makers and even suggested that it be made a ‘compulsory core curriculum regardless of their disciplinary specialisation’ for university students. It was recognised that the book contributes to a discussion about ‘where the country should go,’ bringing with it ‘a breath of fresh air’ and a ‘bracing balance’ to the debates about education and society – as also a ‘must read for activists, educators, students and academics in the Global North and South’ interested in issues of ‘social justice as the antidote to global neo-liberalism’.

Vice Chancellor Swartz, expressed the view that it contained ‘a refreshingly different set of voices critical of the drone-like assertions of ‘human capital’ theories on the alignment of state policy, education and skills training regimes to market demands in tackling the much vaunted triple challenges of job creation, poverty reduction and inequality in post-apartheid South Africa’.

The book requires readers ‘to think more creatively’ about education beyond its value as an instrument of the labour market asserting its role in the development of social, political and cultural goals. It was praised for ‘debunking’ the dominant global view about the supply of education as a panacea to economic failure based on a skills discourse that was unsophisticated. Some saw it as a call to action – beyond interpreting the world, while others remarked on its reach beyond the ‘reductive ways of thinking about education and development’.

Clearly these commentators think that the book has an important place in the lexicon of writing about education and society, going beyond the decaying premises of the prevailing discourses. In fact it offers a challenge to the purveyors of those discourses to respond to the arguments of the book so that more debates and discussions around the issues canvassed in its pages can be had.

In addition to soliciting these reviews a number of book launches were organised to provide members of the public, academics, policy-makers and others an opportunity to share

the ideas set out in the book and to engage with them critically. These launches took place in various cities around South Africa including Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth, Cape Town, Bloemfontein and Durban. The launches were organised by associates of the EPC in the various cities and were well attended. In two cases the launches were part of and coincided with conferences – in one case of the South African Sociological Association and in another of the South African Education Research Association. In both cases authors were asked to make presentations to a plenary discussion about the themes of the book. In addition, various radio and television interviews with Salim Vally were held – both locally and abroad.

In every case there was vigorous discussion and an exchange of ideas and a great deal of interest in the ideas contained in the book – with a great deal of positive comment and affirmation and little, if any, criticism. The book appears to have struck an analytical chord in the minds of those who took the opportunity to engage with it. ¹⁸

Enver Motala is from the Nelson Mandela Institute for Education and Rural Development.

Overthrowing Dilma Rousseff

It's class war and their class is winning

Every so often, the bourgeois political system runs into crisis. The machinery of the state jams; the veils of consent are torn asunder and the tools of power appear disturbingly naked. Brazil is living through one of those moments: it is dreamland for social scientists; a nightmare for everyone else, writes **Alfredo Saad Filho**.

Credit: Beto Nacite on Flickr



Dilma Rousseff was elected president in 2010, with a 56-44% majority against the right-wing neo-liberal Brazilian Social Democratic Party (PSDB) opposition candidate. She was re-elected four years later with a diminished yet convincing majority of 52-48%, or a majority of 3.5-million votes.

Dilma's second victory sparked a heated panic among the neo-liberal and US-aligned opposition. The fourth consecutive election of a president affiliated to the centre-left Workers' Party (PT) was bad news for the opposition, because it suggested that PT founder Luís Inácio Lula da Silva could return in 2018. Lula had been

president between 2003 and 2010, and when he left office his approval ratings hit 90%, making him the most popular leader in Brazil's history. This likely sequence suggested that the opposition could be out of federal office for a generation. The opposition immediately rejected the outcome of the vote. No credible complaints could be made, but no matter: it was resolved that Dilma would be overthrown by any means necessary. To understand what happened next, we must return to 2011.

BOOMING ECONOMY

Dilma inherited from Lula a booming economy. Alongside China and other middle-income countries, Brazil bounced back vigorously after the global crisis. GDP expanded by 7.5% in 2010, the fastest rate in decades, and Lula's hybrid neo-liberal neo-developmental economic policies seemed to have hit the perfect balance: sufficiently orthodox to enjoy the confidence of large sections of the internal bourgeoisie, and heterodox enough to deliver the greatest redistribution of income and privilege in Brazil's recorded history, thereby securing the support of the formal and informal working class. For example, the minimum wage rose by 70% and 21-million (mostly low-paid) jobs were created in the 2000s.

Social provision increased significantly, including the world-famous Bolsa Família conditional cash transfer programme, and the government supported a dramatic expansion of higher education, including quotas for blacks and state school pupils. For the first time, the poor could access education as well as income and bank loans. They proceeded to study, earn and borrow, and to occupy spaces previously monopolised by the upper middle class: airports, shopping malls, banks, private health facilities and roads, that were clogged up by cheap cars purchased in 72 easy payments. The government coalition enjoyed a comfortable majority in a highly fragmented Congress, and Lula's legendary political skills managed to keep most of the political elite on side.

Then everything started to go wrong. Dilma was chosen by Lula as his successor. She was a steady pair of hands and a competent manager and enforcer. She was also the most left-wing president of Brazil since João Goulart, who was overthrown by a military coup in 1964. However, she had no political track record and, it would later become evident, lacked essential qualities for the job.

Once elected, Dilma shifted economic policies further away from neo-liberalism. The government intervened in several sectors seeking to promote investment and output, and put intense pressure on the financial system to reduce interest rates, which lowered credit costs and the government's debt service, releasing funds for consumption and investment. A virtuous circle of growth and distribution seemed possible. Unfortunately, the government miscalculated the lasting impact of the global crisis. The US and European economies stagnated, China's growth faltered, and the so-called commodity super cycle vanished. Brazil's current account was ruined. Even worse, the US, UK, Japan and the Eurozone introduced quantitative easing policies that led to massive capital outflows towards the middle-income countries. Brazil faced a tsunami of foreign exchange that overvalued the currency and bred deindustrialisation. Economic growth rates fell precipitously.

The government doubled its interventionist bets through public investment, subsidised loans and tax rebates, which ravaged the public accounts. Their frantic and seemingly random interventionism scared away the internal bourgeoisie: the local magnates were content to run government through the PT, but would not be managed by a former political prisoner who overtly despised them. She despised not only the capitalists: the president had little inclination to speak to social movements, left organisations, lobbies, allied parties, elected politicians, or her own ministers. The economy stalled and Dilma's political alliances shrank, in a fast-moving dance of destruction. The neo-liberal opposition scented blood.

THE OPPOSITION

For years, the opposition to the PT had been rudderless. The PSDB had nothing appealing to offer while, as is traditional in Brazil, most mainstream parties were gangs of bandits

extorting the government for selfish gain. The situation was so desperate that the mainstream media overtly took the mantle of opposition, and started driving the anti-PT agenda, literally instructing politicians on what to do next. In the meantime, the radical left remained small and relatively powerless. It was despised by the hegemonic ambitions of the PT.

The confluence of dissatisfactions became an irresistible force in 2013. The mainstream media is rabidly neo-liberal and utterly ruthless: as the equivalent would be if Fox News and its clones dominated the entire US media, including all TV chains and the main newspapers. The upper middle class was their obliging target, as they had economic, social and political reasons to be unhappy. Upper middle class jobs were declining, with 4.3-million posts paying between five and ten minimum wages vanishing in the 2000s.

In the meantime, the bourgeoisie was doing well, and the poor advanced fast: even domestic servants got labour rights. The upper middle class felt both squeezed and excluded from their privileged spaces. It was also dislocated from the state. Since Lula's election, the state bureaucracy had been populated by thousands of cadres appointed by the PT and the left, to the detriment of 'better educated', whiter and, presumably, more deserving upper middle class competitors. Mass demonstrations erupted for the first time in June 2013, triggered by left-wing opposition against a bus fare increase in São Paulo. Those demonstrations were fanned by the media and captured by the upper middle class and the right, and they shook the government – but, clearly, not enough to motivate them to save themselves. The demonstrations returned two years later and then in 2016.

Now, reader, follow this. After the decimation of the state apparatus by the pre-Lula neo-liberal administrations, the PT sought to rebuild selected areas of the

bureaucracy. Among them, for reasons that Lula may soon have plenty of time to review, the Federal Police and the Federal Prosecution Office (FPO). In addition, for overtly 'democratic' reasons, but more likely related to corporatism and capacity to make media-friendly noise, the Federal Police and the FPO were granted inordinate autonomy; the former through mismanagement, while the latter has become the fourth power in the Republic, separately – and checking – the executive, the legislature and the judiciary. The abundance of qualified jobseekers led to the colonisation of these well-paying jobs by upper middle class cadres. They were now in a constitutionally secure position, and could chew up the hand that that fed them, while loudly demanding, through the media, additional resources to maul the rest of the PT's body.

Corruption was the ideal pretext. Since it lost the first democratic presidential elections, in 1989, the PT moved steadily toward the political centre. In order to lure the upper middle class and the internal bourgeoisie, the PT neutralised or expelled the party's left wing, disarmed the trade unions and social movements, signed up to the neo-liberal economic policies pursued by the previous administration, and imposed a dour conformity that killed off any alternative leadership. Only Lula's sun can shine in the party: everyone else was incinerated. This strategy was eventually successful and, in 2002, 'Little Lula peace and love' was elected president. (This was one of his campaign slogans.)

For years the PT had thrived in opposition as the only honest political party in Brazil. This strategy worked, but it contained a lethal contradiction: in order to win expensive elections, manage the executive and build a workable majority in Congress, the PT would have to get its hands dirty. There is no other way to 'do' politics in Brazilian democracy.

We only need one more element, and our mixture will be ready to combust. Petrobras is Brazil's largest corporation and one of the world's largest oil companies. The firm has considerable technical and economic capacity, and was responsible for the discovery, in 2006, of gigantic 'pre-salt' deep-sea oilfields hundreds of miles from the Brazilian coast. Dilma, as Lula's minister of mines and energy, was responsible for imposing exploration contracts in these areas including large privileges for Petrobras. This legislation was vigorously opposed by PSDB, the media, the oil majors and the US government.

THE INVESTIGATION

In 2014, Sergio Moro, a previously unknown judge in Curitiba, a southern state capital, started investigating a currency dealer suspected of tax evasion. This case eventually spiralled into a deathly threat against Dilma's government. Judge Moro is good-looking, well-educated, white and well paid. He is also very close to the PSDB. His Lavajato (Carwash) operation unveiled an extraordinary tale of a large-scale bribery, plunder of public assets and funding for all major political parties, centred on the relationship between Petrobras and some of its main suppliers – precisely the stalwarts of the PT in the oil, shipbuilding and construction industries. It was the perfect combination, at the right time. Judge Moro's cause was picked up by the media, and he obligingly steered it to inflict maximum damage to the PT, while shielding the other parties. Politicians connected to the PT and some of Brazil's wealthiest businessmen were jailed summarily, and would remain locked up until they agreed a plea bargain implicating others. A new phase of Lavajato would ensnare them, and so on.

The operation is now in its 25th phase: many have already collaborated, and those who refused to do so have received long prison

sentences, to coerce them back into line while their appeals are pending. The media turned Judge Moro into a hero; he can do no wrong, and attempts to contest his sprawling powers are met with derision or worse. He is now the most powerful person in the Republic, above Dilma, Lula, the speakers of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate (both sinking in corruption and other scandals), and the ministers of the Supreme Court, which have either been silenced or quietly support Moro's crusade.

Petrobras has been paralysed by the scandal, bringing down the entire oil chain. Private investment has collapsed because of political uncertainty and an investment strike against Dilma's government. Congress has turned against the government, and the judiciary is overwhelmingly hostile. After years of sniping, the media has been delighted to see Lula fall under the Lavajato juggernaut, even if the allegations seem stretched: does he actually own a beach-side apartment which his family does not use, is that small farm really his, who paid for the lake and the mobile phone masts nearby, and how about those pedalos? No matter: Moro detained Lula for questioning on 4 March. He was taken to São Paulo airport and would have been flown to Curitiba, but the judge's plan was halted by fear of the political fallout. Lula was questioned at the airport, then released. He was livid.

In order to shore up her crumbling administration and protect Lula from prosecution, Dilma appointed Lula her chief of staff (the president's chief of staff has ministerial status and can be prosecuted only by the Supreme Court). The right-wing conspiracy went into overdrive. Moro (illegally) released the (illegal) recording of a conversation between President Dilma and Lula, pertaining to his investiture. Once suitably misinterpreted, their dialogue was presented as 'proof' of a conspiracy to protect Lula from Moro's canine determination to jail him. Large right-

wing upper middle class masses poured into the streets, furiously, on 13 March. Five days later, the left responded with large – but not quite as large – demonstrations of its own against the unfolding coup. In the meantime, Lula's appointment was suspended by a judicial measure, then restored, then suspended again. The case is now in the Supreme Court. At the moment, he is not a minister, and his head is well-positioned on the block. Moro can arrest him at short notice.

THE COUP

Why is this a coup? Because despite aggressive scrutiny, no presidential crime warranting an impeachment has emerged. Nevertheless, the political right has thrown the kitchen sink at Dilma. They rejected the outcome of the 2014 elections and appealed against her alleged campaign finance violations, which would remove from power both Dilma and the vice-president – now, chief conspirator – Michel Temer (strangely enough, his case has been parked). The right simultaneously started impeachment procedures in Congress. The media has attacked the government viciously for years, the neo-liberal economists plead for a new administration to 'restore market confidence', and the right will resort to street violence if it becomes necessary. Finally, the judicial charade against the PT has broken all the rules of legality, yet it is cheered on by the media, the right and even by Supreme Court justices.

Yet ... the coup de grâce is taking a long time coming. In the olden days, the military would have already moved in. Today, the Brazilian military are defined more by their nationalism (a danger to the neo-liberal onslaught) than by their right-wing faith and, anyway, the Soviet Union is no more. Under neo-liberalism, coups d'état must follow legal niceties, as was shown in Honduras in 2009, and in Paraguay in 2012.

Capitalist crisis

From bad to worse

Like a recurring nightmare, the capitalist crisis refuses to go away and seems rather to be going from bad to worse. Capitalism continues to face the crisis of over-production and over-accumulation, writes **Shawn Hattingh**.

Brazil is likely to join their company, but not just now: large sections of capital want to restore the hegemony of neo-liberalism, those who once supported the PT's national development strategy have fallen into line, the media is howling so loudly it has become impossible to think clearly, and most of the upper middle class has descended into a fascist hatred for the PT, the left, the poor, and the black. Their disorderly hatred has become so intense that even PSDB politicians are booed in anti-government demonstrations. Despite the relentless attack, the left remains reasonably strong, as was demonstrated on 18 March. The right and the elite are powerful and ruthless – but they are also afraid of the consequences of their own daring.

There is no simple resolution to the political, economic, and social crises in Brazil. Dilma has lost political support and the confidence of capital, and she is likely to be removed from office in the coming days. However, attempts to imprison Lula could have unpredictable implications and, even if Dilma and Lula are struck off the political map, a renewed neo-liberal hegemony cannot automatically restore political stability or economic growth, or secure the social prominence that the upper middle class craves. Despite strong media support for the impending coup, the PT, other left parties and many radical social movements remain strong. Further escalation is inevitable. ¹⁸

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Perhaps the most glaring signs of the deepening crisis has been the massive volatility experienced in stock, bond and currency markets globally. Over the last few months more than US\$6-trillion in share values have been wiped off stock markets across the world, and currency values have bounced around. So far, the worst hit countries have been in Latin America, Asia, and Africa. China has been particularly hard hit with stock markets plunging over the last eight months.

South Africa has not been spared. As with other 'developing countries', South Africa's stock, currency and bond markets have been on a roller-coaster ride.

Worse still, there are growing signs that corporations across the world are over-indebted and many are battling to service this debt. For instance, it has been estimated that in China up to 20% of corporate debt is not being re-paid and in essence is already bad debt. A similar story exists elsewhere. Even the South African-linked giant, Anglo American, is experiencing

problems servicing its debt with the consequence being that its bonds have been downgraded to junk. This has led to the company attempting to sell off as much as 60% of its assets. Should widespread corporate debt defaults occur, the financial companies and banks that hold this debt will be massively impacted upon. This too is impacting on states. Numerous states in Latin America, Asia and Africa have had their debt downgraded to junk status, and the South African state too faces this prospect.

SYMPTOMS

All of these recent convulsions are, however, symptoms of wider problems. Capitalism has been mired in a crisis since the 1970s based on over-production and over-accumulation. Since the 1970s, productive sectors, like manufacturing, have been stagnating due to over-production. As a result, the portion of investment into manufacturing since then has declined, as capital has desperately sought other outlets for better returns.

One of the few geographical places that seemed to have been immune to the global problem of over-production and over-accumulation was China. Due to extremely low wages, ruthlessly kept in place by the Chinese state, the manufacturing sector in China experienced a boom beginning in the 1980s.

By 2007/08, it became evident though that China was not immune. In 2007/08, exports from China plunged because globally demand could not be sustained and it became apparent that China itself had excess manufacturing capacity and a problem of capital over-accumulation. At the time there was a real threat that due to a lack of demand thousands of factories would become idle. Two things, however, delayed the full impact of this at the time: the Chinese state made trillions of dollars in loans available to speculators – leading to a stock market boom – and massive intervention by the state to purchase products and commodities. For a while this seemed to work, commodity prices rose worldwide and stock markets boomed in China, but this intervention has now run out of steam.

RETURNING IN FULL FORCE

The global economy is now again slowing dramatically due to the ongoing crisis of over-production and over-accumulation. In 2015, global trade in goods fell by 13.8% compared to 2014 due to the impacts of over-production. The slowing of the global economy was confirmed in February 2016 when reports emerged that Chinese exports dropped by 24.4% in dollar terms compared to the same time in 2015.

In fact, major sectors of the Chinese economy have been experiencing falling prices since 2013 due to over-production, including the steel, clothing, and ship-building sectors. This in turn has fuelled the drop in commodity prices globally, including coal, oil, gas, iron and copper. But it has not only been commodity sectors

and China that have experienced contractions. In February 2016, the countries of the European Union experienced an inflation rate of minus 0.2%. This is extremely dangerous for capitalism as it means many corporations are being forced to sell products at below the cost of production, and for a system based on profit-making that is disastrous.

For countries that rely on exports of raw materials, like South Africa, the problem of over-production and over-accumulation globally, including in China, is bad news. It is, therefore, not an accident that South Africa's mining and manufacturing sectors have been contracting over the last few months.

Worldwide, therefore, the crisis of over-production and over-accumulation that arose in the 1970s is still with us; it has only been periodically masked by speculative bubbles – when these burst, as is again happening now, the underlying crisis becomes evident again.

Unfortunately, the reality is that even tougher times look like they are ahead globally, including for China and countries such as South Africa. This will especially be the case should companies that borrowed massively between 2009 and 2014 to speculate on stock, currency and bond markets in Latin America, Africa and Asia begin to forfeit on their debt. Such a danger also exists for a number of listed companies in South Africa that borrowed money during this period to buy back their own shares to inflate the prices.

STATES INTERVENE

In reaction to the latest speculative bubbles bursting, the ruling classes in a number of countries have once again tried to use their control of states to bailout capitalists: highlighting again that the notion of a self-regulating free market is a myth.

Since June 2015 the Chinese state has spent at least US\$400-billion to try and stem the bloodletting on its stock, currency and bond markets. In March 2016 it even mooted 'nationalising' bad debts of companies to try and stave off their insolvency. All of this so far has been to little avail.

It has not just been the Chinese state that has intervened in the wake of recent events. The European Central Bank (ECB) extended its Quantitative Easing programme in March 2016: in other words it is creating even more money and giving it to corporations to help boost their speculative activities in the hope new bubbles – to alleviate the underlying problem of over-production and over-accumulation – can be created. As part of this, the ECB has extended its programme to buy bonds, in other words the debt, of key European companies. The ECB also provided further credit to banks in March 2016 'charging' interest rates of minus 0.4% – in other words paying them to borrow.

The US state too has not raised its interest rates in 2016 (it raised interest rates by 0.25% in December 2015 for the first time in almost 10 years), meaning it has elected to keep interest rates at near 0% to assist financial corporations through ensuring they have cheap credit to use to speculate on financial markets to create new bubbles.

NOT A NEW STORY

The story of states intervening so dramatically to assist capitalists is not new, but it is central to why the crisis is now taking the form it is – centred around the stock, bond and currency markets (and mainly but not exclusively, in Latin America, Asia and Africa). In fact, states are central to capitalism as Peter Kropotkin points out: 'The state ... and capitalism are facts and conceptions which we cannot separate from each other. In the



Workers and students: Forming alliances against outsourcing at the University of Johannesburg's Doornfontein Campus.

course of history these institutions have developed, supporting and reinforcing each other. They are connected with each other'.

States, since the 1970s, have been intervening in specific ways to create outlets for capital in order to try and alleviate the crisis of over-production and over-accumulation. One way states have been intervening in the market, since the 1970s, has been through embarking on financial liberalisation. They have assisted capitalists by creating new areas of 'investment', including through floating currencies and encouraging trade in opaque instruments such as debt derivatives. In countries such as the US and South Africa states have made it legal for companies to buy back their own shares to inflate prices.

It is, therefore, states as instruments of the ruling classes that have helped engineer the explosion of the financial speculation, including in China, Latin America and Africa. Globally, speculation has become massive – dwarfing productive sectors and trade in real goods. For example, by 2014 the average daily speculation on currencies around the world had reached \$5.5-trillion. This explosion of speculation has led to massive instability as since the 1970s there have been over 100 financial crises

in different parts of the world.

Of course when speculative bubbles have burst, states have spent trillions bailing out the rich. In the wake of the 2007/08 financial crisis it was estimated that the US state alone spent as much as \$12-trillion bailing out speculators. It was this money – along with that supplied through Quantitative Easing and cheap loans by states in the years that followed – that was used by corporations to buy back their own shares to inflate prices and to speculate on stocks, currencies, and bonds globally (in particular in Latin America, Asia and Africa). This created bubbles that are now bursting with the result that the underlying problems of over-production and over-accumulation are 'returning' in full force.

LEARNING FROM THE PAST

If history is to go by the next move of the ruling classes there is going to be another round of attacks on the working classes. The aim of this will be to get the working classes to bear the brunt of the turmoil of the latest speculative bubbles bursting. Indeed, every financial/economic crisis since the crisis of capitalism first erupted in the 1970s has been used by the ruling classes to attack the working classes through retrenchments and austerity.

There needs to be a massive

defensive struggle against this.

A start already has been made and struggles are heating up in countries such as China and South Africa. These have to be built on – otherwise the ruling classes will cut wages and welfare even further.

Nonetheless, at some point, such defensive struggles are going to have to be built into conscious revolutionary struggles to rid the world of the nightmarish system that is capitalism. Thus, while capitalism is stumbling it will only be ended if the working classes end it. In doing so, the working classes too will have to rid themselves of the states that so ruthlessly prop up modern capitalism. Only when the working classes have dismantled capitalism and the states that keep it in place – and replaced these with a democratic economy based on meeting all people's needs and a society run by all through federated worker and community assemblies and councils – will the torture of the working classes at the hands of the ruling classes be ended. **LB**

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