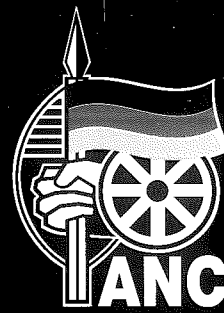
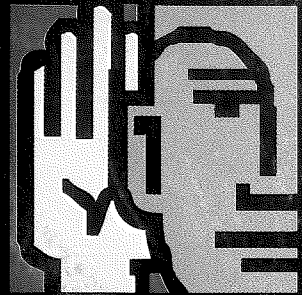


NUMBER 18  
June 2003



# UMRABULO



LET'S TALK POLITICS



A tribute to our heroes

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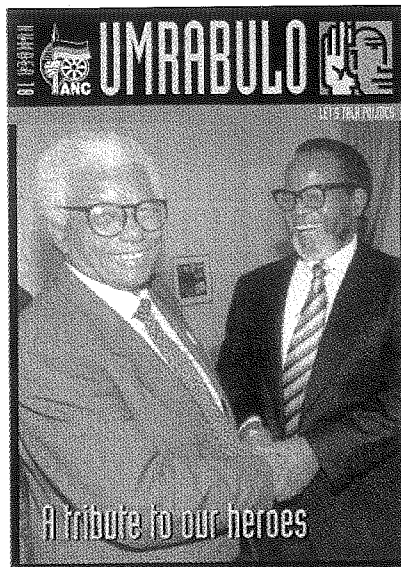
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UMRABULO is a forum for debate. The contents and views expressed do not necessarily reflect the policies of the ANC or the views of the Editorial Collective.



# Introduction

**W**E dedicate this edition of Umrabulo to two giants of our struggle and of the African continent – **Walter Sisulu** and **Oliver Tambo**.

Their dedication, commitment to the people, and above all their clarity of purpose make them an inspiration for all future generations of patriots.

Tata Sisulu wrote during his time on Robben Island: *"In a certain sense, the story of our struggle is a story of problems arising and problems being overcome."* We are in the final year of our First Decade of Freedom and we continue to grapple with the central transformation task: overcoming the legacy of apartheid and colonialism and building a truly united, democracy, non-racial, non-sexist and prosperous South Africa.

We celebrated Youth Day on 16 June, with unemployment as one of the key issues affecting young men and women. The youth sector, led by the ANC Youth League, mobilised to ensure that this issue featured prominently on the agenda of the Growth and Development Summit. Like their forebearers, the youth of today take seriously the words of the late Moses Kotane: that the future will be what you make of it.

Comrades Sisulu and cde Tambo came from a generation who were profoundly aware of the interconnectedness between the liberation and development of South Africa and that of the rest of the African continent. On 25 May this year we celebrated 40 years of the Organisation of African Union. The African Union will hold its next Summit in July in neighbouring Mozambique, and will be seized with putting in place the structures necessary to ensure that it fulfil its mandate. Many challenges remain, and the speech of President Mbeki to the Africa Conference on Elections, Governance and Democracy and the account by Iqbal Jhazbhay of the elections in Somaliland highlight some.

Our UMRABULO READERS FORUM continues to grow from strength to strength, with readers interested in contributing to the transformation debates across a wide spectrum of issues and topics. One such article that is bound to stir debate, is the assessment of the events surrounding the formation of the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee by Cde Tankiso in *Beyond Dreadlocks and Demagogy*, and also referred to in the article on *Internal democracy in the ANC*. It is an insightful analysis of the evolution of the SECC, but it is more importantly a warning to ANC branch structures, that unless it is out there actively taking up the issues of communities, others will.

Kgaogelo Lekgoro raised this in the November 2000 edition of UMRABULO NO 9, when he wrote: *"It is true that – outside of provincial and national elections campaigns – we may not reach the same level of political and social mobilisation. However, to only have mass work and mass campaigns during elections leaves an undesired lull and impact on the depth and participatory nature of the democracy we are striving for."*

Cde Sisulu and Cde OR knew the importance of organisation of the people, no matter what the stage of our struggle we are in. Cde Sisulu wrote: *"Every organization engaged in national liberation constantly has to isolate, analyse and search for solutions crucial both to its continued existence and growth, and to the success of the struggle as a whole."*

We hope that UMRABULO will continue to be a forum for debate on the problems facing our country and our movement, as we pick up the spears of these giants of our struggle.

## Feature Theme

### They fought for freedom

*"When an elder dies, it is as if a library has burned"* – African Proverb

**I**N THE MORE THAN 90 years existence of the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC) since it was founded in 1912, many outstanding men and women have played a part both at leadership and rank and file level. It gathered behind its banner not only the chiefs and professional men irked by the theft of land and the restraints of segregation and discrimination, but the unlettered and often illiterate common men and women who sought in the ANC an instrument of deliverance from the poverty and pain to which they were subjected by the exploitation and oppression imposed by white domination. Like the tribe itself, the sum was greater than its parts, the President-General the mouthpiece, not the master, of its members.

Amongst the outstanding leaders of our people, are **cde Oliver Reginald Tambo**, who passed away ten years ago in April 1993 and **cde Walter Sisulu**, who passed away on 5 May 2003.



## Hero among heroes

### WALTER MAX ULYATE SISULU

1912 – 2003

*"Walter Sisulu was not a man for the public occasion, though he could rise to any. He was the man who made the public occasions possible, who behind the scenes had carried the burden of the organisation's work."*

*If it was his earnest attention to detail, his patient persistence which carried the Congress and its campaigns through the country, Walter Sisulu had other, rarer qualities too.*

*He had the capacity to concentrate on the principal issues; by his own example of seriousness and dedication he had the ability to persuade those with doubts and those with differences that these should at*

*no cost be allowed to prevail over the central objectives of the struggle.*

*Walter Sisulu did not command; he persuaded. His personal behaviour, free of malice and self-seeking, reinforced his political clarity. He was a revolutionary because he understood fearlessly the failure of the society in which he lived to produce any alternative life for his people. He was also a revolutionary because he valued and loved people; he despaired of any change except by the masses, and he lived in the hope and confidence that they would rise to the challenge. As he undoubtedly still does!*

Ruth First (1982)

**W**ALTER SISULU WAS BORN at Engcobo in the Transkei on 18 May 1912. He was brought up by his mother and an uncle, a village headman, according to the strict traditions of his people. Coming from a poor family, he left school at the age of 15 in Standard 4 in order to look after family affairs when his uncle died. Walter's elders were devout Anglicans who tried to instill in him a respect for whites, missionaries and officials, but he found himself incapable of servility or submission and earned the warning from one of his teachers that if he did not change his ways when he grew up he would not be allowed to work for a white man.

But work he had to, seeking on the Johannesburg goldmines the livelihood the impoverished Transkei was unable to provide. He worked at the rock-face thousands of feet underground, sleeping at night on the wooden bunks side by side with the other miners in the soulless compounds typical of the Reef. It was a hard life, devoid of any form of social contact, and when he had completed his contract he did not return, but sought work in East London as a 'kitchen boy', working for a white family. This job did not last long either, and soon he was back in Johannesburg, this time working in a bakery for 18 shillings a week.

In his spare time he sometimes attended meetings of the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (ICU) and though fascinated by the fiery speeches of its leader, Clements Kadalie, did not join the organisation. He learnt his first political lesson from life itself when he led the workers in the bakery sector out on strike for higher wages. After interviewing all the workers separately and persuading them to continue working at the old wage, the boss sacked Sisulu as the 'agitator'.

Sisulu then went on the usual round of jobs open to unskilled and untrained workers, finding employment with a succession of white employers whose general behaviour and demeanour fired his national spirit. He made a study of Xhosa history and wrote a series of articles about national heroes for the BANTU WORLD, a white-owned paper directed towards an African readership. The streak of personal rebellion and resistance to white domination grew steadily stronger. One evening in the train going home to the township where he lived he saw a white ticket collector confiscating an African child's season ticket. He asked the official why he had done this but, instead of getting an answer, became the victim of an assault. Sisulu fought back, was arrested and imprisoned. It was his first prison experience.

As he went from job to job he studied for his Junior Certificate and also took part in music and debating clubs. He was one of the first Africans to enroll at the Technical College when it was opened to blacks. By this time his mother had come from the Transkei to join him, and they lived in one of the small brick box houses in Orlando township, now part of Soweto. His mother supplemented the family income by taking in washing for white families.



Walter and Albertina Sisulu... *Mandela was best man at their wedding, and Lembede, in a speech congratulating the bride, warned her: "You are marrying a man who is already married to the nation."*

Sisulu continued his quest for a political outlet and joined the ANC in 1940 after hearing a speech by Dr A B Xuma, who became president of the ANC in December of that year. Sisulu was now working as an estate agent, winning a measure of independence for himself by buying and selling the bits of freehold land that were still left to a handful of Africans under the country's land laws reserving 87 per cent of the country for white ownership and occupation. But his interest in the political world grew steadily until it became a consuming passion.

He was at first active in the ANC Youth League, working with Anton Lembede, Oliver Tambo, Govan Mbeki, Nelson Mandela and others. Sisulu was elected to the Youth League at its first meeting at the Bantu Men's Social Centre. It was in Sisulu's office that the Youth Leaguers met to discuss their strategy and tactics, young men and women determined to bring about a radical change in South African society during their

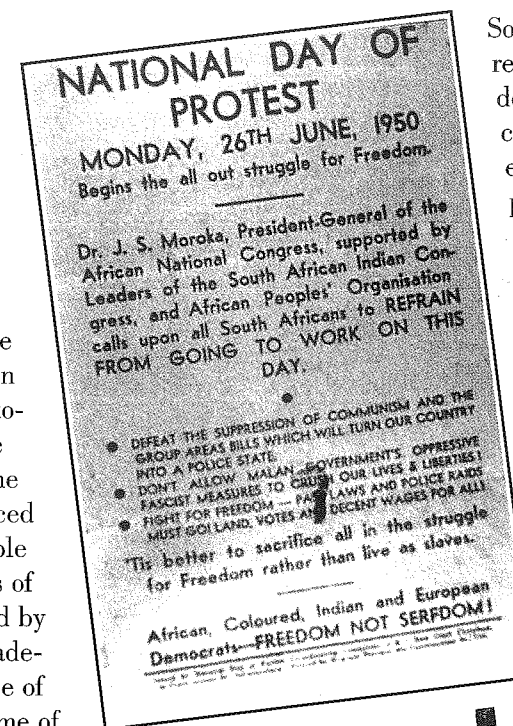
lifetime. One of those who took part in the discussions, Albertina, a nurse, married Sisulu in 1944. At the wedding, Mandela was best man and Lembede, in a speech congratulating the bride, warned her: 'You are marrying a man who is already married to the nation.'

The enthusiasm and policies of the Youth Leaguers swept through the ANC like a hurricane, and were given relevance and immediacy by the victory of Malan's Nationalist Party in the 1948 general elections. As one by one the ruthless apartheid laws were placed on the statute book, the African people began to realise that the old methods of conciliation and compromise pursued by the ANC leadership were no longer adequate. At the 1949 annual conference of the ANC a new and radical Programme of Action, which had its origins in the Youth League, was adopted.

The Programme suggested that a Council of Action should work for the boycott and abolition of 'all differential political institutions,' and 'employ the following weapons: immediate and active boycott, strike, civil disobedience, non-cooperation and such other means as may bring about the accomplishment and realisation of our aspirations'. It also called for 'a national stoppage of work for one day as a mark of protest against the reactionary policy of the government.' The Programme stated that its fundamental principles were 'inspired by the desire to achieve national freedom. By national freedom we mean freedom from white domination and attainment of political independence.'

At the December 1949 conference the old guard leadership of the ANC was replaced. Dr J S Moroka became President-General and Dr S M Molema Treasurer-General, while Walter Sisulu was elected the ANC's first full-time Secretary-General. He gave up his living as an estate agent and devoted himself wholly to the work of the ANC. His wife, Albertina, wholeheartedly endorsed his decision. From then on the family would depend on her earnings as a nurse for, although the ANC offered Sisulu five pounds a month as a wage, it was not often that they had the money to pay him.

The phenomenal growth of the ANC in the succeeding decade was not the work of any one man or group of men but was a channelling of the mass revolt of the people against intensifying repression. However, there is no doubt that the presence of Walter Sisulu at the centre of affairs was a guarantee of integrity, steadiness, persistence and efficiency which inspired confidence in all who had dealings with the organisation. As the ANC grew, so did Walter Sisulu. He began to see the relationship between the national and class struggles in



*Pamphlet calling for a national day of protest*

South Africa, to understand that the repressive state in South Africa was dominated and controlled by a ruling class whose power was based on the exploitation of the mass of the people both as blacks and as workers or peasants. His national consciousness was broadened as he began to work with the organisations of the Indian and Coloured people and progressive whites, all ready to join hands with the Africans in their fight against apartheid oppression and for national liberation. Realising the need for a new theoretical approach, he began to read and study, to plan new methods of struggle.

Immediately on achieving power, the Malan government had set about restricting the liberties of its opponents. During 1949 meetings of Sam Kahn, Communist Member of Parliament, were banned in

the Transvaal under the Riotous Assemblies Act and restrictions were also placed on Dr Yusuf Dadoo, Indian Congress leader, who was banned from speaking in the eight main centres of the country. Passports were refused to trade unionists and African students wishing to study abroad. Publications were being censored en masse by decrees in the Government Gazette. A Defend Free Speech Convention held in Johannesburg on 26 March 1950, with the participation of the ANC, the South African Indian Congress (SAIC), the African People's Organisation (APO) and the Communist Party called for demonstrations on 1 May against the pass laws, for full franchise, land, decent wages and the repeal of all discriminatory laws. The demonstrations were a huge success, 80 per cent of Witwatersrand workers going on strike and bringing industry to a halt. But in the afternoon and evening the police resorted to violence, killing 18 people and injuring an unknown number. A few days later the Unlawful Organisations Bill (later renamed the Suppression of Communism Bill) was published, proposing to give the government the power to ban not only the Communist Party, but any organisation or individual opposing the government's policies.

After an emergency meeting of its executive at Thaba 'Nchu (Dr Moroka's home town), the ANC executive launched a campaign for a national day of protest. The Indian Congress, APO, ANC Youth League and the Communist Party immediately declared their support, and the date was fixed for 26 June - South Africa's first Freedom Day.

Walter Sisulu said in a statement:

*"The African people should not be bluffed by the*

*title of the Bill. It will leave no chance for them to protest and fight for the interests of all oppressed people... Although the Unlawful Organisations Bill purports to be directed against Communism in general and the Communist Party of South Africa in particular, the ANC Executive is satisfied that it is primarily directed against Africans and other oppressed people, and designed to frustrate all their attempts to work for the fulfilment of their legitimate demands and aspirations."*

Sisulu and Yusuf Cachalia, of the Indian Congress, were appointed joint secretaries of the National Day of Protest Committee set up to protest against the Suppression of Communism Bill and the 1 May killings, and the effectiveness of their work was summed up by Sisulu in his report on the 26 June strike. Describing it as 'an outstanding success ...in the face of intensive and relentless police intimidation', he estimated that 50 per cent of all workers stayed at home, and in Alexandra and Western Native Township it was 80 per cent.

These were the first steps in the implementation of the Programme of Action which converted the ANC into an effective mass political organisation enjoying the loyalty and support of millions of people throughout the country. The 26 June Day of Protest laid the foundations for the joint action of the Congresses which ultimately consolidated itself in the 'Congress Alliance' whose initiatives dominated the political scene in the 1950s.

The next phase of the struggle culminated in the 1952 'Campaign of Defiance of Unjust Laws'. Walter Sisulu, Dr Moroka, J B Marks, Dr Dadoo and Yusuf Cachalia were appointed members of a Joint Planning Council after a meeting of the executives of the ANC, SAIC and APO with observers from the Franchise Action Council (set up in 1951 to oppose the Nationalist government's legislation to remove Coloured voters from the common voters' roll). The report of the Planning Council, drawn up after two months' work, was endorsed by the ANC's annual conference in December 1951, and in January 1952 President-General Dr Moroka and Secretary-General Walter Sisulu wrote to Prime Minister Malan calling for the repeal of six 'unjust laws' by 29 February, failing which protest meetings and demonstrations would be held on 6 April 1952, when whites would be celebrating the 300th anniversary of the arrival of Jan van Riebeeck at the Cape in 1652.

The six unjust laws were the pass laws, stock limitation, the Group Areas Act, the Suppression of Communism Act, the Coloured Voters Act and the Bantu Authorities Act—keystones of the apartheid state being set up by the Nationalist government. It was perhaps a sign of the growing power and influence of the ANC that Dr Malan took the trouble to reply, stressing that the differences between the races in South Africa were 'permanent and not man-made' and that the

government 'will under no circumstances entertain the idea of giving administrative or executive or legislative powers over Europeans, or within a European community, to Bantu men and women, or to other smaller non-European groups. The Government, therefore, has no intention of repealing the long-existing laws differentiating between European and Bantu.'

The Defiance Campaign was launched on the second anniversary of Freedom Day, 26 June 1952, and in all about 8,000 people in various parts of the country went to jail for defying the unjust laws. Sisulu himself was a member of a group of 52 Africans and Indians, led by the veteran Indian Congressman Nana Sita, who entered Boksburg location without permits. He was fined £1 with the alternative of seven days' imprisonment, but not before he had told the court:

*"Our position has so worsened that today white South Africa has put in office a government which has closed all constitutional channels between itself and my people and whose barbarous and godless policies have shocked enlightened people all over the world. As an African and national secretary of the Congress I cannot stand aside on an issue which is a matter of life and death to my people. My duty is perfectly clear - it is to take the lead and to share with the humblest of my countrymen the crushing burden imposed on us because of the colour of our skins."*

Later in the year Sisulu and 19 others were rearrested and charged under the Suppression of Communism Act for their part in organising the Defiance Campaign. They were sentenced to nine months' imprisonment, suspended for two years, Judge Rumpff remarking that their offence amounted to 'statutory communism' under the Act but had nothing to do with 'what is commonly known as communism'. He added that he accepted 'the evidence that you consistently advised your followers to follow a peaceful course of action and to avoid violence in any shape or form.'

Having been convicted under the Act, Sisulu became liable to administrative action by the Minister of Justice, who quickly served a notice on him banning him from meetings and confining him to the magisterial district of Johannesburg. Similar notices were served on many other Congress leaders and trade unionists, and the Guardian newspaper was banned as part of the government's attempt to eliminate the opposition.

A significant feature of the Defiance Campaign was the meeting in November 1952 of over 200 whites called together by the National Action Committee of the ANC and SAIC, and addressed by Sisulu, Tambo and Cachalia, at which the Congress of Democrats was formed. The silence of white democrats on the issues involved in the Defiance Campaign, said Tambo, was being construed by blacks as acquiescence in and approval of the government's policies. After Sisulu had pointed out that the limited franchise proposals being advanced by some white liberals would have no appeal

for the majority of blacks, the meeting passed a resolution expressing support for equal rights for all and the aims of the Defiance Campaign. Thus was forged another component of the Congress Alliance which played such a significant role in the ensuing decade.

The commitment which Sisulu had declared and demonstrated in the Defiance Campaign was sustained and strengthened in campaign after campaign launched by the Congress Alliance: the campaign against the mass removal of blacks from Johannesburg's Western Areas, the campaign for the Congress of the People and the adoption of the Freedom Charter at Kliptown in 1955, the bus and potato boycotts and political strikes of the late 1950s, the campaign against the pass laws which culminated in the 1960 State of Emergency and the banning of the ANC, the turn to armed struggle and the formation of Umkhonto we Sizwe, the military wing of the ANC. At the heart of every action was Walter Sisulu - calm, composed and determined, planning, agitating, organising, mobilising his people for struggle.

Every day for him was a day of action, and the action continued at night and over weekends when his home was always crowded with visitors seeking instruction or advice or just wanting to talk politics. Those who had dealings with him remember his sense of humour, his smile and his warmth rather than the frown of concentration or anger. Gifted with the common touch, he won the support of his comrades and his people by persuasion, not command. Nobody ever saw him downhearted.

He left the country only once, in July 1953, on a

visit to a number of countries in Europe and Asia on behalf of the ANC and SAIC. He and Duma Nokwe were amongst the guests of the Youth and Student Festival in August in Bucharest, and he also visited Israel, Poland, China, the USSR and Britain. Reporting back to the ANC conference in December 1953, Sisulu said that what impressed him most in the socialist countries was 'the abolition of unemployment and the tremendously sincere desire for peace'.

The moment his ban under the Suppression of Communism Act expired, Sisulu was back at work, addressing meetings, travelling, organising, inspiring. Professor Z K Matthews paid tribute to him in his presidential address to the ANC (Cape) on 26 June 1954:

*"As for the general secretary, it is hardly necessary for me to welcome him here; He is the son of the Cape Province and he was with us quite recently. During his recent Cape tour he was instrumental in taking the ANC right into the heart of the Transkei, that area which is supposed to be surrounded by an Iron Curtain. During his brief sojourn there, they sought him here, they sought him there, they sought him everywhere, and when he had already returned to headquarters, they were still seeking."*

A few days later the authorities once again used the Suppression of Communism Act in an attempt to decapitate the ANC. President Luthuli was confined to the Tugela district of Natal where his home was situated, and Sisulu was banned from gatherings for two years and ordered to resign as Secretary-General of the ANC



The 1952 Defiance Campaign...  
Addressing the court  
after being arrested  
with 52 others,  
Sisulu said:  
"As an African  
and national  
secretary of  
the Congress  
I cannot stand  
aside on an issue  
which is a matter  
of life and death  
to my people."

within 30 days. Sisulu said:

*"The time has passed when they [the government] could rule the country as if we, the people, did not exist. The time is against them, the world is against them. We on the other hand are encouraged by the great spirit of the people of South Africa, by the growth of the national liberatory movement, by the unprecedented political consciousness of the people and by the fact that the truth is with us. We enjoy the confidence of the whole world in this noble and just task for which we are pledged to fight until the dawn of freedom."*

In an attempt to make sure that Sisulu was immobilised, the security police began to subject him to an ever-increasing regime of surveillance and harassment. In July 1954, one day after the banning notice was served on him, Sisulu was arrested together with Freddie Morris, the Transvaal provincial secretary of the ANC, at the dinner table of Bloemfontein African businessman Mr Keiloe and hauled off to the police station where he was detained for two nights. He was charged with attending a gathering to partake of, or be present whilst others partake of refreshment (in the nature of tea and/or some such other liquid refreshment, and/or edibles and/or a meal) and 'to listen to what one or more or all of the other persons present had to say about any matter...and/or to have social intercourse.' It was alleged that ANC matters and preparations for a meeting were to be discussed over the dinner table. Sisulu was sentenced to three months' imprisonment in the Kroonstad magistrate's court but was acquitted on appeal.

Sisulu was one of the 156 arrested on 6 December 1956, in the treason trial, and was one of the key accused who endured the full agony of that ordeal up to the moment of acquittal on 29 March 1961. During the 1960 state of emergency all the accused in this batch were detained in jail for five months. In October 1961, Sisulu was stopped in the street in Johannesburg and driven to Special Branch headquarters, served with a five-year banning order, detained for the night and later sentenced to R30 or 90 days at the Fordsburg Native Commissioner's Court for not having a reference book. He was arrested time and time again – once after a party at Lillian Nogyi's home and on another occasion with Ahmed Kathrada and Ben Turok (then National Secretary of the Congress of Democrats)

In June 1962 Sisulu was arrested and charged under the Suppression of Communism Act. Released on bail of R250, he was ordered to report to the police twice a week. In August 1962 Sisulu was again picked up by the police as he was walking down Commissioner Street in Johannesburg. Held without bail for 12 days, he was eventually charged with incitement arising from the countrywide strike which had been organised from 29 to 31 May 1961, in protest against the inauguration of the racist 'Republic'. Nelson Mandela, who had gone

underground after the strike to organise the resistance, had been arrested in Natal on 5 August and was charged with a similar offence.

The launching of Umkhonto we Sizwe with a series of sabotage attacks on 16 December 1961 was followed by the intensified persecution of ANC leaders. Following decades of peaceful and non-violent struggle, the movement had finally resorted to armed struggle as the only way of defending itself against the ferocious repression of the apartheid regime and advancing the cause of liberation. The opening of the trials of Mandela and Sisulu in October 1962 was marked by bomb attacks in Natal and the Western Cape and demonstrations by thousands of supporters in the main centres of the country. Although Mandela and Sisulu faced charges arising from the same strike, their trials were separate – Mandela appearing in Pretoria and Sisulu in Johannesburg. Mandela faced two charges: incitement to strike and leaving the country without permission. He was eventually sentenced to five years' imprisonment. Sisulu also faced another charge arising from documents found in his home by the police which were held to show that he was promoting the aims of the ANC. He was sentenced to six years' imprisonment in March 1963.

His case had dragged on for nearly five months and during this period he had been free on bail of R1,000. After the sentence the magistrate withdrew the bail but it was reinstated on appeal to the Supreme Court. Sisulu was again released, this time on bail of R6,000. His 'freedom', however, was both limited and dangerous; in October 1962 he had been placed under house arrest. Ten days later, following the death of his mother, Sisulu was arrested at his home for attending a 'gathering' created by the mourners who had come to pay their last respects. At the conclusion of the incitement case, Sisulu realised that time had run out for him and on 20 April 1963 he went underground to join the High Command of Umkhonto we Sizwe.

On 26 June, Freedom Day, 1963, the country was electrified on hearing the voice of Walter Sisulu broadcasting over Radio ANC. It was a typical Sisulu message – direct, forceful and down to earth:

*"Sons and daughters of Africa: I speak to you from somewhere in South Africa. I have not left the country. I do not plan to leave."*

*Many of our leaders of the African National Congress have gone underground. This is to keep the organisation in action; to preserve the leadership; to keep the freedom fight going. Never has the country, and our people, needed leadership as they do now, in this hour of crisis.*

#### **Our house is on fire.**

*It is the duty of the people of our land – every man and every woman – to rally behind our leaders. There is no time to stand and watch. Thousands are in jail including our dynamic*

*Nelson Mandela. Many are banished to remote parts of the country. Robben Island is a giant concentration camp for political prisoners. Men and women, including my wife, rot in cells under Vorster's vicious laws to imprison without trial. Men wait in death cells to be hanged. Men die for freedom.*

*South Africa is in a permanent state of emergency. Any policeman may arrest any South African – and need not bring him to trial. Under the Bantu Laws Amendment Bill, the pass laws will turn children into orphans, wives into widows, men into slaves. We must intensify the attack on the pass laws. We must fight against the removal of the Africans from the Western Cape. We must reject once and for all times the Bantustan fraud. No act of government must go unchallenged. The struggle must never waver. We, the African National Congress, will lead with new methods of struggle. The African people know that their unity is vital. Only by united action can we overthrow this government.*

*We call on all our people to unite and struggle. Workers and peasants; teachers and students; ministers of religion and all churches: we call upon all our people, of whatever shade of opinion.*

*We say: the hour has come for us to stand together. This is the only way to freedom. We warn the government that drastic laws will not stop our struggle for liberation. Throughout the ages men have sacrificed – they have given their lives for their ideals. And we are also determined to surrender our lives for our freedom.*

*We face tremendous odds. We know that. But our unity, our determination, our sacrifice, our organisation are our weapons.*

*We must succeed! We will succeed! Amandla!"*

On 11 July Sisulu and other leaders of Umkhonto we Sizwe were arrested at their Rivonia headquarters. For months they were held in solitary confinement ceaselessly and often brutally 'interrogated' by the security police. Some were viciously assaulted. Even their lawyers were denied access to them until two days before their indictment on 9 October 1963. Nelson Mandela was brought from Robben Island to join them in the dock when their trial finally got under way on 3 December. They faced four charges arising from the prosecution's interpretation of the document Operation Mayibuye which was found at Rivonia:

- Recruiting persons for training in sabotage and guerrilla warfare for purposes a violent revolution.
- Conspiring to commit the aforesaid and to aid foreign military units when they invaded the Republic.
- Acting in these ways to further the objects of communism.



**Sisulu demonstrated that a man who is clear in his ideology and convinced of the logic and justice of his cause, without self-deception or conceit, is more than a match for his enemies.**

- Soliciting and receiving money for these purposes from sympathisers in Algeria, Ethiopia, Liberia, Nigeria, Tunisia and elsewhere (the countries visited by Mandela on his 1962 tour).

Asked to plead, Mandela said: 'My Lord, the government, not I, should be in the dock. I plead not guilty to all charges.' Sisulu: 'The government is responsible for what has happened in this country. I plead not guilty.'

The details of the Rivonia trial are well known and Nelson Mandela's moving statement from the dock has become a classic of liberation literature as well as an inspiration to struggle. The decision of the accused was that Mandela should speak from the dock so that he would not be interrupted or subjected to cross-examination or heckling from the prosecutor.

Sisulu was in the box for five days. From the outset he made it clear he would say nothing and answer no questions which might lead to the identification and prosecution of others, and he calmly and firmly refused to be provoked by the prosecution. He expounded the policy of the ANC, explained the resort to violence, rejected the racist sneers and innuendoes of the vicious prosecutor, Percy Yutar. Sisulu demonstrated that a man who is clear in his ideology and convinced of the logic and justice of his cause, without self-deception or conceit, is more than a match for his enemies.

During his detention, Sisulu revealed, he was told he faced the death penalty but could avoid being hanged if he gave information to the police. He refused to co-operate. The authorities could do what they liked.

Like Mandela, Sisulu made it clear that in helping to form Umkhonto we Sizwe the ANC was not abandoning its hope for a peaceful solution, nor was it committed to a programme of reckless killing and destruction.

# SISULU IN THE DOCK

Secretary-General of the ANC, Walter Sisulu was the main defence witness in the Rivonia trial and he was under prolonged attack from the prosecutor. An observer commented: "Once Sisulu had taken the measure of the prosecution, it was as if he forgot he was in the witness box. It must have been eleven years since he had last appeared on a public platform and now again he dominated the situation".

In the course of Sisulu's evidence, he spoke with authority about ANC policy: "Since its inception, the ANC adopted a democratic policy. That is, it advocated that there was room in South Africa for all racial groups, which existed. It advocated that it should participate in the Government councils of this country. This policy was clearly stated in a document drawn up during the war years in 1943. The document was called 'African Claims'.

During cross-examination by the prosecutor, Dr. Percy Yutar, Sisulu had an opportunity to expound on ANC attitudes towards the national question:

YUTAR: ...that is your solution of the problems of this country--the concept of black and white co-operation?

SISULU: Oh yes. We have absolutely no doubt that as a feasible proposition it is the only answer--no other. The question of what Africa says or anybody else is not the real issue. The question is, what do we feel in this country?

YUTAR: And yet the rest of Africa--I am putting it a bit too high, but many States of Africa are the countries to whom you have appealed for assistance, military and financial?

SISULU: Yes, that is correct.

YUTAR: And they are the countries that are supporting you militarily and financially?

SISULU: In spite of our policies . . .

YUTAR: And they are the countries who are against this concept of partnership between black and white?

SISULU: Yes.

YUTAR: And notwithstanding that, you still say that can be the position in this country?

SISULU: Of course. I am saying that the position is decided by the people of South Africa, not the people outside... It merely emphasises the difficulties, and the problems of our organisation, of our policy, and yet we are prepared to stand by it. We educate other people in this country and abroad, that the only solution in South Africa is living together of black and white, and no other...

YUTAR: Sisulu... perhaps it is pertinent at this stage just to ask you this: if eventually the non-Europeans got control of the country, what would be the position if the responsible leadership made a few more mistakes and dropped a few more bombs in houses of the whites?

SISULU: Well, on the question of responsibility insofar as this line is concerned, it is not a question of colour. Europeans have done worse things in this country, they have bombed each other.

YUTAR: I am talking about the responsible leadership that you have referred to that made mistakes--what if they cut away some more railway lines?

SISULU: I said that the question of being irresponsible is not a question of colour. The leadership of the ANC has demonstrated for the last fifty years that they are most responsible.

YUTAR: Most responsible?

SISULU: Oh yes.

YUTAR: And notwithstanding it, you gave your benign blessing to the creation of Umkhonto and allowed them carte blanche to commit acts of sabotage?

SISULU: Very much against our feeling. We have tried, by all means, not to get into this situation...

THE COURT: And you also have a duty to persuade the people that they are oppressed, is that so?

SISULU: If it's so, I don't know if it's merely a question of persuading the people. It would be a strange thing that the Africans in South Africa are the only people who do not know that they are oppressed...

TOWARDS THE END OF DR. YUTAR'S CROSS-EXAMINATION, SISULU'S ANGER SURFACED. THE PROSECUTOR MADE THE REMARK: "The police don't arrest indiscriminately".

SISULU: They arrest many people indiscriminately. For no offence people have been arrested.

YUTAR: Would you like to make a political speech?

SISULU: I'm not making a political speech, I'm replying to your question.

YUTAR: How do you know they arrest people innocently?

SISULU: I know.

YUTAR: How do you know?

SISULU: They arrested my wife, they arrested my son... They arrest other people.

YUTAR: Yes, without any evidence whatsoever?

SISULU: What evidence?

YUTAR: I don't know, I'm asking...

SISULU: I have been persecuted by the police, Special Branch. If there is a man who has been persecuted it's myself. In 1962 I was arrested six times. I know the position in this country.

YUTAR: You do?

SISULU: I wish you were in the position of an African. I wish you were an African to know the position in this country!

From: *The Sun will Rise - Statements from the Dock by Southern*



*Sisulu, accompanied by cde Albertina and other leaders that were incarcerated on Robben Island, meets the exiled ANC leaders in Stockholm, January 1990*

The years of incarceration on Robben Island have meant for Sisulu and his comrades not the end of their struggle but simply its transfer to a new and more difficult arena. For them and others, life imprisonment means the government intends them to remain in prison for the rest of their natural lives.

In March 1963 the Minister of Justice announced that there would be no remission of sentence for any person convicted under the security laws. Not a single day has been knocked off the jail term of any political prisoner.

Every day the prisoners had to brace themselves for some new assault, to fight for their rights and to assert their personalities. Under the leadership of men like Mandela, Sisulu, Mbeki and others, the prisoners were disciplined, determined and courageous.

As Francis Meli wrote:

*"The racist rulers have converted the Island into a harsh prison camp - a grey, soulless, cruel spot, designed to crush the spirit of the bravest and truest leaders of our revolt against the apartheid system, to douse once and for all the flames of rebellion in our hearts, to deter and subdue us forever."*

*This was the intention but...the racists failed. The struggle continued, on the Island and off, the fires of resistance continued to burn, and Robben Island became nationally and internationally synonymous not with defeat but with courage and indestructibility."*

[Francis Meli, ANC Director of External Publicity, in his foreword to *Island in Chains: Ten Years on Robben Island by Prisoner 885/63, as told by Indres Naidoo to Albie Sachs* (Penguin Books, 1982), p 7.]

The Robben Island prisoners became the focus of resistance not only in prison, but throughout South Africa. The names of Mandela, Sisulu and their com-

rades were on the lips of the youth in Soweto and wherever the masses were in action - in the schools and universities, in the factories, on the picket line, at funerals, church services and demonstrations.

On Robben Island, cde Walter Sisulu was the man he always was - older and wiser, but determined and immovable in the face of threat or danger, positive in his thinking and convinced that he would see freedom in his lifetime. His influence on his comrades was immense. He took time to consider his verdict, he refused to be rushed into a hasty decision, weighed the pros and cons, but when his mind was made up he was utterly secure in himself and an inexhaustible source of confidence for others. His peers always sought his agreement, the youth looked upon him as a father figure.

On October 1989 the government released Sisulu, six other ANC leaders and a PAC political prisoner. The unbanning of the ANC on 2 February 1990 and the release of Nelson Mandela followed a week later.

Sisulu subsequently met with the external wing of the ANC in Lusaka and was asked to lead the ANC internally. This involved re-establishing ANC structures inside the country and preparing for the national conference that was held inside South Africa in December 1990. Sisulu also formed part of the historic ANC delegation which met with representatives of the government at Groote Schuur, Cape Town in May 1990.

In the foreword to "In Our Lifetime", the recently published biography of Walter and Albertina Sisulu, Nelson Mandela writes: "If we as a liberation movement and a nation were to be given the choice of one life story to be told, that story would have to be Walter Sisulu's. In his life and the work of his life are captured and demonstrated the best, the noblest, the most heroic, the most deeply humane that our movement and our country represent and seek to represent."

# Oliver Tambo

## HIS LEGACY AND LIFE

1917 — 1993

by  
Luli  
Callinicos  
(Abridged)

**O**LIVER REGINALD TAMBO, leader of the African National Congress in exile for thirty years, died on 23 April 1993. Yet, more than a decade later – his legacy lives on. Comrade O.R. – as he was affectionately known – left a significant and enduring heritage, one which enhanced our new constitution, contributed to the inclusive and equitable policies of our government, and affirmed the abiding vision of the ANC itself.

The African National Congress has consistently produced leaders of the highest calibre. But Oliver Tambo, thoughtful, wise and warm-hearted, was perhaps the most loved. His simplicity, his nurturing style, his genuine respect for all people seemed to bring out the best in them. During his fifty years of political activity, he played a significant role in every key moment in the history of the movement, until his death.

Oliver Tambo was a founder member and secretary of the ANC Youth League in 1944; the general secretary of the ANC from 1952; the mandated leader of the ANC's Mission in Exile in 1960; the President of the ANC from 1977 until 1990; then National Chairperson until his death, in 1993.

What shaped the life of Oliver Tambo? What values and life skills enabled him to make such an important and enduring impact on the history of the African National Congress and on our new, democratic South Africa? Two major processes in Comrade O.R.'s early life moulded his style in politics and leadership – his traditional rural roots; and the expertise he acquired through education. Each experience was very different; yet O.R. combined them creatively to develop an approach which was able to reach and empower a broad mass of the people, both nationally and internationally.

On an early summer morning on 17 October, 1917, in the small village of Kantolo, about 20 kilometres from Bizana, Pondoland, a son was born to Mzimeni, son of Tambo, and his third wife, Julia.

Pondoland, known for its green, fertile and available land, had been the last chiefdom in South Africa to remain independent. The annexation of Pondoland had

taken place within Oliver Tambo's parents' lifetime. It was an act that completed the process of colonial dispossession of South Africa. Tambo's father was acutely conscious of this British assault on Pondoland, and named his son Kaizana.

The Tambo homestead was unusually large: 'a big kraal, as distinct from a two-hut home, of which there were many', remembered O.R. The homestead consisted of the paternal grandparents, their three sons, and their wives and children. Oliver's father, Mzimeni, had four wives (though he married his youngest wife, Lena, only after his second wife died in labour). Mzimeni was comfortably off. He owned at least 50 cattle at one time, several fine horses and an ox-wagon. These resources led to trading and transport opportunities. Mzimeni was not literate - 'my father had not seen the inside of a classroom'. His prosperity was largely due to his own enterprise. Shrewd, creative and quick to seize an opening, Mzimeni sought and gained employment as an assistant salesman at the nearby trading store. This exposure to a more commercial economy taught Mzimeni a number of skills and widened his world.

Two women in O.R.'s life, his own mother, and his father's third wife were Christians. They also opened up new horizons. Oliver's mother was a sociable and energetic person who could read and write. She established her home as the local headquarters of the Full Gospel Church. Tambo recalled occasions when there were large, bustling gatherings of worship in his mother's hilt. Eventually, perhaps because of her influence, Mzimeni himself converted to Christianity, and had all his dependants baptised.

In that somewhat large and busy homestead, Kaizana had an active, happy and traditional childhood. From as early as three or four years old, young Kaizana was learning the essential skills of the rural economy, and the practical discipline that went along with it. Tambo vividly recalled the duties of the small boys, describing their fairly heavy responsibilities in tending the calves, and ensuring that the animals were permitted to suckle only after milking. As the boys

grew older and were able to accept more responsibility, they were given the task of herding the cattle.

The whole family contributed to the homestead economy. Work was practical and rewarding. Unlike labour in industrial society, it was not separated from home or community. Herding, like other productive activities, would be done in groups, and would include social interaction and co-operation.

In a society where everyone knew almost everyone else, group pressure was a strong form of discipline. The Amapondo, like many polities in southern Africa, had a consensus approach to decision-making. Between headmen and the community, as well as between chiefs and the people, there was a balance of power. In his autobiography, President Mandela recalled how 'at a council meeting, or *imbizo*, everyone was heard: chief and subject, warrior and medicine man, shopkeeper and farmer, landowner and labourer... It was democracy in its purest form'.

After thorough discussion, the chief and his advisers would get the feel of the meeting. Opponents of the plan were encouraged to speak out. Chiefs relied on their councillors to prevent them from acting contrary to popular will. This very sound practice, of never straying too far away from their constituencies – was to play a profoundly important role in the ANC style of leadership of both Tambo and Mandela.

By the time little Kaizana was old enough to herd, a cash economy had already begun to infiltrate the area. Regularly, young men from Kantolo would take the 25 kilometre trip to Bizana, where there was a recruiting station for the coal mines in KwaZulu-Natal and the gold mines in Gauteng, in order to earn money for taxes. All of Oliver's older brothers became wage labourers, both the traditionalists, such as Willy and Zakele, and the younger Christians such as Wilson and Alan. The migrant labour system was indeed an integral part of the homestead economy, and became even more important when Mzimeni's fortunes began to decline in the late 1920s.

Migrant labour also brought risk and adversity. The health of Wilson, Oliver's older brother, was ruined when he contracted TB in the compounds of the sugar plantations and had to return home, permanently unfit for strenuous work. In about 1929, the Tambo family suffered a major tragedy: Oliver's uncle and his older brother Zakele were killed in an underground fire in the Dannhauser coal mine. Aside from the heartbreak and personal anguish, the deaths of two healthy and productive members of the homestead was a severe economic blow, and further hastened the decline of Oliver's father's prosperity the tragic loss remained deeply imprinted in Oliver Tambo's mind.

Although Mzimeni Tambo was a traditionalist, he also saw the value of western education. Working in the trading store for many years, Mzimeni had been impressed by two aspects of the white trader: that his learning enabled him to run an independent business and keep its books; and that his relative wealth gave him power and status.

On his first day, young Kaizana was asked to come to school with a new, 'English' name. After his mother and father discussed it at length that evening, the little boy took his new name to his teacher. It was, he said, to be 'Oliver'. The school teacher turned out to be very strict, and would beat the children for the slightest offences. Oliver began to dread school, and would find any excuse not to take the long ten mile walk to school. Mzimeni was so determined that his children should persevere that he moved the children several times to other schools. As he grew older, Oliver began to want to leave home.

*"My age group, some of them, had left their homes, crossed the Umtamvuna and went to Natal to work - some in the plantations. And some were coming back, big stout chaps already. They were young men, and I was still going to this school. So I began to think in terms of leaving, escaping to go and work there as a garden boy or even in the sugar plantations. I would work there and*



Oliver  
Tambo,  
flanked by  
Nelson  
Mandela  
and Walter  
Sisulu

*bring back money to my parents – that's what everyone else was doing."*

One day, when Oliver was about eleven years old, he met a lad who was in the debating society of another school. He and his friends were deeply impressed with the ease with which this youngster spoke English. That experience changed Oliver's attitude to education. He had discovered in himself a love of discussion and debate, and English seemed to be the key, to skills, independence and power.

Not long afterwards, Oliver was given the opportunity, through a family friend, to enroll at the missionary school at Flagstaff, called Holy Cross. By this time, Oliver's father did not have money to pay the fees. But Oliver was so anxious to stay, that the school itself managed to find two kind English sisters who sent the sum of £10 a year for Oliver's schooling. His older brother, working as a migrant in faraway KwaZulu-Natal, also sent an additional amount from his hard-earned wages to make up the shortfall in the fees.

From then onwards, Oliver never looked back. Really motivated to learn now, he starred in class. After five years at Holy Cross, his teachers found him a place in the well-known black school of St Peter's in Johannesburg. Many years later, Comrade O.R. linked the kind deed of the English ladies to the international support 'for those engaged in the struggle for liberation from oppression and the apartheid system in particular in the years to come.'

*"They were total strangers to us as we were to them. They intervened tirelessly to save the careers of two unknown youngsters who but for their intervention, might have had to say goodbye to Holy Cross and goodbye to education as well as goodbye to a future of possible usefulness to humanity... They had stretched a couple of hands across the lands and oceans to the south of the continent of Africa to give aid and support to two unknown children. Two unknown African children."*

Oliver finished his schooling at St. Peter's in Johannesburg, a school which exposed him for the first time to boys from other provinces, who spoke other African languages, and also to fast-talking city youngsters. For the first time, in the streets of Johannesburg, he was exposed to race prejudice and segregation but city life was to be his future. Within a year, first his mother and then his father passed away – at the age of sixteen, he was orphaned.

His parents did not live to delight in their son gaining top marks in matric. In those days all scholars in the Transvaal, black and white, wrote the same examination. The black press reported the achievement with great pride that this excellent scholar was from the Transkei, the eastern Cape assembly of chiefs, the Bhunga, granted Oliver a bursary of £30 a year to study at Fort Hare

Oliver decided to study science. There was an imbalance, he decided. In the black professions there

were too many B. A. candidates. Ideally, he had wanted to study medicine; but at the time no university would accept black students. Three years later, Oliver Tambo graduated with a B.Sc. degree in physics and maths. The following year he enrolled for a diploma in higher education. O.R. had a calm and quiet disposition, but he made an impact on his lecturers and his fellow students. He was deeply religious, yet he was also an intellectual. His future friend, partner and comrade Nelson Mandela, recalled his first impressions of Oliver:

*"I became a member of the Students Christian Association and taught Bible classes on Sundays in neighbouring villages. One of my comrades on these expeditions was a serious young science scholar whom I had met on the soccer field. He came from Pondoland, in the Transkei, and his name was Oliver Tambo. From the start, I saw that Oliver's intelligence was diamond-edged; he was a keen debater and did not accept the platitudes that so many of us automatically subscribed to. Oliver lived in Beda Hall, the Anglican hostel, and though I did not have much contact with him at Fort Hare, it was easy to see that he was destined for great things."*

Nelson Mandela, **Long Walk to Freedom.**

Oliver was elected chairperson of the students' representative council of his Anglican residence, Beda Hall. But before his last year at Fort Hare was through, he was expelled for organising a student protest on a point of principle. He then left the university and went home to Kantolo, planning to look for a job – any job, for he had the younger members of the homestead to support. But the news of his expulsion reached his old school, St Peter's. They immediately offered him a post as maths master.

Once again, Oliver was in Johannesburg, and once again, he was in the news amongst the black community. In downtown Johannesburg near Diagonal Street was an estate agent called Walter Sisulu with an office which attracted the young black elite – the teachers, lawyers, journalists and intellectuals who loved a good discussion on politics and life. Sisulu was keen to meet Tambo, and in due course, friends brought the brilliant scholar around. Tambo at once took to the slightly older man, who had not had much formal higher education, but was seasoned in the hard knocks of city life and had acquired a wealth of wisdom and political insights. Sisulu was interested in marshalling the abilities of the young people who came to his office in the service of their community. At Sisulu's office, Tambo met other like-minded young men – Anton Lembede, A.P. Mda, Jordan Ngubane as well as a fellow student whom he remembered from Fort Hare – Nelson Mandela.

These young men, including Walter Sisulu, began to visit regularly the Sophiatown home of Dr Xuma, the medical doctor who was also the President of the African National Congress. They were particularly

attracted to the ANC because the organisation aimed to unite all the black nations of South Africa, regardless of language or ethnicity. The weakness of the ANC, they decided, was that it did not reach out to ordinary people. Its members tended to consist of chiefs, professionals and elites like themselves.

Nevertheless, they agreed, the ANC was the organisation with a long tradition and an honourable nationalist vision which they felt they could work with. The group decided on a plan of action to revive Congress. Meeting regularly at the Bantu Men's Social Centre, they decided to put a resolution to the next annual congress.

In 1944, the ANC Congress in Batho, Bloemfontein formally created the ANC Youth League, as well as a Women's League. Anton Lembede was elected chairman, Oliver Tambo secretary and Walter Sisulu treasurer of the new organisation.

*AFRICA'S CAUSE MUST TRIUMPH, declared the Youth League manifesto. We believe that the national liberation of Africans will be achieved by Africans themselves... We believe in the unity of all Africans from the Mediterranean Sea in the North to the Indian and Atlantic Oceans in the South... and that Africans must speak with one voice'.*

The Youth League undertook to provide a three-year programme to mobilise the ordinary black people of South Africa.

In the meantime, Tambo was making an enduring impact on his students at St Peter's. Dozens of his students remembered his distinctive, interactive and encouraging style of teaching, using methods which were well ahead of their time. O.R. inspired many to take up teaching too. After hours, he introduced the concepts of the Youth League to his senior students. Some of them went on to join the movement and become prominent comrades. Amongst them were Andrew Mlangeni, Henry Makgothi, Duma Nokwe, Joe Matthews, Vella Pillay and a number of others – although another pupil took a different political direction – Lucas Mangope.

In 1948, the National Party was voted into power by the white electorate. They immediately set about extending and introducing a host of racially discriminating laws. The existing pass laws were tightened up to control labour and the movement of black people. These laws needed to be challenged and resisted. O.R. decided to study law by correspondence, through Unisa, while continuing his teaching. After serving his articles he qualified, then in 1952 joined Nelson Mandela to start an immensely successful firm of attorneys, dedicated to assisting black people against the oppressive apartheid legislation.

Chief Albert Luthuli was elected President of the ANC in 1953. The previous year, the Defiance Campaign, which defied 'Six Unjust Laws', had been successful in mobilising thousands of people. It also resulted in a spate of banning orders for its leaders.



Oliver Tambo and Chief Albert Luthuli... **O.R. was deeply influenced by Chief Luthuli's simplicity and integrity.**

After Walter Sisulu was banned, Oliver Tambo became national secretary. He and Chief Luthuli, highly respected for his refusal to be 'bought off' as a chief by the apartheid regime, worked together on the ANC's programme of mass campaigns and policy during the remainder of the decade. O.R. was deeply influenced by Luthuli's simplicity and integrity.

'The ANC is the parliament of the people', Luthuli declared. In 1955, the Congress of the People presented to the nation the Freedom Charter, which reflected the grass roots demands of a democratic South Africa. O.R. was a member of the National Action Committee, which had drafted the clauses based on the popular vision. The following year, he, Luthuli, Mandela, Sisulu and 152 others were arrested for High Treason. But after the preliminary hearings, O.R. and Chief Luthuli were acquitted. In the meantime, with the bulk of the ANC leadership still on trial, Tambo and Luthuli had to continue to lead the struggle. During this period O.R. also updated the ANC constitution, presenting a more detailed, enlightened and inclusive vision, based on the ANC's formal acceptance of the Freedom Charter.

There were some Africanists, within the ANC though, who had a problem with this broader all-

encompassing definition of the nation. They were also unhappy with the formation of the Congress Alliance, which consisted of the South African Indian Congress, the South African Coloured People's Organisation, the tiny white Congress of Democrats and the South African Congress of Trade Unions. They felt that the 'non-African' organisations might easily come to dominate the ANC. Eventually, after a noisy confrontation at a regional meeting in 1959, chaired by Oliver Tambo, they broke away to form the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC).

In 1957, Oliver had become engaged to Adelaide Tsukudu, a Youth League activist and qualified nurse who worked at Baragwanath Hospital (now renamed the Baragwanath-Chris Hani Hospital). The wedding date, set for December 1956, was nearly derailed, as the bridegroom was arrested for High Treason. Fortunately, all the accused were granted bail, and the marriage took place. O.R. was destined to see very little of his family once he went into exile. Adelaide Tambo became the breadwinner, working double shifts to provide for their children, Thembi, Dan and Tselane.

On 21 March, 1960, police fired on a crowd of people who gathered outside the Sharpeville police station to protest against passes. Sixty nine people died on that day. The event unleashed a storm of protest both at home and abroad. Panicking, the apartheid government banned the ANC and the Pan Africanist Congress, and declared a state of emergency, jailing thousands of activists. Chief Luthuli, mandated by the ANC's executive, then instructed Tambo to leave the country to set up a Mission in Exile in order to gather international support for the liberation movement.

Once they met O.R., the Scandinavian countries proved to be amongst the most supportive (together with the Netherlands) of the western countries. But it was not always plain sailing for the ANC. In the early period of the mission in exile, O.R. had to deal with many different countries with conflicting ideologies and policies. The governments of most western countries were unhappy with the ANC's willingness to work with the SACP and also its turn to armed struggle in 1962.

In Africa, the movement's non-racial policy was seen as a drawback by many newly independent countries which had fought against white colonialism. It was thanks to O.R.'s obviously genuine commitment, his insight, understanding and his ability to articulate the ANC vision, that negative images of the ANC were eventually dispelled.

In 1962 O.R. and Mandela were delighted to meet again. Mandela left South Africa illegally to help O.R. and the mission to raise support for the movement, and to explain the formation of Umkhonto we Sizwe, the movement's armed wing to international supporters. Mandela then returned home, to continue his struggle inside South Africa, underground.

O.R. campaigned ceaselessly for international sanctions against the apartheid regime. The ANC's



***O.R.'s marriage to Adelaide was nearly derailed when he was arrested for high treason in 1956.***

staunchest supporter was Father Trevor Huddleston, Oliver's old friend from St Peter's days. Dr Dadoo, leader of the SACP, was also particularly responsive to this economic weapon. The campaign grew to include the boycott of South African sports, arts, academic and all cultural interaction as well as South African export products.

After the arrest of the bulk of the ANC leadership, including Mandela, following Rivonia, the ANC was severely weakened internally. When Wilton Mkwayi was arrested and imprisoned, the position of Supreme Commander of MK was passed to O.R., in exile. The ANC set up its headquarters in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. That country's head of state, Julius 'Mwalimu' Nyerere generously donated land for the use of MK as well as any other programmes necessary for the ANC.

It was at Morogoro, Tanzania, that the ANC was able to hold its first conference outside South Africa, in 1969. The conference was sanctioned by the leadership on Robben Island, and was O.R.'s constructive response to criticism by cadres who were itching to return home to wage the armed struggle inside.

One of the leading protesters was Chris Hani, who had been jailed for two years in Botswana following the ambitious military campaign to invade South Africa via the hostile territory of Rhodesia, through Wankie. 'I blew my top,' Chris Hani remembered. While much of the leadership was furious with Hani's outburst and wanted to discipline him severely, it was O.R. who was able to overlook the provocation, and really listen to the points Hani was making. The outcome of the Morogoro conference was a significant step forward. Conference agreed that in future political interest was to take precedence over the military, and that a Revolutionary Council (RC) be formed to give direction. The non-racial composition of the RC, though, proved to be a problem with a small, Africanist group of middle level membership. After many discussions with O.R., they were unable to come to terms with the inclusion of 'non-Africans' in the structures. Eventually, the Group of Eight, as they were called, broke away.

It was to the credit of O.R., and the general esteem with which he was held, that the split was contained, and did not spread further. Tambo was, as so many exiles have confirmed, the 'glue' that held the movement together during the most difficult and frustrating years in exile.

The tragedy of June 16 1976 at Soweto, with the shooting of the schoolchildren and its aftermath, impacted strongly on the ANC. Many hundreds of schoolchildren fled South Africa and made their way to the liberation movements in exile, particularly to the ANC in Dar es Salaam – they had heard of MK, and wanted to fight the apartheid system.

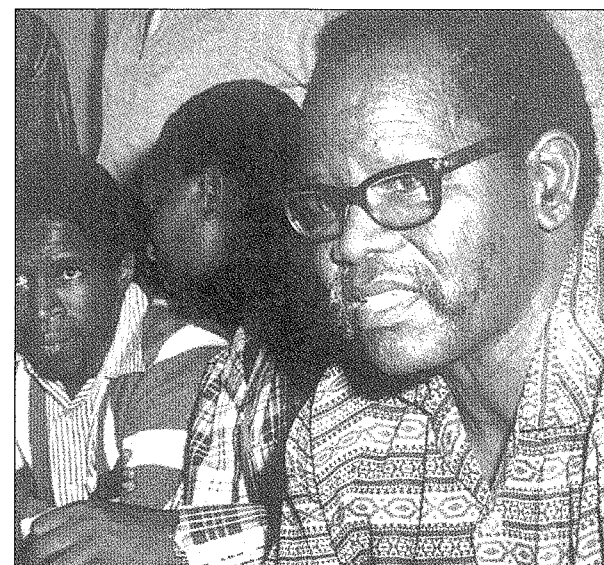
O.R. immediately began to raise funds from the international community to give these children shelter and education. As a successful teacher himself, O.R. was most concerned that these young exiles should first complete their schooling before joining the military

struggle. The Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College (SOMAFCO) was founded. SOMAFCO was named in honour of Solomon Kalushi Mahlangu, part of the 1976 MK 'intake' who returned to South Africa, was apprehended in a shootout, and executed in Pretoria in 1977. With the help of comrades, O.R. also initiated the Luthuli Foundation, which allocated bursaries to serious students, placing them in friendly countries around the world.

The massacre by the apartheid regime's South African Defence Force (SADF) in Maseru, 1982, resulted in the deaths of 42 men, women and children, including 12 Basotho civilians. The bombing was part of a general destabilisation campaign on neighbouring countries which lent support to the ANC. Particularly threatening to South Africa was the sustenance the ANC received from socialist countries, including Cuba. The SADF embarked on a series of invasions into Angola, with the encouragement of the USA. It aimed both to drive out Cuban troops who had responded to the elected Angolan government's call for assistance, as well as to smash the MK camps. A series of bombing attacks and pitched battles occurred. At Cuito Cuanavale, MK helped to defeat the SADF. This was an enormous psychological victory for the whole of Southern Africa. But from then onwards, the struggle began to escalate.

In response to the penetration of selected cadres into South Africa, the SADF unleashed a series of raids on neighbouring countries. These included the bombing of civilian as well as MK targets in Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Lesotho. Despite the very real threat to his life, O.R. unexpectedly appeared in Maseru – so dangerously close to South Africa's borders – to attend the funeral, and to grieve along with the families and comrades of those who were massacred.

***O.R. with SOFAMCO students***



***Despite putting himself at risk, O.R. attended the funeral of comrades and Basotho civilians who were killed by the SADF in Maseru***

The almost unbearable strain began to affect the movement. The apartheid government sent an ultimatum to the neighbouring countries – expel the ANC, or more raids would follow. The ANC was obliged to withdraw from some countries. It was becoming clear that the liberation movement had been infiltrated by informers and askaris. Suspects were questioned, and a number found guilty. In some camps, frustration and uncertainty introduced a climate of suspicion, even paranoia. Prisoners took the brunt of the tension. Eventually, the maltreatment of these prisoners came to the attention of O.R. He appointed a committee of investigation, and eventually the abuses were curtailed. The committee was also instructed to formulate a Code of Conduct for both MK and the ANC. A Bill of Rights followed, so that this appalling relapse into inhumanity might never occur again.

O.R. was foremost amongst those who advocated rights for women in the movement. Today's constitution is an acknowledgement of O.R.'s highlighting gender sensitivity in the ANC. One of his most well known speeches is remembered for its gentle humour as well as for the challenge it presented to both men and women in the ANC:

*“Women in the ANC should stop behaving as if there was no place for them above the level of certain categories of involvement. They have a duty to liberate us men from antique concepts and attitudes about the place and role of women in society and the development and direction of our revolutionary struggle.”* – O.R. Tambo's speech to the Women's Section of the ANC, Luanda, Angola, 1981.

O.R. was always supremely aware of the value of spelling out clearly the policy of the movement, both to conscientise its members as well as to provide clear guidelines to its representatives in difficult situations. The ANC formally subscribed to the Geneva protocols. It also again revised and updated its constitution. In the preparations for the changes, O.R. made extensive contributions to the guidelines for the commission on the constitution. In the ANC's Bill of Rights, O.R. was also instrumental in foregrounding children's rights, and firmly declared a principled tolerance of sexual orientation.

Looking ahead, O.R. made a firm policy statement on the necessity for multi-party, democracy, after liberation, in which there would be freedom of speech, of assembly, of association, language and religion. This was an alternative to the one-party state model adopted by many independent African countries.

As mass resistance to so-called apartheid 'reforms' inside South Africa escalated in the 1980s, O.R. broadcast regularly on Radio Freedom. He called for a People's War against apartheid. The democratic labour movement, civic organisations, the National Education Crisis Committee, women's and youth groups and other anti-apartheid organisations came together to form the United Democratic Front. O.R. urged them to make the

apartheid system ungovernable. State violence rapidly increased in order to suppress popular resistance to apartheid 'reforms' such as the tricameral parliament which consisted of whites, coloureds and Indians only, and the new dummy local councils in the townships. Assassinations, tortures, deaths in detention, troops in the townships, and weekly funerals were met with mounting anger.

At the ANC conference held in Kabwe in 1985, a sober assessment of the 'structural violence of apartheid' led to a decision to step up the armed struggle. O.R. continued to maintain the moral high ground, emphasising that civilian loss of life was still to be avoided. But henceforth military personnel and military officials would no longer be excluded in sabotage attempts. Nevertheless, O.R. did not attempt to deny, or 'sanitise' mistakes. A car bomb aimed at a military target but which killed four civilians was 'inexcusably careless'. He pointed out though, that the violence of apartheid was the cause of these incursions in the first place. At the Children's Conference held in Harare in 1987, to gather evidence on the widespread imprisonment of children, O.R. denounced the grisly method of necklacing. On behalf of the ANC leadership, he called on guerrillas to set an example by avoiding civilian casualties.

The economic weapon continued to be a major campaign. O.R.'s years of patient diplomacy and warm relations with anti-apartheid movements in western Europe and north America began to pay off. Sanctions and divestment campaigns amongst students, the churches, the African-American community, the trade unions and other progressive organisations in civil society were widely publicised, putting pressure on conservative governments to act against apartheid. Fund-raising campaigns and concerts reached a wide range of the population. Almost reluctantly, the Reagan and the Thatcher governments in the USA and the UK began to seek audience with the ANC leadership. They could no longer ignore the powerful popular support that the ANC enjoyed in South Africa, or indeed the widespread symbol that the movement had become, against the scourge of racism which existed throughout the world.

Similarly at home, more and more groups of people – Afrikaner intellectuals, various professionals, white trade unionists, sporting representatives and delegations from a variety of organisations - began to make the pilgrimage to the ANC's headquarters in Lusaka.

During the turbulent eighties, the war on many fronts also included the issue raised by O.R. early in 1985 - that of talks with the enemy. He had outlined the necessary conditions to enable negotiations to take place; firstly, he said, a clear mandate would be necessary from the ANC inside the country; secondly, the agenda would need to begin with talks on the dismantling of the apartheid system itself. At about this time, Mandela was turning over in his mind the prospect of talks.

Once the possibility of negotiations became more likely, it fell on the ANC in exile to present the ANC's strategy for negotiations to its members and to the world. Under Tambo's guidance, a team prepared the Harare Declaration. The schedule was gruelling. As always, O.R. worked late into the night finalising the document, which required careful explanation. In the previous few years, his health had been visibly taxing him. In 1982 he had suffered a mild stroke, and his medical advisers pleaded with him to ease up on his work. Instead, he pledged to the movement that he would continue to work ceaselessly for freedom until the day he died. On 9 August, 1989, as the delegation returned from its intensive presentations of the Harare Declaration, O.R. collapsed. He was rushed by plane, arranged by President Kenneth Kaunda, from Lusaka to London. He had suffered a severe stroke.

While O.R. lay in hospital, events occurred in quick succession. Within a few months, the ANC was unbanned and Mandela and other leading political prisoners released. As soon as he could, Mandela journeyed to Sweden, where O.R. was recuperating, to meet his old friend, after nearly thirty years' separation.

In December 1990, Tambo returned home. At the first Congress inside South Africa since the banning of the ANC, he reported on the mission which he had been mandated to undertake. He was able to deliver the ANC, united and successful. Many years had passed, entailing much pain, sacrifice and the loss of many lives, but the movement's major principles remained intact. At the congress, Mandela was elected President of the ANC, with Oliver Tambo as National Chairperson.

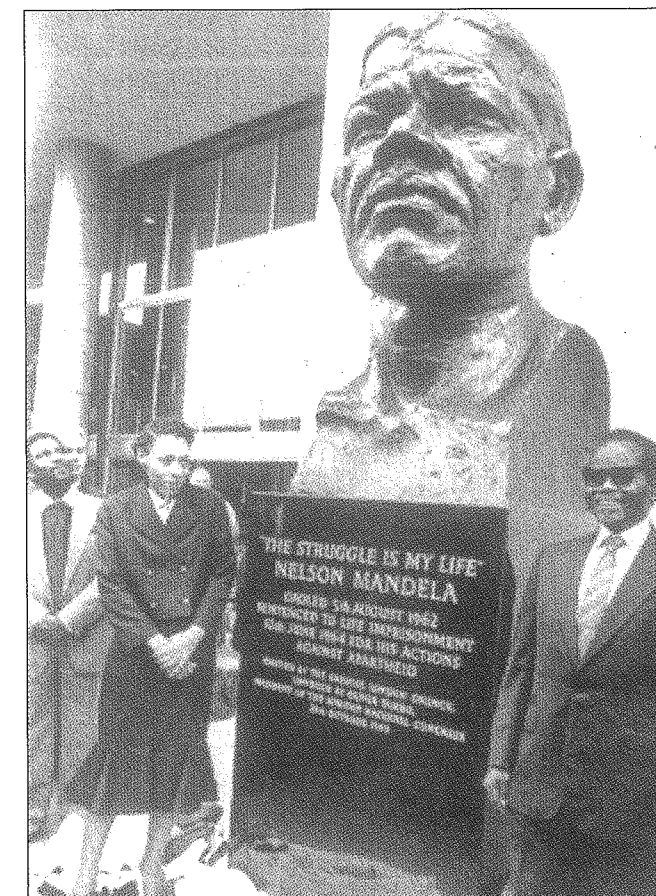
In his remaining three years back home, O.R. delighted in spending time at his sisters' homestead in Kantolo, gazing at the mountains. Years earlier, in exile, he had longed to see that faraway, ever-present landscape of his childhood again. The mountain range, he said, had a special significance for him.

In the early hours of 23 April 1993, Oliver Tambo suffered a massive, fatal stroke. His death came a mere two weeks after the murder of one of his most talented apprentices, Chris Hani. The shock of the assassination, as well as the very real threat of national mayhem narrowly averted, may well have hastened his own demise.

Oliver Tambo was accorded a state funeral. Scores of friends and heads of state from the international community - east, west and non-aligned - journeyed to bid him farewell. Oliver Tambo, after many years of toil and conscientious care, had led his people, like Moses, to the top of the mountain range. He did not live to see

See Also:

- **A Short Biography** by Luli Callinicos
- **Selected Articles, Papers, Speeches, Statements and Other Documents, 1960-1993.** Compilation edited by E S Reddy



An icon of our revolution... **Tambo unveils a statue of Nelson Mandela, erected by the Greater London Council in 1985**

the other side.

Precisely a year after his death, the South African nation went to the polls in the first ever democratic election. The African National Congress won an overwhelming victory. The people of South Africa had cast their vote of confidence in the ANC, and in the legacy that its leaders had imprinted on its vision. This was the moment for which Oliver Tambo willingly gave his life.

As we approach the celebrations of our first decade of freedom, and preparing for the next phase, it is important to reflect on our heritage and pay tribute to Oliver Tambo, revolutionary thinker, humanist and mentor.

*'It is our responsibility to break down barriers of division and create a country where there will be neither whites nor blacks, just South Africans, free and united in diversity.'*

**Oliver Tambo, 1990**

# We are soldiers of Sisulu

by President Thabo Mbeki  
(From *ANC Today*, No. 19, 16 May 2003)

**W**E SAID FAREWELLS TO A GIANT of our struggle, Xhamela, Walter Sisulu on 17 April 2003. He left to his final resting place from the Orlando Stadium, in Soweto, where he lived for many decades, among the masses of black working people who supply labour to the businesses of the greater Johannesburg area.

With the departure of Walter Sisulu, we have lost one of the major architects of the ANC, as we know it today. He played a central role among the group of leaders and activists who have occupied the front ranks of our movement for 60 years.

Together, they established the ANC Youth League. They changed the forms of struggle used by the ANC from petitioning the powers that be, by mobilising the people to engage in mass action for their liberation. They broadened the movement for national liberation, by ensuring that it includes all sections of our population, African, White, Coloured and Indian, giving birth to the Congress Movement.

They established a strategic alliance between the ANC, the SACP and the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), and later, COSATU, led by the ANC as the political leader of the national democratic movement.

They mobilised our people to produce an enduring vision for a liberated South Africa, as contained in the Freedom Charter.

When the circumstances changed, they worked to ensure that the ANC continued to live and to lead, by rebuilding it as an underground movement and establishing an external mission led by one among them, the late Oliver Tambo, supported by others who belonged to the same generation, including Moses Kotane, J.B. Marks and Yusuf Dadoo.

Refusing to submit to tyranny, they decided to include armed struggle among our forms of struggle, leading to the formation of the people's army, Umkhonto we Sizwe. They led the process that established one of the biggest internationalist solidarity movements in history, the world anti-apartheid movement, involving millions of people throughout the world as supporters of our struggle and friends of our people.

At the same time, Walter Sisulu and his comrades

also taught our movement that it also had a responsibility to act in solidarity with others elsewhere in Africa and the rest of the world, who, like us, were involved in struggle for freedom, peace and social progress. This entrenched the internationalist character of our movement, which was expressed at the very formation of the ANC, when it secured the patronage of the traditional leaders of our people, throughout Southern Africa, and later inspiring the establishment of sister ANCs in a number of countries of our region.

When the time came, Walter Sisulu and his peers, especially Oliver Tambo and Nelson Mandela, led our movement to prepare for the negotiated resolution of the conflict in our country and to take us through the process of negotiations successfully. They led us through the first democratic elections in our country and the first years of the establishment of our democratic system of government.

Under their leadership, South Africa transformed itself from the status of an international pariah, to an important contributor to the struggle for Africa's renaissance, and an integral part of the world forces working to build a world order of democracy, peace, equality among the nations, and prosperity for all.

By any standard, these contributions constitute a critical part both of our rich history and the kind of South Africa we are able to build today. We are therefore very right to salute Walter Sisulu in the manner that we have done in the period since May 5, when he passed away.

We are correct to feel a great sense of loss at the departure of so great a leader of our movement and people as Walter Sisulu. We have lost a valuable guide, with a great wealth of experience, on whom we could call for advice as we grappled with the serious challenges of transformation that we face everyday.

When Walter Sisulu took up fulltime work in the ANC as its Secretary General, our organisation did not have sufficient resources both to pay its chief executive officer and to implement the decisions taken by its National Conferences and National Executive Committee. Knowing very well that more often than not, he would not be paid, Walter Sisulu did not hesitate to carry out the instruction of National Conference to work

fulltime for the organisation.

This reflected the ready willingness of Walter Sisulu and others of his comrades to make the necessary sacrifices to secure the liberation of our people, as they had shown during the Defiance Campaign of 1952. This echoed the similar willingness of the masses of the people to engage in action to liberate themselves, being ready to pay whatever the necessary price might be, as was demonstrated during the 1946 mine workers strike and the mass struggles of 1950 in Alexandra Township.

Walter Sisulu's commitment to our movement and our struggle was further to be tested during the 30-year period of extreme repression from 1960 to 1990. This period gradually built up during the 1950s with the passage of the Suppression of Communism Act and the banning of the Communist Party, through the violent suppression of mass action, and the marathon Treason Trial of 1956-61. Walter Sisulu was among those targeted by the apartheid regime as it prepared to hit at our movement harder, using ever more brutal means. At no point did he waver or seek to retreat.

Then began the period of extreme repression proper, with the 1960 massacres at Sharpeville and Cape Town, and the banning of the ANC and the PAC. For Walter Sisulu and his comrades, this was to culminate in the Rivonia arrests and trial, and their life imprisonment by the apartheid courts. Thus Walter Sisulu was to spend 25 years of his life in the apartheid jails.

Once more, during the Rivonia Trial, he, together with the others, demonstrated his willingness even to pay the supreme sacrifice to secure the freedom of his people by using the witness box as a platform to sustain the political offensive against the oppressors' regime. When the time came, together with the others, he decided that it would be politically incorrect to appeal against the death sentence, in the event that such a sentence was handed down.

As they had argued with regard to the struggle in general, these leaders of our movement said that they would rather rely on the struggles of the masses of our people to save them from the gallows, rather than depend on the humiliating mercy of their oppressors. If the masses he loved could not save his life, Walter Sisulu was ready to go to the gallows defiantly singing of the freedom he knew would come, even if he had been murdered by the apartheid regime.

But even as he fought against the increasingly brutal system of apartheid, Walter Sisulu never abandoned the vision and conviction that had informed the response of our people to the European settlers from the very first days of their arrival in the Cape. Our people were ready to share their country with the new arrivals, extending to them the traditional welcome with which new settlers were received.

However, these settlers were intent on colonisation, the seizure of the land of the indigenous population, and their subjugation and super-exploitation as a colonised people. But still, throughout the centuries

during which our people fought for their liberation, at no time were they driven by an anti-white sentiment, being inspired by the desire for a just and peaceful coexistence between themselves and the new arrivals from Europe.

And so it was that Walter Sisulu and others in his cadre of leaders, resisted for a long time the demand to take up arms against the apartheid regime. They did this because even as this regime was closing off all avenues to the peaceful resolution of the conflict in our country, they were determined that change should be brought about with the minimum loss of life among both black and white.

Indeed, when it became absolutely necessary to resort to armed struggle, our leaders directed that it should be carried out in a manner that minimised loss of life. This position was maintained throughout the period of armed struggle.

Some of our critics, who played no part in the struggle to liberate our people, content to enjoy the privileges of the apartheid system, often comment in a disparaging manner about the effectiveness of our armed struggle.

Perhaps what they will never understand is the humanism that drove Walter Sisulu and our leaders, which imposed an obligation on Umkhonto we Sizwe to conduct its operations under the most restrictive political commands. Contrary to what they suggest about an effective armed struggle, we are proud that Umkhonto we Sizwe did not conduct itself in a manner that would have resulted both in many operations and the death of many non-combatants, both black and white.

But it is precisely this that we, the fighters for the victory of the national democratic revolution must understand, that Walter Sisulu gave a particular and distinct character to our movement. He taught us that because we were opponents of white racist tyranny, we must ourselves be principled adherents of the vision of a non-racial South Africa, and the practices this entailed, even within our movement.

Because we were enemies of a neo-fascist regime, we must ourselves remain very firm in our adherence to democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

He taught us that specifically because we were fighting a regime that based its relations, especially with the rest of the African continent, on the use and the threat of the use of force in all its forms, to achieve domination, we had to remain loyal to the internationalist traditions of our movement, which respected the independence of peoples, and equality, friendship and mutually beneficial cooperation among the nations.

We had to fight and defeat all efforts that sought to encourage us to copy our enemy in its ideology and methods. Whereas it pursued anti-human policies, we, for our part, and at all times, had to affirm and re-affirm the humanist purposes of the ANC and the rest of the broad movement for national liberation. This is exactly why at the Rivonia Trial, Nelson Mandela said he was

as opposed to black domination, as he was opposed to white domination.

As we bid farewell to this great giant of our struggle, Walter Sisulu, all our leaders, cadres and members have a duty both to study the life and invaluable contribution of Walter Sisulu and others of his comrades. All of us have a duty to try as best we can to emulate Walter Sisulu in doing all the things that are necessary further to advance the national democratic revolution. This includes a deep understanding of the need to make the necessary sacrifices to give effect to our express commitment to serve the people of South Africa, as Walter Sisulu did, without seeking any rewards of any kind.

One of our old freedom songs says: *"We are the soldiers of Luthuli. Wherever we may be, we pledge to bear witness to the nobility of our cause."*

At the passing of Walter Sisulu, and as our tribute to him, we must proclaim by word and deed: *"We are the soldiers of Sisulu. Wherever we may be, we pledge to bear witness to the nobility of our cause."*

# An enduring faith in victory

by Kgalema Motlanthe, ANC Secretary General

**D**URING HIS YEARS ON ROBBER ISLAND, Walter Sisulu often remarked that when South Africa achieved its freedom, monuments should be built for Moses Kotane and J.B. Marks.

To understand why he should single out these two leaders for remembrance is to acknowledge the profound impact they had on his political development, and, by extension, the role they played in forging the ANC as a powerful, progressive national liberation movement.

Sisulu has been described, quite correctly, as one of the key architects of our non-racial, non-sexist democracy. Yet if our nation today bears the hallmark of Sisulu's vision and organisational acumen, its firm foundations were laid, to a large degree, in the lives and work of J.B. Marks and Moses Kotane – and the influence they had on the thinking of the young Walter Sisulu.

In 1944, Walter Sisulu was among a number of other young African intellectuals – including Anton Lembede, Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo and A.P. Mda – who founded the ANC Youth League (ANCYL).

Though they had the support of ANC President Dr A.B. Xuma in forming the league, they sought a more radical and mass-based ANC, and were impatient with the older leadership of the organisation.

Militant African Nationalism was the declared creed of the ANCYL. Their 1944 manifesto said: *"We believe that the national liberation of Africans will be achieved by Africans themselves. We reject foreign leadership of Africa."* They rejected communism, which was regarded as a foreign ideology.

Walter Sisulu's own thinking at this stage largely reflected these perspectives. During his term as the league's first treasurer he was well known among his comrades as most hostile to any form of contact or cooperation with whites.

This was in contrast to the approach of Xuma, who developed tactical alliances with the likes of the Indian Congress, resulting in the 'Doctors Pact' of 1947. He was also hesitant for the ANC to adopt the programme of action proposed by the ANCYL, prompting the league's leaders to plan the replacement of Xuma with Dr J.S. Moroka and to vigorously contest for the nation-

al leadership of the ANC at the 1949 national conference.

But as they sought to wrest control of the ANC from Xuma and his "tired, unmilitant, privileged elite", events were greatly influenced by two older and more measured men, whose ideological convictions and political approach was wholly different.

J.B. Marks and Moses Kotane were both leaders of the ANC and the Communist Party. Kotane was the Communist Party's General Secretary and Marks would later become its Chairperson. Both hailed from the North West, both were the products of working class families and both had found their political inspiration primarily through the traditions of the Russian Revolution of 1917.

The Youth League leaders did indeed make significant gains in the 1949 conference, with a number elected to the ANC National Executive Committee, and Sisulu being elected Secretary General. The Youth League's programme of action – with its emphasis on mass organisation and direct action – was adopted in large measure as the programme of the ANC.

Yet as the ANCYL took charge of the organisation, the political orientation of its leaders underwent a significant shift – broadening its militant Africanism to embrace non-racialism; and revising its anti-communist sentiments in favour of cooperation with the Communist Party.

And at the centre of this transformation was Walter Sisulu.

Working with experienced and politically-developed leaders like Kotane and Marks, Sisulu was challenged to reconsider his outlook on the world. In the process, his tools of understanding and analysis become sharpened and refined. He was able to acknowledge that class oppression was as much a feature of South African society as racial oppression – and indeed that the two were closely linked.

The political approach which Sisulu took as Secretary General drew much on the thinking and work of Kotane and Marks, who acted consistently and resolutely to promote unity among all the forces of change. Like them, Sisulu sought to build a fighting ANC espousing a broad nationalism which accepted close

cooperation with Indians, Coloureds and democratic whites.

Walter Sisulu was largely responsible for persuading his fellow youth leaguers to acknowledge the revolutionary logic which infused the thinking of people like Kotane and Marks. During this critical period in the shaping of the character of the ANC, his clarity and calm reasoning helped bring about a change in the approach of the league's leaders.

As a result, the ANC which embarked on the groundbreaking campaigns of the 1950s was a united and cohesive movement, capable of uniting people across different classes, races and ideologies behind a common vision of national liberation.

Walter Sisulu has been hailed as a great teacher and mentor. He was able to do this because he was also a great learner. His early political experiences taught him that there was a lot to be learned from listening to other people and from making mistakes.

Throughout his life he consistently maintained that the greatest attribute of a revolutionary is to be human, with the ability to learn from mistakes and be proven wrong.

From Kotane and Marks, Sisulu learned that freedom has to be fought for. It requires organisation and the mobilisation of all forces for change; commitment and energy; and an enduring faith in victory.

Sisulu infused the movement with this understanding. Throughout his years as Secretary General; through house arrest and detentions; and even as the ANC was forced underground, Walter Sisulu was the pivotal figure in alliance, providing leadership and direction as the liberation movement faced some of its most trying tests.

At a crucial moment in the history of South Africa, Walter Sisulu stepped forward to shape the development of the struggle for freedom.

In honouring his memory and celebrating his legacy, we would be amiss if we did not remember the contributions of Moses Kotane and J.B. Marks. As we lay Walter Sisulu to rest, let us build living monuments to these giants of freedom by working together to build the better nation to which they dedicated their lives.

# Integrating youth

## into the labour market

### SUBMISSION OF THE YOUTH SECTOR TO THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT

#### Introduction

It is a responsibility of any government in any revolutionary transformation to mobilise and empower its youth for development purposes, which includes skilling, employment and general economic integration. In the context of South Africa, growth and development endeavours should seek to transform the economy from the white minority to a broad populus participation in terms of its ownership, control and management.

Any strategy on sustained growth and development should centrally be characterised by growth in employment. Youth of this country should begin to benefit from the successful fiscal prudence and macroeconomic stability through a deliberate and comprehensive undertaking by the government to depart from a contractionist to a more controlled expansionist economic policy underscoring increased capital and social investments.

Thus, youth development would denote an ongoing process in which all young people are engaged, invested and empowered. It is a multidimensional and embracing approach: (a) a philosophical orientation to social development and community; (b) a programmatic frame work for youth services and self-employment; (c) and building of skills and competencies that allow youth to function in their daily lives as productive citizens.

The process of economic regeneration that puts issues of youth development on the national agenda cannot be left to government alone. Business with its vast financial and material resources should play a more prominent role in this regard. A social compact in both policy and practice should be applicable in tackling empowering young people.

Therefore, our approach to the GDS argues that three fundamental programmatic plans should be

**70% of unemployed people are youth; and the bulk of unemployed young men and women are between the ages of 15-24 years old.**

adopted and implemented to promote sustainable integration of youth into the mainstream economy. These areas are:

- (a) Direct Labour Market Absorption;
- (b) Youth Entrepreneurship; and
- (c) Human Resources Development.

Sequentially, this document is divided into three sections: Section 1 addresses issues pertaining to measures for directly absorbing youth into the labour market. Section 2 looks at strategies that should be employed to promote self-employment and how to accelerate the existing programmes.

The last section analyses the critical need for skills development and capacity building.

#### Section 1: Direct labour market absorption

##### PROBLEM STATEMENT

It is acknowledged that youth unemployment represents the aggregate unemployment in the country. However, a critical analysis and statistical empirical evidence demonstrate that about 70 per cent of the unemployed economically active population are young people (ages 14 to 35). Within the category of young people, African youth, rural youth and young women bear the brunt of grinding youth unemployment and under-employment. In addition, the bulk of the unemployed youth are between the ages of 15 – 24 years of age.

##### PROGRAMMATIC STRATEGIES

The existing initiatives should be retained and/or reinvigorated, as well new measures should be introduced to accelerate youth integration into the labour market. It is our view that increased resources should be dedicated to youth to ensure sustained youth development.

### National Youth Service Programme (NYSP)

The recent adoption of the NYSP by government is a major milestone towards youth development. It is most critical to understand that the NYSP is not seen as an alternative to learnerships but an overarching programme that can include learnerships. The key character and motivation is community-based programmes which seeks to contribute towards community development whilst empowering youth with hands-on skills. This is in addition to public sector and private sector driven NYSP.

The NYSP should be linked with other initiatives which promote national development such as expanded public works programme, infrastructure development and other relief funds, and accordingly be utilised as one of the key delivery mechanism on youth development. Accordingly,

- The NYSP takes prominence and arch over most youth development programmes.
- Sufficient resources should be allocated. The NYSP does not necessarily demand excessive new funds. Instead, existing resources and funds should be reconfigured to fund the Programme.
- Both government and business, (particularly sectors proposed in the NYSP framework document) should support the Programme, individually and collectively come up with their own support and implementation plans (Integrated Implementation Plan which should also cover exit strategies for youth participating in the programme).
- Particular focus should be placed on job creation, skills formation and economic development.
- The employment of the programme should not be misconstrued or misused to foster a two-tier labour market system in South Africa.
- The SA National Defence Force and other departments should provide infrastructure in some of its unutilised buildings which could be used as centres for skills training and other related development.
- The Programme should be linked to other initiatives such as Expanded Public Works Programmes, poverty relief programmes, learnerships and internships.

### Youth Solidarity Fund

The process of economic development and job creation demands an active contribution from all stakeholders. Thus, without undermining the foregoing, the youth would like to commit to the creation of a Youth Solidarity Fund by pledging by *themselves* financially into this Fund – “Do not ask only what your country can do for you, but what can you do for your country”, JF Kennedy. A challenge is put to both business and government in this regard.

Accordingly,

- The Fund will be formed out of a **1 day gross remuneration** of all working youth, and youth who

may be unemployed but have access to financial or monetary opportunities to make such a contribution.

- The Fund which its management should be located in the existing youth machinery.
- All businesses and parastatals should contribute 2% of their profits to youth employment initiatives as a Youth Solidarity Levy as a gesture of goodwill and recognition of youth's enormous contribution to the struggle and patience with the transformation, co-architectures of reconstruction and development process in South Africa.
- Unemployed youth would contribute through skills to assist in national economic development, for example, community development projects.

## Section 2: Youth entrepreneurship

### PROBLEM STATEMENT

The biggest challenges facing small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs), and in particular youth entrepreneurship is access to finance, access to business development support, access to procurement opportunities and participation in empowerment processes as well as enabling environment for youth co-operatives.

### PROGRAMMATIC STRATEGIES

In addition to the direct absorption of youth into the labour market and the skilling strategy that is contained in the next section of this document it is pivotal that concrete action programmes should be adopted to promoting self employment of young people.

### Access to finance

Clearly the market allocation of finance is both inadequate and inappropriate, suggesting a stronger role for the state in regulating, harnessing and channelling finance and investment in the economy. Accordingly,

- The role that is played by development funding institutions should be re-evaluated against the performance of SMMEs in the country. Benchmarks should be introduced to assess their impact on entrepreneurship, and in particularly youth entrepreneurship.
- Legislation should be promulgated to ensure those commercial banks avail funding to SMME development. This criterion could be part of the licensing of banks which would require amendments to the Bank Act or be part of the proposed Community Reinvestment legislation.
- Banks should visibly and practically demonstrate their departure and practically do away with their practice of “redlining”.
- A flexible security/collateral/credit policy should be applied to loans by youth entrepreneurs.
- Statutory agencies should be well co-ordinated and streamlined to promote co-operation and effective

functioning.

- **Community Reinvestment:** Government should introduce and promulgate a “Community Reinvestment” legislation to encourage private banking, investment financial sector to support economic development which among other projects will be the youth entrepreneurship, for example community development initiatives such as housing and infrastructure development. This measure will have a multiple effect – employment creation, skills development and self-employment.
- **Rural Livelihood mechanisms:** The land reform process should also be pivotal in integrating youth into the mainstream economy, in terms of access to land and access to the markets. It is submitted that
  - The Land Bank should ensure that youth have sustainable access to land and easy access to the markets. Benchmarks in this regard should be introduced.
  - The Land Bank and other financial development institutions should proactively support the acquiring of technical and management skills by youth.

### Promotion of youth co-operative and enterprises

It is submitted that the state promulgates a legislative framework to promote co-operatives in many areas of the economy. In addition, resources should be allocated for appropriate training and support. Co-operatives, especially in the agricultural and tourism industry, can be used to address unemployment among rural youth, and ICT in urban areas. Agriculture and tourism for example, have a huge potential for employment growth in the South Africa. This has the potential to generate

food security for the nation, while generating wealth for the economically depressed rural communities. Accordingly, each Municipality across the country should at least have one youth co-operative. Legislation on co-operatives should be promulgated before the end of 2003.

### Black Economic Empowerment

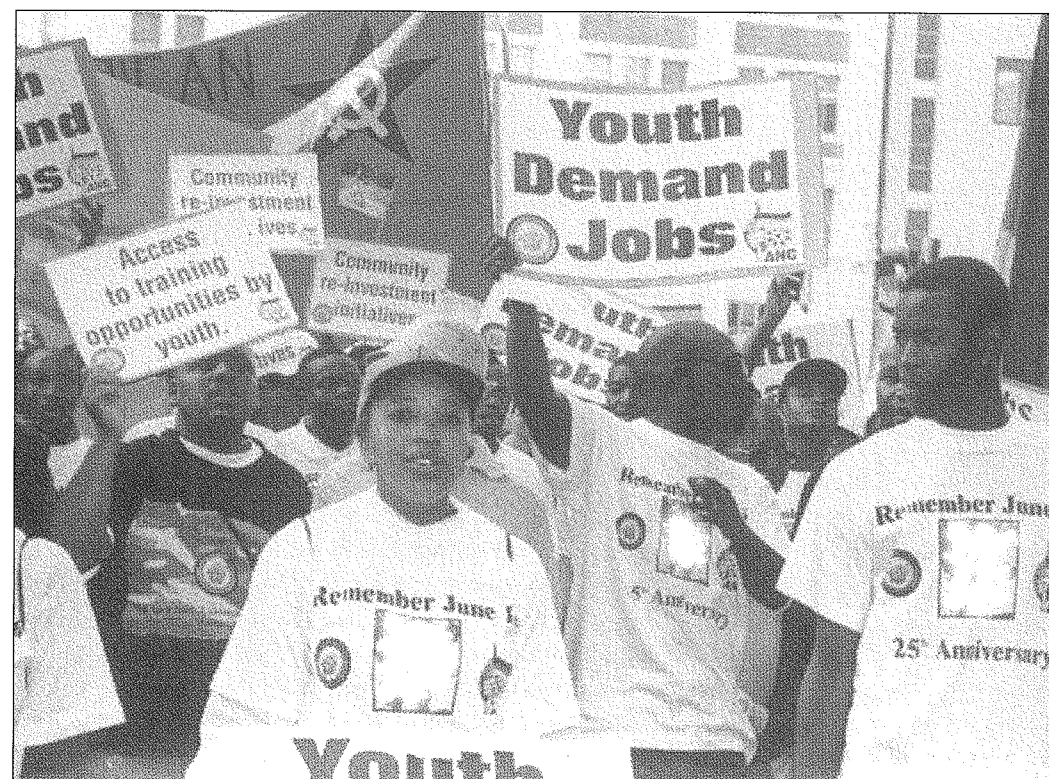
While we fully support the targeted empowerment through the global and sectoral charter approach to readdress the existing economic inequities as well as the allocation of R10 billion for Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) processes, these initiatives should fall short of clear benefit and empowerment of youth.

It is submitted that

- Both youth and government should agree on how the BEE process would benefit the youth including setting of targets or percentages in this regard.
- Sectoral charters as well as the global charter should also include a particular percentage of youth ownership.
- Youth should be represented in the structures and office(s) dealing with this issue, including the Advisory Council on Black Economic Empowerment.
- Clear policy guidelines should be agreed upon on the R10 billion allocated for Black Economic Empowerment, in terms of how its will be spent, and what percentage or what resources will be directed to youth empowerment.

### Procurement programme

The current policy on government procurement falls short of clear mechanisms to promote youth empower-



Youth march against unemployment...  
**It is important that the business community join government in addressing challenges facing the youth of this country**

ment. One way to promote direct youth absorption into the labour market is through the government's procurement policy. When government awards its tenders, it takes into account various criteria, such as the racial and gender composition of the companies tendering. In addition, the private sector companies which includes parastatals should accordingly review their procurement policies to include youth access to such opportunities.

### Section 3: Human resource development

#### PROBLEM STATEMENT

Noting serious backlogs in the provision of schooling infrastructure, thus limiting access to schooling, the lack of synergy between the current curriculum and economic imperatives, particularly the labour market, the lack of effective implementation of the Integrated Human Resource Strategy, it becomes critical that skills development occupies the centre stage of the country's growth and development strategies.

#### PROGRAMMATIC STRATEGIES

##### *Access to schooling*

The infrastructure backlog has made accessing education even more difficult for youth in the outlying areas where distance is a source of discouragement to continue in the face of the poverty they and their parents live in. This situation has served as a new breed and a source of cheap labour that is further exacerbated by lack of incentives for staff in rural areas and the closure of farm schools due to problems of subsidies from the government and sheer racism by some farmers to close down their schools.

It is submitted that:

- The education system, and particularly the Department of Education should implement as a matter of urgency policy intervention to bring farm schools under the guardianship of the Department and circumvent the placing of young people's future to the whims of farmers who continue to draw cheap labour from them.
- The disparities of resources between rural and urban should be narrowed with a view of being eliminated.

##### *Learnerships*

Learnerships are an important mechanism for youth skills development purposes. The private sector has been very slow in responding to learnerships.

- Business accepting youth by giving them skills-training during the service period and providing employment opportunities for them upon the completion of their service. Business should supplement government contribution to the Umsobomvu Youth Fund for its sustainability.

- Organised business should play an active role in encouraging their members to take at least one learnership – "One Company, One Learnership".
- Government should amend the regulation to cater for learnership and NYSP.

##### *Funding*

The funding of education has become a thorny issue as a mass of young people get excluded on the basis of affordability and the allocation ratios as well as mean tests to get state subsidies have exacerbated problems around accessibility to education broadly.

Thus, it is submitted that

- An enquiry should be instituted on the National Student Financial Aid Scheme with a view to increase capacity of young people who rely on this mechanism for their access to Higher Education.
- The bursary scheme of the National Skills Fund should be integrated into school programme if young people with potential have to access it. For a comprehensive human development investment to take place, there is a need to focus on scarce skills as well as on other critical areas of development consistent with industrial strategy.
- The exchange programme should be expanded beyond Cuba and other few countries' bilateral agreements but the trends have indicated a strong bias towards Masters, and Doctoral programme and leaving out a large contingent of undergraduates who cannot proceed beyond first and second year due to lack of funding.
- The National Skills Fund from NSFAS and the rest of other Fellowships including private sector funding for bursaries need to be carefully co-ordinated to make or maximise impact in Human Resources Development Strategy.
- The private sector and local as well as international foundation have to set up a co-ordinating mechanisms at their level but complement and exchange information on priority careers for their period.

##### *Skills development and enterprise education*

The Human Resources Development Strategy cannot alone be a sufficient condition to job creation in the labour market. It has to be married to enterprise development for self-employment and absorb other work seekers into the labour market. It is submitted that

- The skills development levy should be increased from 1% to 5% by the year 2004 and a certain percentage be ring-fenced within the National Skills Fund for tackling youth unemployment and youth development in general.
- The Department of Education should introduce a curriculum at middle school to promote and teach basic guides to entrepreneurship readiness. In the short-term, entrepreneurship should be an extra-curriculum activity with a long-term plan of integrating

it into the school curriculum. Learners will explore what entrepreneurs do, their characteristics and skills, and how entrepreneurs contribute to society.

- Mentorship programmes for youth entrepreneurs should transcend beyond the tourism industry as targeted by Business Trust but expand in Cultural, service, Agro-processing, Manufacturing, Information and Communications technologies consistent with key national priorities identified in the state of the nation address by the President of the Republic of South Africa.
- Loans should be advanced at special rates to youth entrepreneurs and increased access to micro finance will increase knowledge for their development into mainstream of economic activity.
- Public Fund institutions and the private sector should complement Umsobomvu Youth Fund by dedicating 5% to 10% of its allocations or revenue to the development of youth entrepreneurs.
- Business must support and contribute to the development of youth co-operatives. This should be done through committing both financial support, skills development and training programmes. Provide after-care support to ensure sustainability of these schemes.
- Adoption of schools by big business and parastatals, which are in dire straits of resources, especially farm schools and township schools to improve their conditions in terms of the infrastructure.
- Engage on a joint campaign in partnership with government to promote teaching in Maths, Science, Technology, Management and Accounting to increase areas with potential to employ more people especially among young women.
- Develop a joint national initiative and sustainable programme on Information and Communications Technologies to support and increase youth access to technological advances and bridge the technological divide in partnership with Government, Telkom, Vodacom, MTN, Cell C, Oracle, Hewlett Packard etc.

# Resolution on promoting youth employment



**ADOPTED BY THE UNITED NATIONS  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS 57TH SESSION**

*"Youth make up more than 40 per cent of the world's total unemployed. There are an estimated 66 million unemployed young people in the world today – an increase of nearly 10 million since 1965. Under-employment is also another growing concern. The majority of new jobs are low-paid and insecure. Increasingly, young people are turning to the informal sector for their livelihood, with little or no job protection, benefits, or prospects for the future."*

**Kofi Annan**, UN Secretary-General, July 2001

**T**HE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY adopted, on 21 December 2002, a resolution introduced by Senegal and co-sponsored by 106 Member States on promoting youth employment. The resolution encourages Member States to prepare national reviews and action plans on youth employment and to involve youth organizations and young people in this process.

It also invites the ILO, in the framework of the Youth Employment Network and in collaboration with the UN Secretariat, the World Bank, and other relevant specialized agencies, to assist and support, on request, the efforts of governments in the elaboration of national reviews and action plans, and to undertake a global analysis and evaluation of progress made in this regard.

The text of the resolution follows:

## PROMOTING YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

The General Assembly,  
Reaffirming the resolve of heads of State and Government, as contained in the *United Nations Millennium Declaration*, to develop and implement strategies that give young people everywhere a real chance to find decent and productive work,

Recalling and reaffirming the commitments relating to youth employment made at the major United Nations conferences and summits since 1990 and their follow-up processes,

Recalling its resolution 54/120 of 17 December 1999, in which it took note with appreciation of the *Lisbon Declaration on Youth Policies and Programmes adopted at the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth* in 1998, which

set forth important commitments regarding youth employment,

Recalling also its resolution 56/117 of 19 December 2001, in which, inter alia, it welcomed the Secretary-General's initiative to create a *Youth Employment Network* and invited him to continue with initiatives in that regard,

Recognizing that young people are an asset for sustainable economic growth and social development and expressing deep concern about the magnitude of youth unemployment and underemployment throughout the world and its profound implications for the future of our societies,

Recognizing also that Governments have a primary responsibility to educate young people and to create an enabling environment that will promote youth employment;

1. Takes note of the work of the High-level Panel of the Secretary-General's Youth Employment Network and its policy recommendations;
2. Encourages Member States to prepare national reviews and action plans on youth employment and to involve youth organizations and young people in this process, taking into account, inter alia, the commitments made by Member States in this regard, in particular those included in the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond;
3. Invites, within the context of the Youth Employment Network, the International Labour Organization, in collaboration with the Secretariat and the World Bank and other relevant specialized agencies, to assist and support, upon request, the efforts of Governments in the elaboration of national reviews and action plans, and to undertake a global analysis and evaluation of progress made in this regard;
4. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session on the implementation of the present resolution, including on the progress achieved by the Youth Employment Network.

For more information about the youth employment initiative or to obtain copies of publications, contact [youth@ilo.org](mailto:youth@ilo.org).

# Elections, democracy and governance in Africa

**OPENING ADDRESS BY  
PRESIDENT MBEKI**

**AT THE AFRICA CONFERENCE  
ON ELECTIONS, DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE  
7 APRIL 2003**

**T**HIS CONFERENCE has convened to discuss the important issues of elections, democracy and governance. Hopefully, the delegates and institutions that are gathered here, will define for all of us not just the meaning and importance of democracy, elections and governance, but also the philosophical underpinnings of these concepts, and situate them within the African experience and reality.

In doing so, we would proceed from the understanding that to arrive at a correct analysis of what elections, democracy and governance mean in the African context, we must closely examine the historical evolution of our nation-states and the formation of the different countries on the continent.

This history will reveal among others, the continuous interplay between power, legitimacy, democracy, governance and nation building. In turn, these would further tell us more about why elections, democracy and governance have evolved in the manner in which they did in Africa.

I think this would help the work of the institutions and people that have gathered here, our political parties, civil society and our societies as a whole, because we would look at some of the fundamental challenges in our countries that have impacted, both negatively and positively, on democracy, and confront these challenges in our programmes to build a democratic Africa.

The challenge to analyse and understand Africa arises in part because, understandably, many of us at

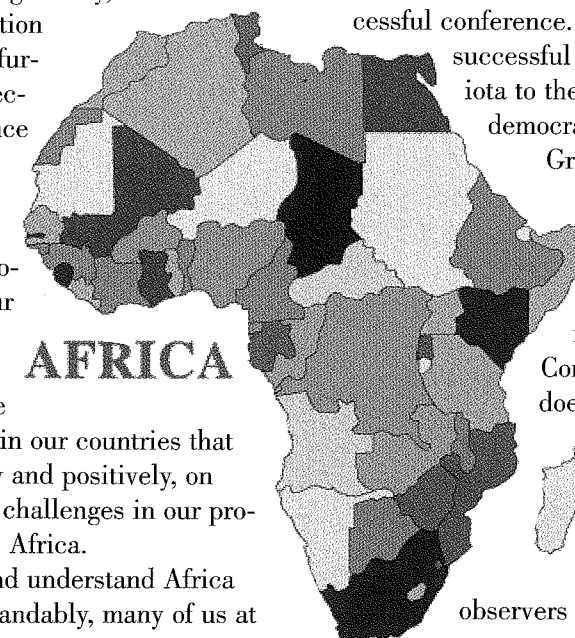
these kinds of gatherings seek to assert the point firmly, that we are democrats. This leads to the propagation of a series of democratic musts drawn from political science textbooks. Accordingly, we tell one another that:

- we must have multi-party political systems;
- we must have regular elections;
- we must limit the number of times anybody can be elected head of state or government;
- we must have Independent Electoral Commissions;
- we must allow international observers to observe and make judgements on our elections;
- we must have a strong civil society;
- we must have an independent Human Rights Commission;

And so it goes on, one must after the other, at the end of which we all proclaim that we had a very successful conference. The problem, however, is that our successful conference may not have added one iota to the advancement and entrenchment of democracy on our continent.

Great Britain does not limit the period during which a person may hold the position of Prime Minister, to say nothing about the hereditary position of Head of State. It does not have an Independent Electoral Commission that conducts elections. It does not have an Independent Human Rights Commission. I have never heard of international observers verifying whether any British election was free and fair.

Instead, I have heard of observers visiting the United Kingdom during



election time to learn about how democratic elections should be conducted. I presume that we send these students because, correctly, we agree that despite the things she is not called upon to do, as we are, Great Britain is a democratic country.

In a sense, the challenge we face is to understand why the rulebook of democratic musts applies unevenly as between ourselves and other countries of the North, such as Great Britain.

This requires as objective an understanding of African reality as possible, not for the purpose of abandoning the rulebook of democratic musts, but to answer the question concretely – how shall these rules be translated into practice.

I believe it also requires that we understand that the democratic system is a form of social organisation, and not one that is separate from and independent of other factors that combine to define any particular society. It is both a product of and exists within the context of the evolution of particular societies. By definition, it is based on and reflects the varied social forces and ideas that characterise any society. It is a supremely human creation.

Of course, we now face a challenging proposition by those who have gone to war against Iraq. Apart from the issue of weapons of mass destruction, they say they have taken up arms against Iraq to overthrow a dictatorship and transform that country into a democracy.

The proposition that is being proffered is that there can be such a thing as an imported and imposed democracy, in much the same way that one can force-feed a person on hunger strike. Presumably the argument is that whether a person ingests jollof rice voluntarily or does so because he or she is force-fed, the fact remains that they have eaten jollof rice.

I am not certain that the institution of a democratic system can be approached in the same way that we approach the consumption of jollof rice.

Writing about Uganda in his 1997 book, "Sowing the Mustard Seed", President Yoweri Museveni says: "The basis of political affiliation at the very beginning of Uganda's independence was...opportunistic and sectarian, with divisions along religious and tribal lines. These divisions clouded the real issues and prevented the electorate from distinguishing between important issues and trivial ones.

The interests and needs of the people were, therefore, not made a focal point because opportunistic, ideologically and politically backward politicians had so fragmented society that com-

mon interests were lost sight of. The peasant in Lango, northern Uganda, did not regard the peasant in Buganda as his ally: he was persuaded to believe that the Baganda were 'arrogant', while the Baganda were told that the Langi were 'primitive and cruel'. This atomisation of the masses into sectarian groups served the interests of the politicians who divided and ruled the people. Sectarianism gave them an automatic and cheap, exploitative political base. It was what philosophers call 'ideological obscurantism', which means obscuring the truth in order to serve the interests of a clique. Political awareness among the masses was anathema to this type of politician."

Writing of the ruling party, the UPC, President Museveni says:

"The UPC was largely composed of lumpen bourgeoisie, or what in Ghana were known as 'verandah boys'. They had no independent means and were not prepared to work patiently. The UPC leadership were generally an uncouth breed, anxious to get rich as quickly as possible using the state apparatus and regarding their own crude style of operation...as the virtue of 'political shrewdness'. Ideologically they were bankrupt and they were certainly unequal to the task of national emancipation." The actions of this 'lumpen bourgeoisie' led to the coup d'etat led by Idi Amin in January 1971.

Of the army that Amin led, this is what President Museveni had to say: "Having been given the wrong foundation by the colonialists, the so-called army was not even a proper army, but just a colonial levy of riflemen with a low level of education and literacy...Obote intensified the

Ugandan army's tribal character and even failed to tackle the problem of low educational standards...On top of all this, the army became virtually a wing of the UPC...By 1970 the army had degenerated further into specific tribal cliques to the extent that a junior officer refused to salute a superior unless he belonged to the same tribe...(After a struggle among the northerners in the army) Amin emerged as victor, in the process murdering thousands of soldiers and civilians, mainly from Lango and Acholi. The main political problem at the time, therefore, was the army, which effectively prevented the country from attaining democracy."

In her own book published in 1970, "The Barrel of a Gun", the late Ruth First, a leader and activist of our liberation struggle, wrote:

"Who rules Africa under independence? What are the main elements in the chronic instability of these states? How is political power concentrated or dispersed, and why can the action of a small armed group so effortlessly capture it? Why, thus, when there has been a blow at the top of the power structure, does it seem so irrelevant to the polity as a whole? What of the institutions of state, and in particular the management of the economy? What of the people, down below? Who is dispossessed by a coup; who raised to power? Was the conflict over who exercised power, or how it was exercised? Why does the army, and not some other group, play the pivotal role in new states? Who are the military men under their uniforms; whose sons and brothers? Do they represent distinctive social forces? The Dispossessed? Themselves alone? Do captains of the army hope to become captains of industry, or of commerce? What triggers the coup? Does the army act for inner army reasons, or for reasons that flow from the wider polity?..."

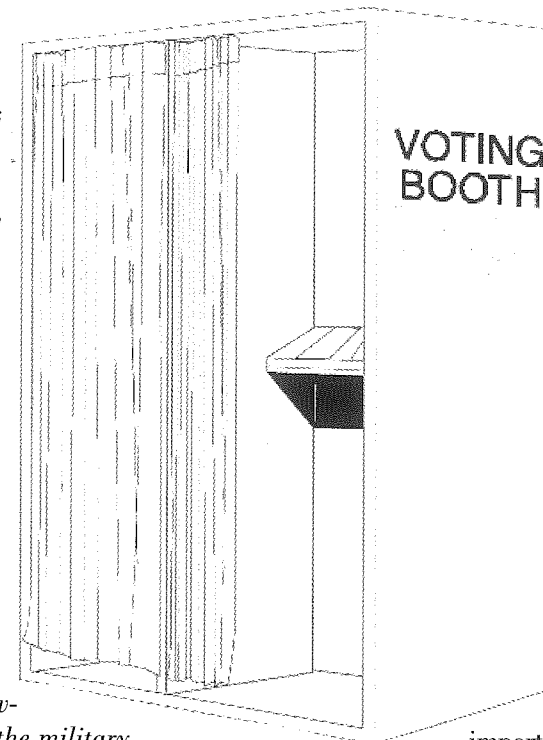
Citing various instances of military takeovers, she wrote:

"Nigeria's First Republic collapsed, said General Gowon, because it lacked high moral standards. Nzeogwu, the young major who made that particular coup, talked in more fevered but comparable terms of a strong, united and prosperous Nigeria, free from corruption and internal strife. In the Central African Republic, Colonel Jean Bedel Bokassa's Revolutionary Council announced a campaign to clean up morals, that would forbid drum-playing and lying about in the sun except on Saturdays and holidays. Colonel Lamizana of Upper Volta said, 'the people asked us to assume responsibility. The army accepts.'"

Were the soldiers right! Have the African armies demonstrated that they are the unique repositories of the values of public morality in Africa!

In his 1999 book "Africa since Independence", Colin Legum categorises some periods in the history of our continent as the Romantic Period from 1939 to 1970, the Period of Disillusionment from 1970 to 1985, and the Period of Realism from 1988 onwards and the Period of Renaissance, which is the period towards the end of the last Century and the beginning of the 21st Century.

It may well be that there could be differences about this categorisation. Yet, it is useful for the purposes of closely analysing developments on our continent, as I



have said, that had a lasting impact on these questions that we are discussing at this conference.

If we were to borrow Legum's categorisation, we may describe the Romantic Period as an epoch that was characterised by high levels of optimism and confidence arising from the important advances that liberation movements throughout the world were making and the fact that many former colonies were gaining their independence.

This was also the case with the African countries, where colonisation was generally on the retreat. Clearly, the attainment of independence was

important because it created the possibility for the African people to respond to the critical challenges of development.

We all know that before independence in many of our countries, colonialists exercised power and governance through brute force. It did not matter to them that they enjoyed no legitimacy among the indigenous people because they believed that they needed no such legitimacy.

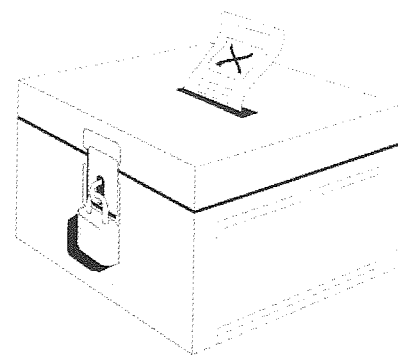
At independence, the new rulers had to ensure that not only did they exercise power but that their governments were legitimate. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, for instance, the people, through the 1960 democratic elections, granted this legitimacy.

However, the elected government of Patrice Lumumba lasted hardly six months. It had won the enmity of some powerful western democratic countries, which then proceeded to sponsor a coup d'etat against the first and only democratically elected government of the DRC.

Ultimately this led to the assassination of Patrice Lumumba and the installation of the Mobutu regime, which came to define everything that was wrong in Africa. The western democracies had set a precedent for the anti-democratic coups that swept through the continent for decades.

Colin Legum says "between 1966 and 1993, there were sixty-three military coups in Africa and twenty-four violent conflicts...About ten million people lost their lives and at least five times as many were wounded in African conflicts. More than twenty million became refugees or were displaced from their homes in their own country."

We must ask ourselves the questions - does the fact that we are Africans make us prone to the anti-democratic violence conveyed by this history, or was it simply that we were not sufficiently educated to understand and implement the democracy rulebook!



Democratic elections...

**Who determines whether an election was free and fair in countries of the North?**

We should draw some comfort from Legum's answer to these questions. He says:

*"The (African) dream of a Golden Age had withered on the tender vine of independence, and it became clear that Africa was not going to escape the experience of Europe, the Americas, and Asia in comparable historical periods when they were evolving and consolidating their new nation-states."*

*Many of the factors which destroyed the optimism of the period of romanticism in Africa were not very different from those in Europe – which had experienced its Hundred Years' War, Napoleonic conquest, assassinations, times of chaos...*

*It was similar, too, in the Americas, with the fratricidal killings and the bitterness of the American Civil War; the racism of slavery; the corruption and miseries of the Reconstruction years; and in Latin America, where a succession of wars was fought over the shaping of borders; the rise of dictators and military regimes; oppression and widespread abuses of the human rights of the indigenous populations;...and the failure of Simon Bolivar's ambition to unify Latin America...The wars and revolutions in Europe and the Americas exceeded in scale and casualties the violent episodes in Africa, bad as these were..."*

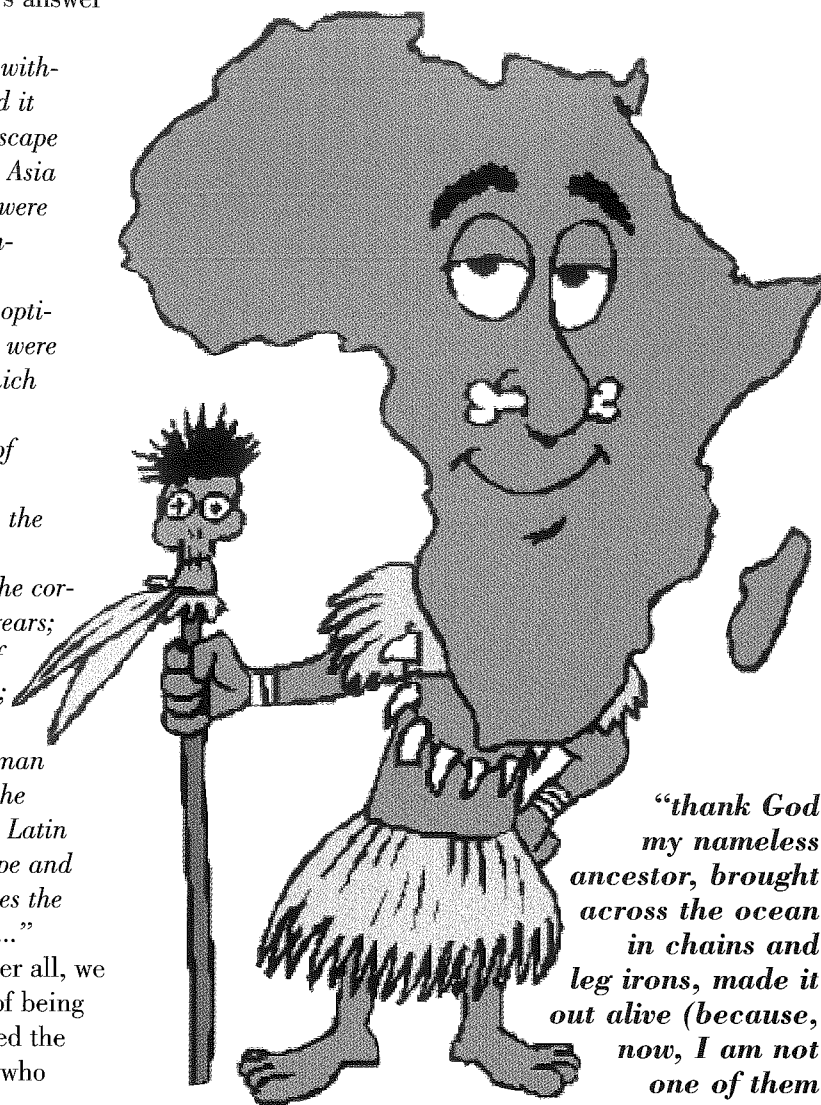
And so we can breathe a sigh of relief that, after all, we have not been as bad as those who accuse us of being especially backward and primitive. This had led the African-American journalist, Keith Richburg, who reported on the 1994 Rwanda genocide for the WASHINGTON POST, to write in his 1997 book, *"Out of America"*, *"thank God my nameless ancestor, brought across the ocean in chains and leg irons, made it out alive (because, now, I am not one of them (the Africans)). Thank God that I am an American."*

Despite this, what Legum has written tells us that we can assert that history has absolved us. We must presume that the African-American, Keith Richburg remains proudly American, no longer an African-American, not one of us.

Be this as it may, the problem, of course, is that what is historical has been and gone. We live not in history but in the present. Our own history tells us that we must not do today what we did in the past, as during the era that Legum characterised as the Period of Disillusionment.

How not to repeat this Period requires that we understand fully the social phenomena described by Yoweri Museveni, and that we answer frankly the questions posed by Ruth First.

Who rules Africa under independence? How is political power concentrated or dispersed? What of the institutions of state, and in particular the management of the economy? What of the people, down below? Do the (men and women in military uniforms) represent



*Thank God that I am an American."*  
African-American journalist, **Keith Richburg**

distinctive social forces? What triggers the coup? Does the army act for inner army reasons, or for reasons that flow from the wider polity...(as happened a few weeks ago in the Central African Republic?).

If we answer these and other questions honestly and correctly, we will create the possibility for us to build stable democracies on our continent, and thus create the conditions visualised during what Colin Legum described as The Romantic Period, that will enable us successfully to tackle the urgent challenge of poverty and underdevelopment.

We are involved in the complex process of establishing the African Union. We are on the verge of the implementation of the Union's New Partnership for Africa's Development.

Neither of these historic initiatives will succeed if we do not answer correctly the questions posed by Legum's Period of Disillusionment. Perhaps the question we will have to answer first is whether we have the courage to answer these questions with regard to our

states as they are and function today!

Is it possible for this important conference to pronounce itself on whether it believes the South African democratic system will survive into the medium and long term? Would it have the courage and ability to ask:

- Who rules South Africa after liberation?
- Does that strange and predatory animal, the lumpen bourgeoisie, govern us?
- Are the political affiliations at the very beginning of our liberation opportunistic and sectarian, with divisions along religious and tribal lines?
- Is our country's political leadership ideologically bankrupt and unequal to the task of national emancipation?
- Does this leadership have the capacity to manage the dynamic relationship between power, legitimacy, democracy, governance and nation building?
- How is political power concentrated or dispersed?
- What of the institutions of state, and in particular the management of the economy?
- What of the people, down below?

Having answered these questions, would it be possible for this important conference to advise the South African people what they need to do to ensure that our own dream of a Golden Age does not wither on the tender vine of liberation?

Will you counsel us about how successfully to implement the rulebook of democracy in our specific conditions?

If this important conference cannot do these things, why should we describe it as an important conference! The prospect facing the people of Iraq should serve as sufficient warning that in future, we too might have others descend on us, guns in hand, to force-feed us with jollof rice.

What might come to be, was honestly expressed by Charles Krauthammer who wrote for the WASHINGTON POST on March 21, 2003, South Africa's Human Rights

Day. He said:

*"There were wars and truces and treaties before the United Nations was created – as there will be after its demise. No need to formally leave the organisation, Mr President (Bush). Just ignore it. Without us, it will wither away."*

Krauthammer obliges us to ask the question, if the United Nations does not matter and should be destroyed, why should we, the little countries of Africa that make up the African Union, think that we matter and will not be punished if we get out of line!

In his poem *"Memories Break"*, Ben Okri has told us what we have done to ourselves in the past:

*"We celebrate our future deaths  
We cut out the tongues  
Of our prophets  
We hail our murderers  
We gild our traitorous leaders  
We poison our healers  
And we walk with eyes wide open  
Into our own abyss.  
Break this cycle  
Break this madness  
Let new fevers rise in this  
Radiant act of faith  
Destroy this temple of living hell  
Let us join our angers together  
Forge a new joy for the age.  
Create  
New breaks."*

# Beyond dreadlocks

## and demagogy

by  
Comrade Tankiso,  
Pimville

### Background

On the 24th September 2001 the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee (SECC) convened a rally at Tswelopele hall in Pimville zone 7. A wave of agitation permeated through the gathering, which influenced the attendants to march to councillor George Ndlovu's house in ward 22. Councillor Ndlovu with his family was held at ransom and the electricity box of his house was ransacked. The fact that the crowd had neither a memorandum nor a petition of demands to submit to him confirmed the suspicion that the purpose of the march was purely an act of harassment and intimidation. This tactic will be dealt with in the later stages.

Can bad things be turned into good things?

Mao Tsetung poses this question in one of his writings and answers it in the affirmative. He states, "...bad things can be turned into good things... Every disturbance can be regarded in this way" (Tsetung, 1977:125). In this regard, the march to councillor Ndlovu's house under the auspices of Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee was a disturbance and surely a bad one. Particularly when Ndlovu was targeted as an individual person. However, the ANC in Pimville Klipspruit turned this incident into a good thing.

For instance, for the first time since the launch of both branches of the ANC (Michael Maponya branch in ward 25 and Mpete Mosaka branch in ward 22), the movement debated the balance of forces in Pimville, Klipspruit.

The incident prompted the branches of the ANC in both wards to convene a special joint forum in the evening wherein a vigorous debate ensued on the political challenges posed by SECC, and its Chairperson, Trevor Ngwane. The forum comprised of representatives from the ANC branches in wards 22 and 25, the SACP, SANCO, councillors Tshidi Mfikoe, George Ndlovu, and Themba Hlatshwayo, the Women's League and the ANCYL. The meeting was also attended by MEC for Transport in Gauteng, cde Kgabisi Mosunkutu who is charged with the responsibility to oversee the constituencies of the two affected wards.

This collective review and assessment of the threats posed by internal factors and the external environment,

was important to inform the organization and its cadres about the challenges we faced. Remember, a cadre of the movement and of the revolution must understand his or her own environment to formulate informed strategies of poverty alleviation and community development, but also to be in a position to limit the possibilities of surprises, which might reverse the revolution itself.

*"The purpose of assessing the balance of forces is to identify revolutionary opportunities, determine the kinds of compromises that have to be made in a given conjuncture and the actions required to shift the balance itself. It is critical for the ANC regularly to pause for such an assessment because the struggle is conducted not in conditions of our choosing. As such we have to master the science and art of assessing the objective conditions and subjective factors that, together, render particular preferred actions possible".* (The Balance of Forces in 2001:UMRABULO no. 9)

While the exercise to assess the balance of forces has got to be an integral part of the branch general meetings of the ANC, in our branch unfortunately such an imperative exercise materialized for the first time after the local government elections as a result of a rude awakening – the 24 September 2001 siege of councilor Ndlovu's homestead.

### The Debate

The joint forum was seized with this incident. Initially, there were divergent views in terms of the general assessment of the SECC and its leadership. The discussion went on to discern the logic, implications, and aims of the siege.

After a protracted engagement one dominant approach emerged to permeate the discussion. This approach will simply be referred to as the elitist approach. This paper will introduce another approach that will be referred to as the totality approach. This approach will be the framework upon which this paper will base its analysis. This new approach will be advanced to contradict the popular elitist approach that has been favoured by most branch cadres and alliance structures in Pimville Klipspruit, some parts of

Gauteng, and beyond the Province.

### Brief overview of the Totality approach

The totality approach advocates for an analysis that seeks to integrate all factors at play, that is, an approach that is informed by facts and not wishes. Subscribers to this approach advocate for the need to seek to know the ideas, resources, people, structures, and so forth related to all the activities and campaigns of Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee. It says in order to understand the mission of those involved, their political orientation and the direction and purpose of their actions, an analysis must attempt to comprehend the ideas behind the activities of these groups and their prominent individuals.

Furthermore, this approach argues that an analysis of the balance of forces cannot be reduced to an individual, as the elitist approach would hold. This paradigm also proposes that the only effective way to handle newly contending forces in local communities is by keeping in touch with the ANC mass base, that is, branch cadres of the movement maintaining and sustaining visibility on the ground.

The ANC and its cadres can only maintain this visibility through sustainable programs of action and campaigns within localities. These programs of action must be made sensible and involve those they are intended to lift out of the morass of poverty. This implies that the ordinary member of the community must be able to link his or her circumstances or conditions with the programs put into place and be able to see and feel these to be viable in developing solutions to his or her material conditions. Effectively, the programs must deal with the bread and butter issues of the community, while keeping the link with the broader picture of development and empowerment initiatives in the region and the province.

This approach also asserts that the SECC-APF pose a cumulative degree of threat to the ANC in Ward 22

particularly and other ANC led wards, because you have weak leadership and organizational structures. An analysis that goes beyond the individual characters will be able to confirm this fact. This observation will also hold true for any ward branch of the ANC that has jettisoned the sharp course of revolutionary activity to find tribute in the soothing plush of organizational inertia.

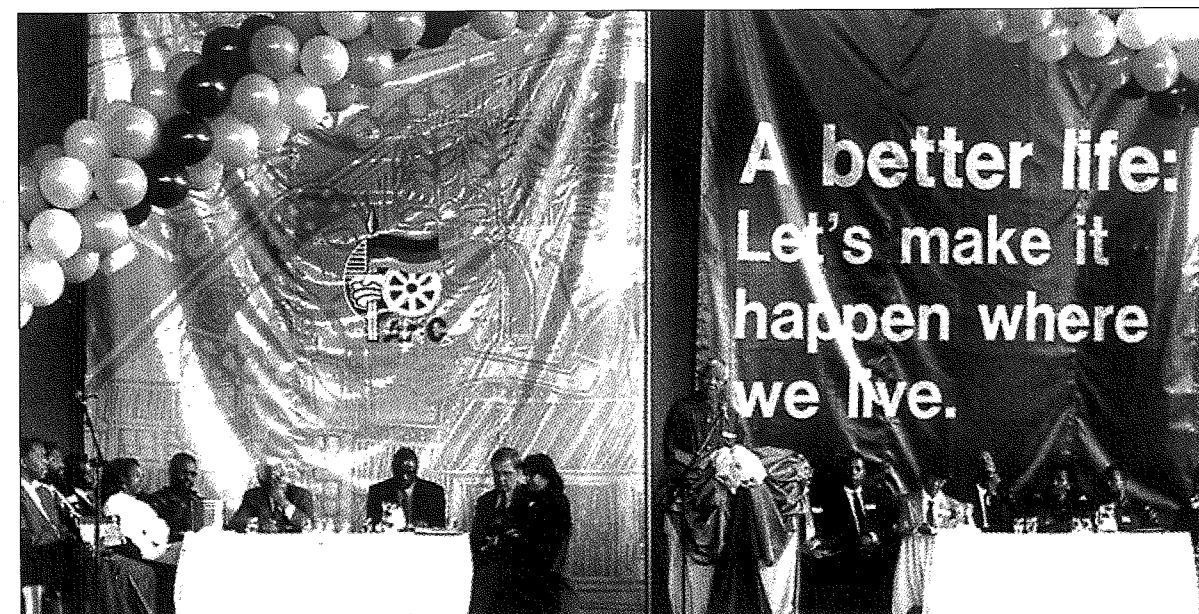
### Brief overview of the Elitist approach

The elitist approach assumed dominance in the deliberations of the Joint Forum. Particularly when subscribers to it appeared mostly comfortable with the conclusion it drew which stated that whatever the political manoeuvres of Ngwane in Soweto or elsewhere, the prospects of success were nil since the ANC has an overwhelming mass base. This approach gives primacy to popular individuals within the organization. Hence its focus in terms of the balance of forces is on an individual to the exclusion of numerous related factors.

Advocates of this position argue that the actions of Trevor Ngwane are a manifestation of anger arising out of his expulsion from the ANC and the resultant removal from the seat of councilor in Pimville Klipspruit. It is argued that individuals like him acts in this way, out of vengeance. They blindly embark on unsustainable campaigns to settle personal vendetta against the ANC by manipulating unsuspecting members of the community.

Once more, advocates of the elitist worldview argue that Trevor Ngwane's actions are just normal political posturing without a political program or vision. Thus the opportunistic birth of Sowejoca (a renegade movement established to rival the civic association in the early nineties) and its seasoned demise is used as a tireless example to confirm the imminent destiny of his course and that of the SECC-APF alliance.

The elitist argument further holds that Ngwane and his committees have no support in Pimville and Soweto. It is alleged that they rely on rent a mob tactic, with



few residents from Pimville participating, in order to enhance the public profile of their meetings. It is further alleged that this holds true for the rally convened at Tswelopele hall on the 24th September 2001 in Pimville. It is reasoned that the aim of this tactic is to create an impression to both the public and the media of a growing anti-government campaign.

Convinced that the SECC activities are more a consequence of an individual inspired by a personal vendetta, a conclusion is thus drawn that these activities do not constitute any degree of threat to the ANC in all wards.

### Limitations and a rebuttal of the Elitist Approach

However, it is the contention of this paper that this approach and the conclusion it draws is highly controversial and must be rebutted. It must be carefully examined in order to alter the perceptions it has created, which if adhered to, might subject the ANC and its branch cadres to a profusion of surprises – now and in the future.

While the focus of this paper is in Pimville, Klipspruit, in particular Ward 22, the conclusion drawn here will also have serious widespread implications for other branches of the ANC in other areas where a similar resurgence is brewing. The implication is simply that branches of the ANC, particularly in desperate communities could sooner or later be faced with the challenge to make hasty and potentially uncultured decisions in the wake of the similar challenge and agitation.

This paper intends to advocate for an approach that emphasizes an outlook beyond individuals i.e. the total approach. It seeks to provide a comprehensive analysis of our surrounding because it integrates a number of factors that are at play into a totality. It is effectively a collectivist approach which will be applied to assert that the Pimville, Klipspruit Residents Committee often in collusion with the SECC-led and chaired by Trevor Ngwane have become a cumulative challenge to the mass base and hegemony of the movement in many wards that are ANC-led or controlled.

In order to show that this force is a challenge to the ANC in Ward 22, the following will be factors for consideration: rent a mob hypothesis, the critical mass, preliminary stage and impressions, building momentum, the active mass, role of APF, role of CANSA, SMI, unclear organizational policy directives, the geographic element, modus operandi, the tactic of harassment, the element of surprise, challenges, and recommendations.

These factors will show that beyond the individual there are structural backups, and alternative ideas finding expression on the shop floor pertaining to anti-privatization sentiments and resonating in the township through the SECC (in Soweto), the United Civic Organization of South Africa (East Rand), Vaal Working Class Coordinating Committee (Vaal Triangle), and so

on.

However, this paper will firstly expose the poverty of ideas and pernicious tools of analysis inherent in the popular elitist approach. Looking at the limitations of this approach focus will be put on the psychological and emotional factors influencing the elitist approach. It will be demonstrated that the elitist approach is shallow, sentimentalists and its proponents espouse a populist and subjective presentation of reality. Such an approach is deficient and suicidal to inform a revolutionary strategy in the context of aggressively contending ideas.

The elitist approach reduces the challenges posed by forces actively challenging ANC hegemony in Ward 22 to activities of an individual, in an attempt to measure the degree of threat posed by campaigns of these organizations. By focusing on the personality, the challenge posed by the SECC is collapsed into the characteristics of an individual, Trevor Ngwane. This is the fundamental flaw of the elitist approach.

The reduction of a growing political currency to the aspect of a personality, must be rejected as a premise of analysis of the balance of forces. The march to the house of councillor Ndlovu is an immediate demonstration of the fact that these forces seek to challenge the ANC in some wards, and they are growing in confidence. Without this acknowledgement, ANC branch cadres in Pimville, Klipspruit will find no value or logic in developing monitoring systems and strategies to maintain and consolidate our mass base through programmes of actions that seek to improve service delivery and

The impression is created that proponents of the elitist approach use a psychological condition of personal hatred of the contending forces to analyze the character of these forces. This subjective premise, which stems from the severing of relations between the ANC and Trevor Ngwane deprives the branch of the opportunity to make profound analysis of their immediate political environment. It is common sense that many cadres will not view Trevor Ngwane in a good light, given his challenge to the ANC in the 2000 local government elections as an independent, amongst other factors.

An objective analysis – on the other hand – would reveal that these forces emerged as a challenge to the movement due to the weak state of the branch in the area, which was a point for concern to the provincial and regional structures of the ANC since 2000 and even into 2002. This is a reality, which many cadres in Ward 22 and in other ANC wards are reluctant and uncomfortable to acknowledge, to their own detriment.

Instead, propaganda is caressed as a veil to obscure the real state of affairs. Such propaganda is essentially deceitful, as Ardono states "...A community in which the leader comes to terms with his followers through propaganda – whatever the merits of its content – is a community of lies. Truth itself becomes merely a means of

enlisting support and is falsified in the very utterance" (1979:225).

In addition, this reluctance to acknowledge weaknesses runs in sharp contrast to the call of one of the leading intellectuals and revolutionaries of the ANC, the late OR Tambo. In his address on the 75th anniversary of the ANC in 1987 he set the tone: "...as serious revolutionaries, we must carefully analyze our strength and weaknesses, discover our mistakes and correct them..." (SECHABA, 1987:8).

The deviation from this call can only result in analyses premised on subjective wishes and not the objective reality.

Furthermore, failure to accept our own weaknesses with a view not to expose the organization or the branch (es) to the opposing and contending forces, is not only repugnant but perilous a deviation from the perspective heralded by the late Tambo. This deviation has made revolutionary cadres in the ranks of the ANC in Pimville Klipspruit, Gauteng, and beyond to seek comfort in the lavish propaganda - premises of non-threat hypothesis when the unsteady balance of forces demands vigilance and sincerity more than ever before. This propaganda - though constructed with good intentions - becomes oddly perilous and counter-revolutionary once it blurs the vision of its architects to the advantage of centrifugal forces.

Another oversight inherent in the elitist approach is a reluctance to acknowledge the strength of the opposition. Acknowledgement of some strength of the opposition is regarded as a sign of weakness and everything is done to downplay such acceptance in soul-searching debates of the organization at branch level. Such that if one begins to acknowledge some degree of strength of the contending force(s) as guided by objective analysis, his or her observation is viewed with scepticism if not rebuked. Hence the conclusion that Trevor Ngwane,

SECC, and PKRC are not a challenge to the ANC in ward 22 and other wards when the facts militated to the contrary.

The assertion that the ideas of the opposition do not represent a challenge is often informed by political expediency. Some cadres particularly at branch executive committee level lack interest in political debates. If they happen to debate political questions, which are particularly theoretical, they do so impatiently under the guise of time constraints. As a result routine is preferred which is mainly organizational administrative functions such as reading of last minutes, apologies, matters arising, and so forth. Time constraint then becomes a justification to push for hasty uncultured decisions and a material ground for failure to exhaust matters to completion. Hence the non-threat hypothesis is preferred because it is politically expedient. It does not impose urgency for action which will put pressure on the branch leadership to perform and deliver.

The NWC discussion document *Through the Eyes of the Needle* could therefore not have come at a better time. The choice of best cadres to lead the organization is ever more imperative in Pimville Klipspruit given the challenges posed by the contending forces. For instance, areas such as zone 7 in Pimville where Ngwane resides, in all fairness became no-go areas to the organization for a period. While both councillor Ndlovu and the ANC in Ward 22 convened more than one public general meeting in all zones comprising this ward, zone 7 remained an exception.

The reason is simply that Ngwane has successfully earned the respect from the community and thus the ANC could no longer tread willy-nilly in every territory. Particularly when such territory became his own not by residence alone but by virtue of influence. This worrying scenario confirmed that Trevor Ngwane succeeded in making inroads into the historical mass based of the



“ These forces therefore seek to transform the critical mass sparked by community dissent using issues such as water, electricity, and housing into an active mass. Essentially what is being precipitated is a rise of the working class against the ANC government to confront and alter its unpleasant material conditions. ”

ANC in Pimville and using this as a base, to launch an expansionism into other wards of Soweto such as Jabulani, Orlando, and Diepkloof, to mention a few. The marked reluctance from our side to convene consistent public general meetings in zone 7, provided by omission a fertile ground for such expansion.

In the absence of ongoing political discussions, the temptation to resort to personal hatred of the contending forces somewhat reflects political immaturity amongst the branch cadres. It is in the interest of the ANC that the national democratic revolution unfolds and succeeds with all its contradictions without manifesting themselves into violence. Cadres of the movement must comprehend that the tendency to resort to personal hatred of contending forces bears possibilities of expressing such hatred into its highest form, violent conflict. In the context of our emerging democracy, where the culture of tolerance has not yet completely inculcated at local community levels, this is a real danger. Violent conflict that results from heightened competition for hegemony can only result in destabilizing development initiatives at ward level. This will not only hamper the ANC's ability to govern, but more importantly its ability to bring about fundamental change to alter conditions of the poor and destitute for better.

Destabilization could effectively lead to the stalling of today's local community development programs and transformation initiatives. A case in point is the deterioration in the conditions of living of communities on the East Rand in the era prior the 1994 elections. The violent political contest between the ANC and IFP in Thokoza in the early nineties lingers in memory. Though there were other factors at play such as the Third force, the conflict expressed itself as a contest for hegemony in the area and the region.

Revolutionary cadres within the ranks of the movement in this situation had an unenviable responsibility to rise above personal hatred or revenge, and to work for peace, including winning over some of these forces. It must be emphasized again and again that the transformation of South Africa demands the mobilization of all forces. This requires taking into account all factors at play as they present themselves and not as cadres or activists would prefer them to be.

### Rent a mob hypothesis and the creation of a critical mass

Those who argue that Trevor Ngwane rented a mob for

gatherings to fake support provide very weak evidence. They argued that we did not recognize most of the marchers that marched to councillor Ndlovu's house and thus concluded that the majority of the marchers were not Pimville inhabitants. Surely this is a very weak exposition to corroborate the rent a mob hypothesis.

The approach to strictly rely on the numerical value to measure the strength of the contending forces is limiting, because it reduces ideas that emerge to contest the political space strictly to a matter of decimals. This is akin to saying that an idea cannot be considered or have the potential to gain support, if initially supported by a few people.

Instead, all ideas must be subjected to scrutiny to establish their validity and the extent to which it contribute towards transformation, development, and economic growth. Should such ideas run in contrast with these expectations they must be challenged by the ideas of the organization, which manifest themselves in programs of action meant to alleviate poverty and the plight of the poor at ward levels

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Secondly, history bears testimony to the fact that to spark a wave of disenchantment does not require big numbers. For instance, in the 1954 Algerian rebellion less than 500 male fighters were involved. As it gained momentum it is estimated that the fighters had swelled to almost 8 500 fighters. In France, about 10% of students were the core of action that threatened the Gaullist state. South Africans have their own domestic example such as the Soweto youth uprising in 1976. At the beginning, not the whole schools of Soweto were involved. But as the protest gained momentum the wave of black power protest against Afrikaans as the medium of instruction at African schools spread like wild fire throughout Soweto and the rest of the country.

This is the understanding that the emerging contending forces are banking on. As such, they are willing to pursue with perseverance in spite of the current numbers of followers. In this regard, any analysis that predominantly relies on the numerical value or that overlook contending forces on the basis of a relatively small mass base is ahistoric and a stranger in the practice and discourse of revolution.

The SECC is an embodiment of a certain critical mass drawn from different sectors and Ngwane relies on this assortment of die-hards to sustain activities. The mere fact that a few followers are willing to move from pillar to post in support of such activities reflect an

ability to amass a critical mass. This is a sufficient ingredient for a revolutionary course. In this case, the critical mass is formed and utilized by a centrifugal force competing with the ANC for hegemony in Ward 22 and some wards in and out of the Province. Such that if the current operations of this or these force(s) have not mobilized huge mass followings by any standards, it should not be presumed as reflection of failure, weakness, or lack of support on their part. The very existence of these forces reflects on the movement: that we have not yet achieved the mobilization of all forces for total transformation.

### Mobilisation tactics by the SECC and related forces

In the initial stages of community mobilization, the key message from these forces was that the ANC in power has not only abandoned its historical constituency (i.e. the working class and poor), but has begun to unleash terror against it. This terror – they argue – is in the form of electricity and water cuts conducted against the weak and poor. Electricity cuts that intensified during the winter of 2002 were presented as naked savagery unleashed by a liberation movement against its people who are largely destitute.

Active campaigns of harassment of key ANC local government cadres such as councillor Ndlovu of ward 22, Johannesburg mayor Amos Masondo and others sought to underpin this message. It was hoped that by discrediting the ANC local government leadership, this will further assist in the consolidation of a wave of open dissatisfaction, and popular rebellion against the ANC government – which will position these forces as ‘the true representatives of the people’ – a position occupied by the ANC over more than 90 years.

Furthermore, the distinction between government and ESKOM is opportunistically collapsed so as to demonstrate that these cut-off are results of government's privatization program. Against this backdrop, the mobilization took the form of sit-ins at ESKOM offices, marches to individual councilors' homesteads, and Operations Khanyisa, Vulamanzi, and Buyel'endlini. Such actions were set to reinvigorate the spirit of militancy reminiscent of the era of ‘ungovernability’ declared by the ANC and the mass movement during the 1980's. It attempted to resuscitate that spirit of defiance such as rejecting and boycotting service payments, a tactic that was effective and essential towards building and sustaining the momentum of struggle

against the apartheid regime. Except, this time, they hoped to turn the masses' anger against their movement, the ANC and against the democratic government.

Operation Khanyisa, a campaign that advocates for informal electricity reconnections, in instances where electricity service has been disconnected due to non-payment. Through this campaign the SECC sought to position itself as advancing the basic needs of the poor, arguing that access to such a service is a right and not a matter of privilege.

At the height of the campaign, ESKOM estimated that approximately 150 000 houses were unofficially connected (Matari, 2002:1). "In Soweto alone ESKOM is owed R900 million while the outstanding national bill is said to stand at R2, 4 billion"(Ibid). The accumulation of debt, exacerbated by growing unofficial reconnections, was a further demonstration that the campaign was winning supporters, especially amongst the unemployed, who were driven by the reality of their material conditions.

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The inroads that they made, in the Pimville ward in particular was evident in the results of the December 2000 local government elections, when Ngwane stood as independent against the ANC. He secured a total of 1 631 (28.14%) of votes. This percentage makes him the second best after the ANC, which received a total of 3797 votes (65.51%). He was able to beat all other parties like PAC-1.88%, Azapo-0.71%, IFP 0.88%, and the DA 2.88%. Although he stood for elections as an independent, the Pimville Klipspruit Residence Committee embarked on a vigorous campaign to secure him a stake in Ward 22. This alone should suffice to negate the sentiments of the elitist approach that he is not a growing threat to the ANC in Ward 22.

It is hoped that the facilitation and augmentation of the preliminary state led by an active critical mass will culminate into a bigger mass mobilization, which Lenin refers to as the active mass. These forces therefore seek to transform the critical mass sparked by community dissent using issues such as water, electricity, and housing into an active mass. Essentially what is being precipitated is a rise of the working class against the ANC government to confront and alter its unpleasant material conditions.

As a result, these struggles have resulted into an open confrontation like the shooting between employees of ESKOM and residents of Dlamini in Soweto in the year 2001. Such readiness and agitation for extreme action is encapsulated in Duduzile Mphenyeki (SECC

secretary's) statement when proclaiming that "In every struggle there are casualties" (Matari, 2002).

In explaining Operation Khanyisa the SECC has stated in some of its public forums that people must chase away Eskom 'agents' tasked to cut electricity cables with whatever means necessary and that 'councillors must be made to taste their own medicines'. It is within this context that the growing violent attacks during that period on ANC councillors should be located – e.g. the renewed attack of Amos Masondo's homestead in April 2002 which was led by the APF and SECC, the setting alight of Dalphonia Motaung and Chabe Kekana' houses in May 2002 by angry residents led by Zithobeni Community Organization, the stoning of the late councilor Julius Sebolai (ward 47), and the burning of councilor Siphwe Nanisi (ward 48)'s car all point to a systematic orchestration of revolt under the auspices of the independents and emergent issue-based committees. A sober revolutionary will never dismiss this phenomenon but will grapple to unpack its core meaning and implication. Particularly when the challenge poses a threat to the basic unit of the ANC, the branch, where these new battles of ultra-left resurgence are bitterly fought.

### Vacillating elements within the ranks of the movement

In addition, inconsistent and opportunistic elements within the ranks of the mass democratic movement provide fertile grounds for the growth of an anti-tripartite alliance challenge. For instance, some key elements of SANCO Pimville zone 2 sub-branch – amongst them respected community members and recognized as ANC activists – argued that as SANCO they cannot be seen to be supporting the ANC despite the SANCO national position, and some even publicly came out in support of Trevor Ngwane.

Such utterances and conduct confused a large part of the local SANCO membership and was a definite demobilization factor of the mass base of the ANC in Wards 22 and 47.

This confusion not only effected demobilization of the ANC membership and support base at a most critical time, but also imposed an atmosphere of vulnerability, uncertainty and desperation. As a result, demobilized supporters became easy to mobilize by the forces in favour of Trevor Ngwane, contributing towards his performance in the 2000 local government elections in ward twenty-two. The developments have not only given numbers to Ngwane but have added fuel to the building of a mass base to dislodge the hegemony of the ANC led alliance in Pimville.

This negative effect was not limited to Pimville alone but was felt in other wards such as those in Senaoane, Orlando and Dobsonville, with the ANC having lost ward 47 after a by-elections in May 2002. Interestingly, the candidate who won this ward is a former ANC and SANCO activist 'comrade' Japhta

Lekgetho. Like Ngwane, Lekgetho also established a rival committee called Dobsonville Civic Association, which was instrumental in securing his landmark victory over the ANC in the by-elections.

### Free basic services:

#### Seizing the moment and slow pace of delivery

The Pimville rally mandated the SECC to expand its scope of demands beyond electricity cuts and to begin to include a demand for houses, a stop to eviction/relocation, and access to free basic water among other issues. This is essentially a call to develop a broad united front that goes beyond SECC and the electricity issue.

This came at a time when prospects for success for the SECC pertaining to the electricity issue were dealt a severe blow by the service framework agreement struck between government, Eskom, Sanco and other stakeholders excluding SECC. The agreement proposes to write off 50% of the electricity debt. Households with Eskom will individually negotiate the settlement of the outstanding 50%. Furthermore disconnected residents will be allowed to reconnect for December and would pay R50 in place of R200. In addition, "An exception is being made in the case of pensioners and the disabled, who have to pay only R25 to be reconnected" (Cox, 2001:2) This agreement depends on individual households agreeing to start paying orderly per month.

Furthermore, the inclusion of a commitment to providing a basic basket of free services, including water and electricity to all in our 2000 Elections Manifesto meant that we were able to respond to a real material reality our people faced. In Pimville, Klipspruit and other parts of Greater Johannesburg Region, the branches and councillors of the ANC embarked on a vigorous campaign to inform communities about the pending basket of free basic water and electricity services that the ANC led government had undertaken to provide. ANC members and residents alike interpreted this as reflective of a listening and caring ANC, and its commitment towards the poor.

However, slow delivery on this commitment has left the void where contending forces have jumped once again to exploit this opportunity.

### Spreading tentacles:

#### Soweto, Vaal Triangle and the East Rand

Whilst the analysis of the SECC may be interpreted as that of a local community group, it is reflective of a broader political agenda. The "rally" on the 24th September 2001 in Pimville confirmed the intentions of the founders of the SECC, beyond a localized community issue. Representatives as far a field as the Vaal Triangle and the East Rand attended the rally convened at Tswelopele Hall in Pimville zone 7.

The Vaal Triangle, in terms of the strategy of these forces has historical significance. "In the Vaal Triangle...the rent boycott took its most determined form in September 1984. This boycott was provoked by the Vaal Triangle Community Council introducing what it called 'economic rentals'..." (Moeti, 1987:25). It is hoped that the the struggles waged by SECC, PKRC, and APF will find resonance in the Vaal Triangle, giving rise to opportunities to maximize mass mobilization against government and consolidating the search for a political alternative to the ANC. Thus structures such as The Vaal Working Class Coordinating Committee have been formed to enhance this possibility.

Furthermore, a rally was scheduled for 30th September 2001 in Extension 25 Vosloorus in the East Rand under the auspices of United Civic Organization of South Africa (Ucosa). The attendants of the rally resolved to march to the Union Building on the 13th October 2001 to deliver a memorandum, demanding that government stop evictions of people from their homes, and to stop privatization of water and other basic services. This was supported by local community structures such as Villa Liza Action Committee, Katlehong Action Committee and other residential protest formations that are independent of the ANC and its related formations.

Without denigrating other areas, communities of the East Rand, Soweto, and the Vaal Triangle played a critical part in the struggles of making apartheid unworkable during the 1980's. As such, the option to establish political and organizational networks in these three areas that have a tradition of mass struggles, particularly against bread and butter issues, is attractive to these forces. It is also believed that residents of these areas are more politicized and prone to understanding the current challenges as raised by

these alternative forces. This could be appealing if the community members faced with cut-offs feel marginalized by processes of empowerment and transformation.

### Emergent United fronts

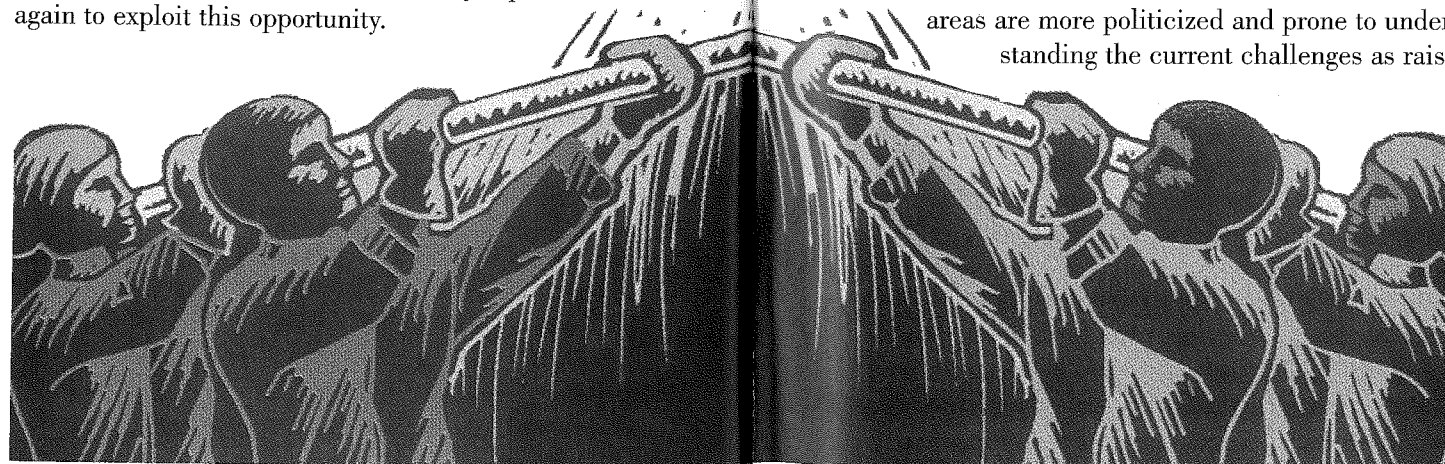
These forces have not only tried to use the tactics of the mass movement in the 80's of bread and butter mobilization and ungovernability, but also the united front tactic effectively used by the ANC throughout its 90 years of existence:-

**The Anti-Privatization Forum (APF):** The APF provides these forces with an alliance that cuts across class and which immensely contributes to the development of a concerted strategy against government. This forum is constituted by trade unionists (including members of COSATU through their sectoral involvement); academics and intellectuals of left-orientation and development activists both from non-governmental and community-based organizations across the sectors.

This broaden the base of these forces, beyond a challenges posed by an angry, lonesome and frustrated individual, towards a range of social forces that share a common anti- privatization, anti-GEAR (Growth Employment and Redistribution – the macro economic policy of government) stance.

This Forum also creates the imperative link between the shop floor struggles against right-sizing (retrenchments), casualization of labour, and the struggles waged against water and electricity cuts in the townships. As a result, the APF synchronizes the struggles waged by SECC, Dobsonville Civic Association (DCA) against electricity and water cuts in Soweto with those fought by among others SAMWU on the shop-floor against retrenchments, as a result of privatization. The APF has been able to show to its participants that they are all fighting a common enemy namely privatization, the brainchild of GEAR. This explains the relationship between the SECC as a community organization and some fragments of trade unionists belonging to affiliates of COSATU. These trade unionists have played key roles in some of the APF campaigns and marches.

It is this ability to link these cuts of services and electricity to privatization that creates a strong and broader appeal – not only to ordinary residents but trade unionists, intellectuals, and development activists



“ [The Anti-Privatisation Forum] ... also creates the link between the shop floor struggles against right-sizing (retrenchments), casualization of labour, and the struggles waged against water and electricity cuts in the townships. ”

– and the capacity to make inroads within the frontiers of the Tripartite Alliance. For instance, the election pamphlets that were distributed by the PKRC depicted an alliance between SAMWU, SECC, APF, other formations, and notable individuals opposing privatization in a united front. This depiction of a united front was used effectively by the PKRC to mobilize residents in Pimville to vote for Trevor Ngwane as an independent candidate in ward 22.

**The Campaign Against Neo-Liberalism in South Africa (CANSAs):** The Anti Privatization Forum has also been linking into international network of groups against neo-liberalism. Some of the issued based activists participating in the APF are also active in Campaign against Neo-liberalism in SA, linked to the international anti-neo liberal networks. All of these structures have individuals such as Trevor Ngwane and others in common.

The CANSAs is focused on campaigning against neo-liberalism in South Africa and have both direct and indirect relations to the APF. Like the APF, their main target is the ANC government, which they claim is pursuing a neo-liberal development path.

**The Social Movement Indaba (SMI):** This structure has played an important role during the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002, giving centrality to issues often sidelined by international institutions and seeking to give a central framework for debate and expression to non-government organizations. But this structure essentially is a culmination of the driving ideas behind the agenda of the APF and the SECC.

## The Challenge

The dreadlocks are in reality an epitome of an octopus, a fish with many legs linking its body to strategic structural networks in the country. In this regard we could mention the Durban Social Forum, Thembisa Social Forum, Nelspruit Anti Privatization Coalition, and the list is endless. Strategically most of them are issue-based but collectively beginning to visibly wage what is believed to be a "class counter offensive against neo liberal policies hitting the working class, reversing its gains, and putting it on retreat". This counter-offensive is informed by the assumption that a state is not neutral but represents certain class interests. Such interest is recognized through government policies.

For instance, the spokesperson of this formation Dale McKinley (a former SACP official) said:

"... We intend to continue our protests around water and electricity cut-offs and other issues and build a base in the townships" (Misbach, 2002:p4).

Furthermore, the coming together of all these formations under the umbrella of SMI has given the SECC and APF a coordinated national framework, which they dearly required to launch themselves formally into a political face particularly towards the next elections.

"People now know...who we are. We are in the beginning of creating a political movement..." (McKinley quoted in Misbach, 2002:p4).

## Occupying the trenches and seizing the initiative

The challenge is really how the local leadership of the ANC in the various affected wards and areas galvanize the motive forces both within and outside their borders into a visible active political leadership and movement. For too long have ANC in some wards been reduced to dealing with the administrative duties of the councillors, in the process deserting the trenches in terms of providing political leadership to both membership and the public. A case in point is the failure to convene

branch monthly meetings, pointing to a lack of political leadership and providing a fertile ground for alternative ideas to gain ground.

Occupying the trenches would mean ensuring that our local and regional leadership take full advantage of the cooperation and unity shown by the motive forces after the 24th September incident to claim back the trenches? Meetings will have to be called to sell the outcome of the services agreement signed between government, ESKOM, SANCO and other stakeholders. There could be no other opportunity other than now to tilt the scale in favour of the ANC, which will assist in entrenching ANC hegemony in areas where the ANC and the

alliance seem to be threatened. What is required is the courage to seize the initiative. The service agreement between ESKOM and other stakeholders is the necessary arsenal to reclaim the community trenches on the electricity conundrum.

The leadership in both wards 22 and 25 must return back to the trenches and implement the Programme of action, which is at their disposal currently. This Programme will assist in making the ANC visible in both wards. This will help to ensure mobilization of the motive forces in the community and constant interaction with the community. Mobilization of the motive forces can only transpire by a massive rallying point, which is the Programme of action. The Programme of action must be relevant to the immediate objective conditions faced by residents.

The branch of the ANC must provide political leadership to the councillor and not the other way round. The councillor is accountable to the ANC and as such

the branch executive committee with the mandate given to them by the branch need to exercise this responsibility in cahoots with the membership. This can only be done through convening consistently (monthly) branch meetings as an organizational rule and not a matter of preference. This will provide the necessary weight to reoccupy the terrain and claim hegemony over community trenches.

The branch leadership must initiate the involvement of the regional and provincial leadership and structures of the ANC in developing a comprehensive strategy not only to compete, but to defeat and win over these forces. Furthermore, this will also help the ANC outside government to interact directly with ordinary members. Such an approach will complement the implementation of the Programme of action that is already locked on the shelves.

In addition, the SACP branches must be involved in the ground strategy development because the establishment of these alternative structures is essentially a grave indictment on the left within the tripartite alliance. In this regard, the SACP has to be involved in ensuring that the basic needs of the working class as conceptualized by the alliance are not sidelined by other agendas. To an extent that such needs find a viable vehicle of expression outside the SACP, COSATU, the ANC and SANCO.

SANCO needs to be revived and its sub-committees resuscitated in the respective zones of the wards, as a matter of urgency. The progressive civic movement, which gave rise to SANCO has always been handling matters of electricity, water, and other related matters effectively, and which now seem to be falling in the socio political domain of the SECC and other such forces.

The ANC branches need to establish governance sub committees in their wards and every zone. Currently, some of the ward based ANC branches have lost touch with the communities due to their concentration on administrative functions of the councillors. Such usurpation of these functions has effectively rendering the ward committees redundant. This is imperative to ensure that the ward based branch of the ANC is indeed rooted everywhere within the ward through establishing sub-branches.

Put nakedly, the branch executive committees (BECs) of the ANC have been extremely industrious on matters of organizational administration, and regrettably, very little political leadership. A matter that may hold true for branches in the region and the province. This assessment is vindicated by the fact that policy units in the branches have not been functional in terms of programs. This is a very serious deficiency.

Particularly where the ANC is being challenged by the emergent resident committees.

The ANC branches and cadres need to initiate what I would call Confidence Marches. These are marches branches must begin to entertain with the purpose of demonstrating approval to their own candidates in council. Particularly where programs of development initiated by their own councillors contribute visibly to poverty alleviation and development. We need to expand our understanding of marches beyond protest culture to that of affirmation. This affirmation culture needs to be inaugurated to prop up councillors who deliver on issues such as free basic water, electricity, housing, and local employment.

However, as we have undertaken in our 2000 local elections manifesto, the ANC as a disciplined party of the left should not tolerate and buttress corrupt elements, but should act against those who fail to serve the people as their representatives.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, it has been argued that an assessment on the balance of forces requires a totality approach in Pimville, Klipspruit particularly and in other wards generally. This approach is embodied in outlook beyond individual paradigm advocated in this paper as a premise of analysis. The elitist approach, which limits its scope of analysis on Trevor Ngwane as a person, is seriously flawed and not helpful in evaluating the balance of forces in Pimville Klipspruit and elsewhere in the country.

The totality approach has shown that there is organizational infrastructure and an array of alliances, which provides the necessary administrative, political, and theoretical support to the campaign of these forces. As a result, it is insufficient and suicidal to conclude that they rely solely on renting a mob tactic.

The APF, which is an intellectual nerve centre, lends an important link between basic services cut struggles with shop floor battles. The struggles waged in the township by SECC-APF through Operation Khanyisa are linked to those at the shop floor. All these challenges both at community and shop floor are presented as consequences of privatization and GEAR, and more particularly as an assault on the working class, hence the combined efforts to fight back.

Unfortunately the internal contest within the alliance has opened up strategic opportunities for centrifugal forces baying for its split to exploit these chances; with the hope that this will offer a short cut to socialism by the working class having retreated in itself. This temptation is incited by the exclusive con-

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ceptualization which wants to beleaguer the value in the mobilization of all classes for the project of a successful NDR that recognize the working class as the consistent and revolutionary class.

While not all has been exhausted in terms of recommendations, this initiative is intended to awaken the ANC branch cadres to the challenges faced by the organization in many parts of our country. It is also a wake up call to ANC cadres in Diepkloof, Orlando, Dobsonville, Pimville, and many other areas where comrades labour under the non-threat hypothesis. It is a wake up call to ANC branch cadres in the East Rand, Vaal Triangle, Nelspruit, and so forth wherein this centrifugal force has begun to be visibly active.

Where criticism has been directed towards a particular branch, region or province it should be viewed as part of the value of criticism and self-criticism. This is in no way an attempt to degrade comrades but to raise a wake up call to levers of the movement. Particularly to alter the universal perception within our structures

including those of the alliance that Trevor Ngwane his networks should be recognized as a cumulative threat to the ANC and alliance horizontally. The fall of any ANC controlled ward to the contending forces is one too many. This wake up call is ever more imperative after the loss of some wards e.g. ward 47 in May 2002 to a segment of these forces. For now the revolution cannot afford the venture of retreat and reversal. On behalf of the motive forces for change here rests my case.

Where I have failed to convert cadres to my views and vision, let it not be fate that shakes off the doubting Thomas from their wobbly pedestal of non-threat hypothesis but ourselves. For in this terrain of democratic revolution nothing is to be taken for granted where everything happens for a reason. Nothing is a given, even hegemony itself. The revolutionary cadreship must not sleep in the corridors of power, to be woken up in destructive furies only to mourn at the graveside of the revolution.

## Glossary

APF	Anti Privatization Forum
CANSA	Campaign Against Neo Liberalism in South Africa
DCA	Dobsonville Civic Association
GEAR	Growth Employment and Redistribution
PKRC	Pimville Klipspruit Residence Committee
SAMWU	South African Municipalities Union
SANCO	South African National Civics Organization
SECC	Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee
UCOSA	United Civics Organization of South Africa

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# Building a South African co-operative movement

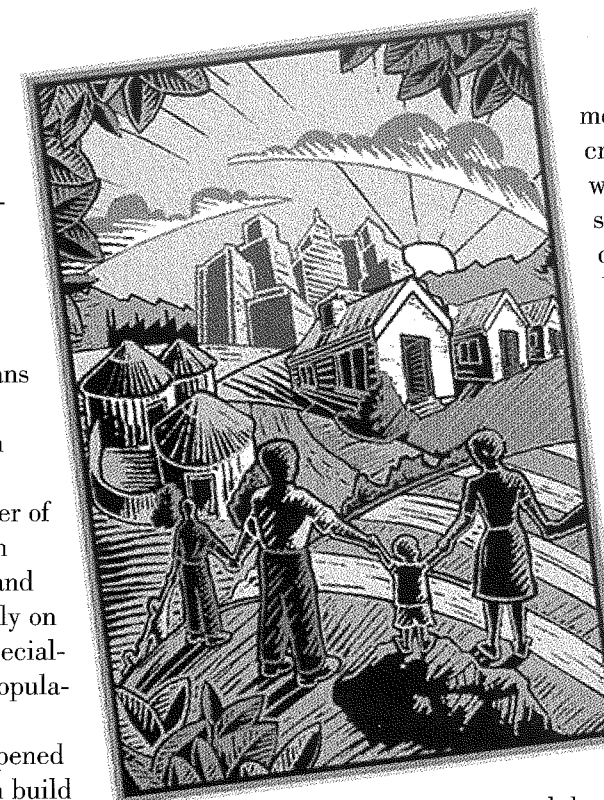
## Discussion document of the National Co-operative Association of South Africa (NCASA)

### Introduction

The ushering in of a democratic South Africa in 1994, the provision of the right to association and the right to social and economic development in our Constitution provided, for the first time, a framework through which all South Africans can pursue collective and co-operative forms of organisation and enterprise as equals. This closed the centuries-old chapter of racist and apartheid legislation and planning of the economy and society that impacted negatively on co-operative development, especially among the majority of the population.

Democratic South Africa opened a new context in which we can build a true culture and practice of co-operatives as a different way of organising the economy and society on values and principles that have been part of the international co-operative movement for many years. These values and principles of co-operatives provide the basis and strategic guidelines through which we can approach the building of a progressive co-operative sector.

A democratic South Africa implies that government policies towards co-operative development need not be pursued to privilege a minority against the rest of the population. It also means that government policies should recognise that, for a long time, the majority of the people have been involved in various co-operative forms of association both in the rural and urban areas. They range from letsema, mogodisano to stokvel and burial societies. These are co-operatives which have been marginalized and whose development has been stymied by political and legal constraints.



A democratic South Africa means that government policies can create and support conditions in which the energies, resources and skills of the majority of the people can be mobilised and harnessed. We have seen various government policies, such as land reform, housing and transport policy and the amendments to the Bank Act, which have allowed various forms of co-operative to emerge and develop in these sectors. The old apartheid era legislation on co-operatives is now under review, opening the way for a new co-operative policy and legislation where all types of co-operatives based on internationally accepted principles of co-operatives can

emerge and develop.

However, the current state of the co-operative development reflects the limitations of the real history of South Africa. Most co-operatives in South Africa are what co-operatives in Europe and North America were more than hundred years ago or more. They mirror the broader problem of under-development that affects the majority of our people because of our specific history. Thus there are limitations on the extent in which we can model co-operative organisation on conventional European and North American practice. Learning from best international practice, our own history, realities and experiences should be the foundation on which we build a co-operative movement in South Africa.

The challenge before South African co-operative members and supporters is that of building a powerful movement, capable of leading the process of creating a significant co-operative sector. But before we begin to look at what needs to be done, we would need to exam-

ine the state of co-operative development in South Africa, the many possibilities which democratic South Africa provides and strategies we should adopt for the development of co-operatives.

## History of co-operative policy in SA

The history of co-operative development in South Africa is not separate from the history of apartheid planning and organisation of our society and economy. It is impossible to chart the way forward for co-operative development in the current period without an understanding of the historical development of co-operatives in South Africa. The very word "co-operative" was appropriated by various racist regimes to fund and establish institutions geared towards the needs of the Afrikaners in the rural areas, especially for purpose of agriculture and related business. Special co-operative legislation – The Co-operatives Act – and an implementing agency – the Registrar of Co-operatives – were established to control and supervise co-operative activities.

These co-operatives have developed into powerful business ventures that control much of agricultural production, marketing and processing in rural areas. At the same time, the apartheid regime promoted the so-called agricultural co-operatives for Africans in the Bantustans, using barren land. There is a debate about whether these formations were true co-operatives (i.e. based on values and principles of cooperation). In practice, some of these were not co-operatives at all but just semi-state apparatus.

Black South Africans, however, were involved in unrecognised co-operatives in both the urban and rural areas. Despite the impact of colonialism and apartheid these co-operatives survive to this day. They included rotating savings and credit schemes of various forms, including Letsema, burial societies, stokvels, mogodisano and social clubs.

## Movement beginnings

The National Co-operative Association of South Africa (NCASA) was founded in 1997 with the purpose of bringing together all South African co-operatives under one apex body. It has brought together co-operatives, including their secondary co-operatives, from agriculture, consumer, home industries, medical and primary health care to financial co-operatives, housing and worker co-operatives.

In the course of its development NCASA has forged links with international co-operative movements such as the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA), International Labour Organisation (ILO) and co-operative apex bodies in many countries of Europe, North America and Africa.

NCASA has also forged links with the Agricultural Business Chamber (ABC), an organisation mainly of white agri-business – where co-operatives make up

50% of its membership – which shares the vision of NCASA and values and principles of Cupertino. This relationship will go a long way towards overcoming the historical division of co-operative development in South Africa along racially defined lines. At the same time, it will strengthen our resolve to build true co-operatives, not false ones, in all economic sectors based on internationally accepted values and principles.

NCASA also aims to enter into strong and strategic alliances with the South African labour movement and other social movements in order to promote the concept and practice of cooperation within these organisations.

## The mission

The mission of NCASA is to promote the concept and practice of co-operation and contribute to the organisation of the significant areas of the economy and society around co-operatives values and principles – the building of a co-operative sector.

By co-operatives we mean those kinds of enterprises and associations that people have formed voluntarily and independently to meet their own socio-economic needs. Their members also control co-operatives in a democratic manner. The defining features of the co-operatives make them fundamentally differently from conventional business structures or enterprises, whose sole criterion is maximisation of profits.

NCASA believes in the values of self-help, self-responsibility, self-management, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. These are values that have shaped the international co-operative movement for many years. The principles that guide members of NCASA are as follows:

- **Voluntary and Open Membership:** Co-operatives are voluntary organisations, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial or religious discrimination.
- **Democratic Member Control:** Co-operatives are democratic organisations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions. Men and women serving as elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In primary co-operatives members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote) and co-operatives at other levels are also organised in a democratic manner.
- **Member Economic Participation:** Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their co-operative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of their co-operative. Members usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing their co-operative, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible, benefiting mem-

bers in proportion to their transactions with the co-operative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

- **Autonomy and Independence:** Co-operatives are autonomous, self-help organisations controlled by their members. If they enter to agreements with other organisations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their co-operative autonomy.
- **Education, Training and Information:** Co-operatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers and employees, so that they can contribute effectively to the development of their co-operatives. They inform the general public – particularly young people and opinion leaders – about the nature and benefits of co-operatives.
- **Co-operation among Co-operatives:** Co-operatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the co-operatives by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.
- **Concern for Community:** Co-operatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members.

All of these principles are interlinked and each one is part of the mission of organising society and economy along co-operative lines. They can only be realised if the majority of the people actively and co-operatively empower themselves and the state create and support appropriate conditions for co-operative development. NCASA aim to enrich these principles through creative application in order to suit the needs of co-operative development in South Africa and ensure that co-operative principles are incorporated in its

training and education services at all levels of co-operative development.

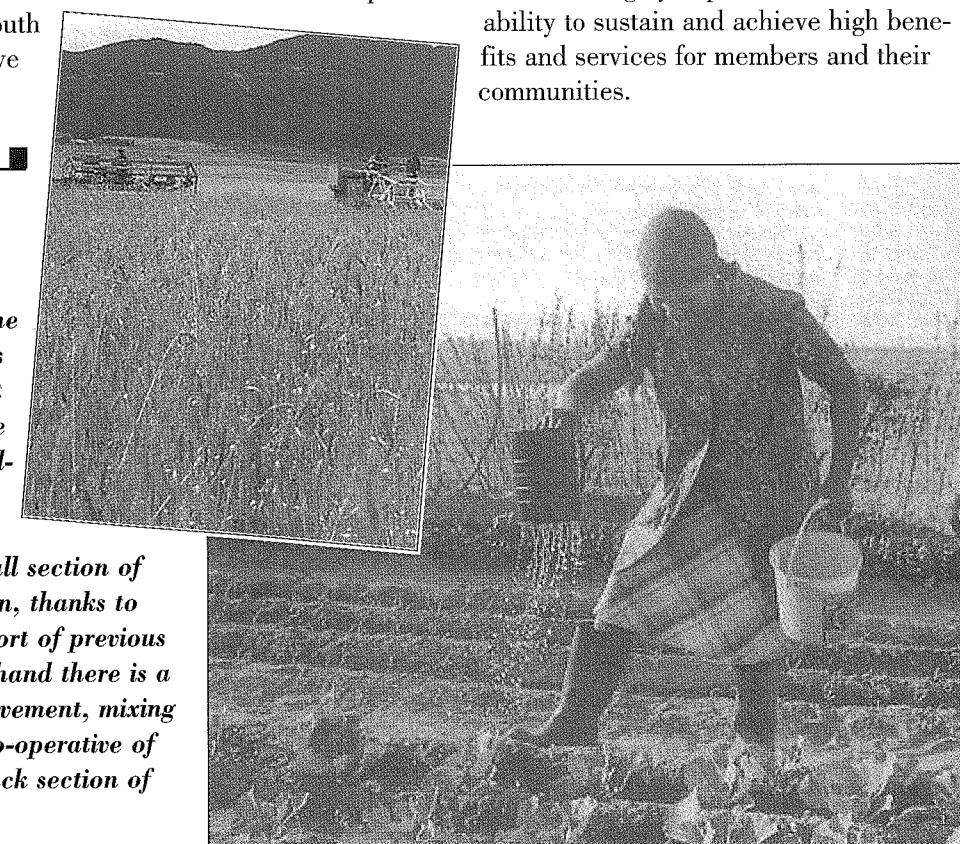
Democratic South Africa, through its progressive constitution and revision of apartheid policies, lays the basis towards meeting our mission.

The organisation of the significant areas of the economy and society along co-operative lines, a mission of NCASA, requires that the it should set short, medium and long-term goals and adopt a programme of action aimed at co-operative ways of organising the economy and society, proceed from an understanding that without a grassroots, autonomous and powerful co-operative movement, no significant co-operative sector is possible. The task of building the co-operative movement is central to realising our mission.

Another objective of NCASA is to influence the shaping of government co-operative policy. This requires that government policies recognise the historical realities imposed on co-operative development in South Africa. It also requires that we develop innovative solutions that bear relation to our situation and promote effective strategies of partnerships with government for national development.

Achieving high benefits and providing high quality services to all members of the co-operatives and their communities is one of the central objectives of NCASA. The main mechanism for attaining these objectives is the establishment of regional support structures which we are building in all provinces and effective structures at the national level. It also involves ongoing training, education and counselling of member co-operatives. The very objectives of organising our economy and society along co-operative lines and building a powerful co-operative movement largely depend on NCASA's ability to sustain and achieve high benefits and services for members and their communities.

“ The main challenge facing NCASA in the current context is how to synchronise and synergise the fact of inherited divergences of co-operative development in South Africa. On the one hand, there is a highly developed, formal co-operative sector centred around agriculture and limited to a small section of the South African population, thanks to financial and material support of previous governments. On the other hand there is a mainly grassroots driven movement, mixing both formal and informal co-operative of various kinds among the black section of the population. ”



## The challenges facing NCASA

The main challenge facing NCASA in the current context is how to synchronise and synergise the fact of inherited divergences of co-operative development in South Africa. On the one hand, there is a highly developed, formal co-operative sector centred around agriculture and limited to a small section of the South African population, thanks to financial and material support of previous governments. On the other hand there is a mainly grassroots driven movement, mixing both formal and informal co-operative of various kinds among the black section of the population.

These co-operatives span the range from housing and consumer to worker co-operatives. There are more than one thousand co-operatives which have been registered with government. The new co-operatives that are emerging and growing are from the black section of the population and are represented by workers, professionals, women, township residents, rural farmers, taxi and truck drivers and artists. However, these majority of these co-operative have not found their national home, they remain isolated, marginalized and not effectively coordinated. We also have thousands upon thousands of co-operative activities which still operate on an informal basis, such as stokvels, burial societies and social clubs.

It is for this reason that the emphasis of NCASA in the current context is on the mobilisation of the resources and energies of the majority of the population for their own self-empowerment, through co-operative association. They provide the best potential to provide leadership to the process of building a co-operative sector. We aim to represent the co-operatives as a whole and ensure that, at all times, and in the first stance NCASA uses its resources and time to represent the interests of the emerging co-operatives.

Among the key tasks in supporting the emerging co-operatives is the mobilisation of finance necessary for new investments, in order for growth to occur in these co-operatives. Without access to finance and credit no significant growth of co-operatives can occur. This will require that we strengthen the existing financial co-operative institutions such as savings and credit co-operatives and that we create new ones, such as co-operative banks and co-operative insurance. It will also require that we advocate for new legislative environment for their development. The importance of building financial co-operative institutions means that money generated by the co-operative enterprises is kept within the community to be used for the benefit of the whole community as well as individual co-operative members.

The process of building a co-operative sector is taking place at a time when the concept and practice of co-operatives is gaining public attention, both within government and civil society. More and more people are becoming aware about co-operatives than at any time in

the past and want to get involved in one way or the other. They involve the labour and religious, women's organisations, democratic and youth movements. Such awareness is not only based on co-operatives contribution to the diversification of ownership patterns in South Africa, but also on their unique role in decent employment creation and development. These are organisations in our society which are eager to see an on-going process of building the co-operative sector.

The pre-dominance of the profit-making private sector as the "most obvious" option of organising the economy and society points to the amount of work we still have to do in promoting and mobilising for a co-operative option in our society. We need to continue popularise and aggressively advocate the concept and practice of cooperation.

Various sections of private sector business, such as the Agriculture Business Centre, the National Farmers Union, also support the idea of co-operative development, creation of conditions by government for their development. We will continue to engage and mobilise this sector to appreciate the idea and practice of co-operative development.

The continued pre-dominance of for-profit making private sector reminds us of the magnitude of the challenge we face as we move towards organising a larger sector of the economy into co-operatives. This process is inseparable from NCASA ability to drive the process of movement building.

As our values and principles illustrate; we consider co-operative development as a process of building a unique and distinct sector in our society. Co-operatives are neither extensions of the state, nor are they private entities in a capitalist sense – aimed at making profit for its own sake – but a being autonomously controlled and driven by the people themselves to meet their own needs.

While co-operatives are crucial in promoting social and economic development, we do not, however, consider them as a panacea for all our social and economic problems, or as a substitute for other efforts by society, such as the public sector, to promote a sustainable social development.

Partnership with government is an important part of building a powerful co-operative movement. Part of our challenge is to ensure that the co-operatives complement the public sector especially in areas like social services and public utilities. Co-operative experience shows that it is possible to build partnerships that enhance rather than undermine the capacity of the public sector in social development. Such partnership [as we further indicate in point 8] will require an appropriate policy environment and special government's consideration of co-operatives in all social and economic development activities.

It is largely the task of NCASA as a grassroots movement to promote and foster the spirit of cooperation which underpins the concept of partnerships.

NCASA should always encourage partnerships with government which do not undermine the autonomy of co-operatives. What we should bear in mind is that the principle of autonomy is the most important weapon we have to introduce forms of partnerships that strengthen rather than weaken the development of the co-operative movement.

## The nature of NCASA

The nature of the NCASA we seek to build stems from our assessment of the present period of building the co-operative sector and state of co-operative development in South Africa. It is for this reason that we have concluded that NCASA should develop itself as a grassroots, autonomous and powerful co-operative movement.

NCASA aims to develop itself as a grassroots co-operative movement, capable of leading the process of building a co-operative sector in South Africa. The nature and strength of NCASA must continue to derive in its grassroots co-operative base. It must strive to remain a powerful movement that accepts all kinds co-operatives in its ranks, including informal co-operatives, who abide by its mission, objectives and policies. Its nature and strength also lies in mobilising other non-co-operative organisations behind the co-operative option.

## Building a grassroots movement

Our ability to build NCASA as a grassroots movement depends on our ability to bring more and more of the emerging co-operatives into the organisation for the objectives mentioned in points 4 and 5 above.

As we have pointed above, one of the key priorities of NCASA is the achievement of high benefits and the provision quality services to our members. This means, among other things, that we continuously develop methods of collaboration with members; ensure that we act as a united organisation at all times; inform our members about the entirety of NCASA activities, and meet our members where they are and where they wish to meet us.

Building NCASA's organisational structures in the regions is our second priority. These regional structures should be sufficiently organised to guide the development of emerging co-operatives where they are located. Emphasis on regional structures is also aimed at enhancing the democratic process within NCASA, and ensures that it remains truly member driven and member controlled.

A democratically controlled NCASA

also means that the national management structures must be accountable and directed by the elected representatives – members of the Board of Directors – who are charged with the leading responsibilities of providing policy direction for the organisation.

The third priority in building a NCASA that is capable of leading building a co-operative sector is the development of co-operative cadreship and leadership as central promoters or activists of co-operative development and ensuring they have capacity to strengthen the co-operatives. We will continue to provide more education and training programmes in this regard. Consistent with our work among the membership will be on-going training to ensure that our members are fully empowered to carry out their role as a conscious force for the building of a co-operative movement.

The fourth priority will focus on building national sector co-operatives where the need arises. This is crucial in sectors such as worker co-operatives, burial societies and financial co-operatives, where the level of their organisation and mobilisation requires an effective

## ANC STELLENBOSCH 2002 RESOLUTION ON BUILDING A CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT

### Noting that:

1. A co-operative movement would support more equitable growth and ownership in our economy and empower our people, while providing important services more affordably and efficiently to poor households.
2. The current legislative framework for co-operatives does not encourage the formation of small-scale producer cooperatives, co-operative financial institutions or consumer cooperatives.
3. Our people do not have enough understanding or information about the aims, developmental potential and functioning of cooperatives.

### Therefore Resolves:

1. That the ANC and its allies support the mobilisation of a social movement to initiate the development of cooperatives as an instrument of economic growth and development.
2. To ensure that Government urgently establishes at all levels appropriate enabling legislation, an appropriate institutional framework and resources for producer, consumer, services and credit co-operatives.
3. To ensure that the Departments of Housing, Trade and Industry, Finance and Agriculture and Land in particular, must develop programmes that support co-operatives and educate the public about them.
4. That the national Department of Education, through interactions with other departments, educational institutions, including SETAs and organisations working in the cooperative sector, should ensure sustainable training programmes on cooperative and that life-skills training in the schools includes some study of co-operatives, as part of broader training on entrepreneurship.

coordination of their development.

Our organisational capacity should also be geared towards ensuring decisive influence in government at all levels. We will participate in the national debates and within many different areas to influence developments on what is best for our members and the co-operative movement generally. This will include shaping co-operative legislation and building strong partnerships with government. Accordingly, NCASA will work towards policy development and research capacity in the organisation as one of its priorities. This will include capacity-building to influence legislative processes.

There can be no mass-based movement that is unable to finance itself and operate on a sustainable basis. At the moment, NCASA is on a transition period, from being a donor-driven, top-down apex body to a mass-based, self-financed co-operative apex body. Various measures will be applied in this period so that the organisation reduces its dependence on donor funding.

### Shaping government co-operative policy

The task of transforming the co-operative legislation of the apartheid era is one of the most important tasks in the process of building a co-operative sector in South Africa. Only when there exist policies and government strategies that promote the development of the co-operative sector, will we be in a position to take the co-operative movement to new heights. Without government legislation friendly to co-operatives, there cannot be a successful co-operative movement.

The process of shaping government co-operative policies should reflect the general and specific potentialities of the co-operative movement and their requirements for development in the current period. Co-operative policies should ensure that institutional support systems are put into place for their sustainability.

The new co-operative legislation should outline key strategies for partnerships between government and the co-operative movement. The legislation should also provide funding mechanisms for the development of co-operatives in two ways, the building of financial co-operative institutions (co-operative banks, credit unions, insurance etc) and state funding for creation of effective support institutions such as research and education for co-operative development. NCASA is in favour of government funding for co-operative support centres in the provinces.

Co-operative policy development is an ongoing process subject to review and further refinement and the current government policy process is in its early stage. As part of our contribution to national co-operative development policy, NCASA will advocate for the need for a comprehensive national co-operative policy in the form of a white paper.

We also utilise existing institutional policy forums and resources to increase our capacity and help contribute to national development. NCASA will actively participate in policy institutions, such as NEDLAC, to raise the voice of the co-operatives and advocate for progressive co-operative legislation.

### International

NCASA is part and parcel of the international movement of co-operatives, under the banner of International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) which has been in existence for many decades. It is no exaggeration to say that a strong national movement of co-operatives depend, in part, on a strong regional, continental and international co-operative movement. Our policy should place more emphasis on regional and continental cooperation with the aim of promoting co-operative values and principles, especially on Southern Africa.

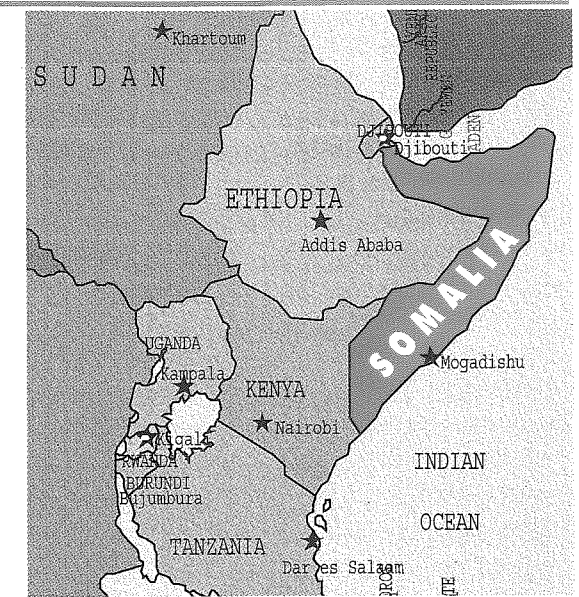
The building of a significant co-operative sector in South African requires that we participate in the current international and national debates about "globalisation" and the implications of world developments on co-operative development. It is in this context that NCASA will encourage international movement-to-movement and co-operative-to-co-operative contacts and exchanges.

This then represents our reading of the challenges facing the co-operatives and the strategies required for building a powerful and grassroots based movement for a significant co-operative sector. Only through a strong and effective NCASA, with active participation of its members, could we guarantee that the mission of the co-operative movement will be achieved.

# A success stories

## Somaliland is Africa's best kept secret

by  
Iqbal Jhazbhay<sup>1</sup>



SOME MAJOR AFRICAN players are taking a new look at Somaliland, that state on the strategic Horn of Africa that continues to pay the political and economic price for declaring independence twice (1960 and 1991).

Somaliland is labeled as a "breakaway state" by some analysts, while others describe its success as "the little country that could."<sup>2</sup>

In fact, Somaliland did nothing more than end a union it had entered into as a sovereign independent state, and has since pulled itself up by its own bootstraps.

Recently, Senegal, the European Union and Somaliland's neighbour Ethiopia have shown promising signs of wanting to end the impasse. Ethiopia hosted Somaliland President Dahir Riyale Kahin on a state visit late last year and President Wade of Senegal hosted the Somaliland president recently.

A South African delegation, paid a fact-finding visit to Somaliland in January 2003 and declared it to be "a challenge rather than a problem for the African Union".<sup>3</sup>

*"The country has shown the African renaissance spirit of self-reliance and resilience and has produced a sustainable government and constitution. They have got their act together while in the south (Somalia) the Transitional National Government (TNG) has been unable to do so. The international community must take notice of this. It cannot remain ostrich-like with its head in the sand"*, said Fatima Ismail, a human rights activist.<sup>4</sup>

The energy that the international community has put into the process that led to the installation of the southern TNG has not produced the desired result.<sup>5</sup>

The Kenyan government earlier appointed a new mediator to take over the Somalia peace talks in Eldoret, Kenya, which have been bogged down since they began in October 2002.

Bethwell Kiplagat, a senior Kenyan diplomat, will replace Elijah W. Mwangale, who was blamed by Somali warlords and Western diplomats alike for not properly managing the talks.

"Warlords continue to hold sway in Somalia and violence has resumed to a disturbing degree. The international community should be looking at the reality on the ground," said Ismail.

*"If the international community plans to apply the principal of territorial unity and the fiction of a sovereign Somalia without understanding the history, facts on the ground and the genocide experienced, it would be planting the seeds for conflict more deadly than previously seen in Africa"*, said Professor Hussein Bulhan, head of the Somaliland Academy for Peace and Development and former head of the Anti-Apartheid Movement at Boston University.

"The expectation of the Somaliland people has rightly been raised by the success of their democratic and modest economic development. To frustrate this expectation and to force a union with the South, against the will of the people, is also to court a deadly conflict," he said.

Supporting peace in Somaliland where it only prevails, providing an incentive to it and extending it, is a worthwhile and realistic target.

Ethiopia, which makes increasing use of the Somaliland port of Berbera, has opened a diplomatic trade-liaison office in the capital of Hargeisa along with numerous EU and UN agencies.

The United States and other Western powers, mindful of the strategic importance of the Horn, continue to investigate establishing an interest office in Somaliland – something that would be impossible in the ungovernable Somalia.

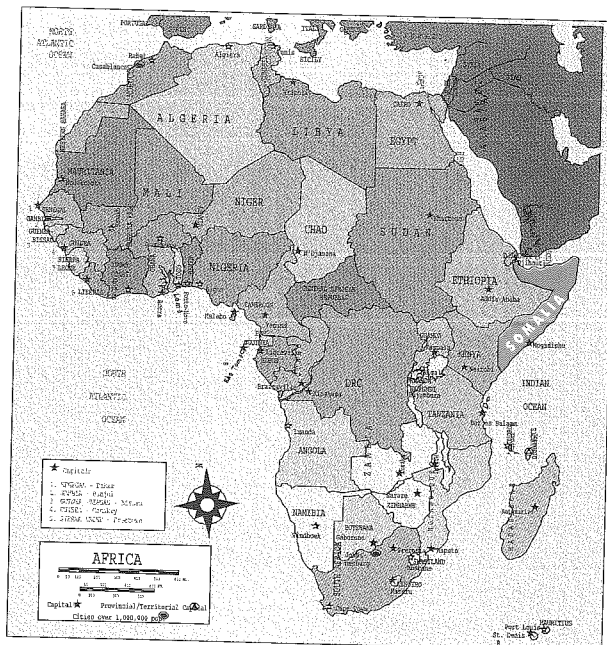
Somaliland's major problem is that it is too small to wield any muscle against the international organisations that ignore it.

But as the African focus moves increasingly off the Great Lakes and onto the Horn of Africa, this country of 3,5-million people will become an example of stability, good governance and economic discipline.

Geographically Somaliland, an area of 137 600 square kilometres forms the top of the figure seven made by the Horn of Africa. It is roughly the size of England and Wales. It was formerly British Somaliland while Somalia, the bottom of the 7 – was an Italian colony. Both colonies gained independence in 1960. Somaliland decided shortly after independence to form a union with the south. Before taking this step, however, it had already been recognised by 35 countries. The partnership was decidedly biased in favour of the south. When southerner Siad Barre took power in a coup he brutally crushed northern opposition. This included flattening the Somaliland capital of Hargeisa, using a combination of artillery, South African mercenaries and bomber aircraft that took off from the airport on the outskirts of the city. On the outskirts of the capital, lie a number of UN acknowledged mass graves as testimony to southern brutality.

After Barre's fall in 1991, the Somalilanders wasted no time in ending the union with the south. After months of deliberations attended by many sectors of society, the grand conference of Burco as well as the second conference at Borama, a sort of South African Codesa, revoked the act of union and reinstated the independence that their territory enjoyed.

This action raised hackles in the then Organisation of African Unity, ever nervous about secession and determined, for better or worse, to maintain colonial boundaries. In fact, Somaliland's declaration of independence transgressed neither of these. The country was not breaking some pre-independence bond with the south. It was merely breaking a union that it had entered into as an independent state, for which there are numerous African precedents.



*The question of Somaliland has been described as "a challenge rather than a problem" for the African Union*

Somaliland has not violated colonial boundaries. It has occupied no more than that territory once occupied by the British and recognised as independent in 1960 by the international community.

Not only are Somaliland disenchanted with the uneven arrangement and traumatised by the civil war that killed more than 50 000 of their compatriots and 500 000 displaced, but they see no inducement to return to formal ties with what is to all intents and purposes an anarchic state.

The TNG of Somalia – that carries the seat at the United Nations, the Arab League and the African Union, cannot pretend to control anything more than a few blocks of Mogadishu. What caused this rush

towards recognising a government with no territory nor administration, after having ignored arguably real and effective government in Somaliland?

The remainder of the country remains ungovernably in the hands of warlords.

Following the withdrawal of United Nations peace-keeping troops from Somalia in 1995 the international community, and particularly the United States that pulled out a year earlier, wanted nothing to do with anything bearing the label "Somali".

However security considerations post September 11 2001 have reinforced the strategic importance of the Horn that is now being patrolled by a German led European force.

The rebuilding of Hargeisa, which Barre reduced to rubble and turned into a minefield, has happened without assistance from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

The economic development has been largely supported by Somalilanders in the diaspora. Proven oil reserves, coal and gemstone mining, livestock and fisheries production, remain untapped.<sup>6</sup>

More importantly Somaliland has built a strong democratic society that seamlessly passed the test last year with the death of President Mohamed Egal.

Within hours of confirmation of his death at 1 Military Hospital in Pretoria, vice president Kahin was sworn in as national leader. Both Egal and Kahin had been nominated by a council of elders in 1993 that re-elected Egal in 1997.

Kahin faced a full electorate in the country's first presidential elections on April 14 this year.

International observers, including South Africans, declared the presidential elections as "peaceful, orderly and transparent".<sup>7</sup>

Somalilanders had their first taste of democracy in May 2001 when an internationally observed referendum confirmed their wish to remain apart from Somalia and endorsed a new constitution.

Highly successful municipal elections – also internationally observed and the first since 1969 – were held on December 15, 2002.

Somaliland is undergoing a full house of democratic procedures with parliamentary elections due to follow shortly on the presidential ballot.

Relations with northern neighbour Djibouti were chilled by that French dominated enclave hosting a conference that parachuted the Transitional National Government into power in Mogadishu.

By all credible accounts, the President of Djibouti, considerably interfered in this process and some conclude hijacked the process driven by his specific interests.

Observers have rightly questioned: where in history has a president enjoyed the right of nominating dele-

gates to a parliament of a neighbouring country? In addition the election of a long-standing minister of interior in the scorned Barre regime as TNG president was received with shock in Somaliland.

This gut-wrenching shock is captured by a Somali refugee in Kenya who said "Mogadishu has fallen into the clutch of thugs, no better than hyenas, who have no idea what honour is, what trust is, what political responsibility means".

Asked whether he would go back to Mogadishu. He went on, "Would you ask a hyena to watch over your beef stew? Because you would be a fool if you trusted a hyena, wouldn't you?"<sup>8</sup>

By contrast, a recent UN 2002 review declared Somaliland as "the exception to the violence" and the prevailing anarchy in Somalia.<sup>9</sup>

Clearly, Somaliland's extraordinary indigenous conflict-resolution methods may provide an example to the southern Somalis. But, now the international community and notably South African agents of peace, cannot be delicately silent on supporting Somaliland's success story and its emerging democracy. Are we ready for this critical Nepad imperative?

## Notes and references

<sup>1</sup> Iqbal Jhazbhay teaches at the University of South Africa and is a member of the ANC's Commission of Religious Affairs. He also serves on the Board of the Institute for Global Dialogue. E-mail: jhazbmid@unisa.ac.za

<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.csis.org/africa/ANotes/ANotes0211.pdf> – for an insightful overview article by David Shinn with the title: "The Little Country that Could". See also the article by the eminent scholar Ioan M Lewis with the title "Mohamad Siyad Barre's Ghost in Somalia" at <http://www.waltainfo.com/Conflict/Articles/2002/April/article8.htm>. Another text of importance is the unpublished article by Matt Bryden, "The Banana Test: Is Somaliland Ready for Recognition".

<sup>3</sup> This fact finding visit was undertaken by Mr. Welile Nhlapo, Head of the Presidential Support Unit in the Presidency of South Africa. The Unit primarily focuses on conflict resolution in Africa.

<sup>4</sup> Amnesty International, while not the favourite of all political activists, called recently for acknowledgement of Somaliland's record of stability, political pluralism and media openness. It recently convened its regional conference in the Somaliland capital of Hargeisa.

<sup>5</sup> See the recent report of the International Crisis Group, "Negotiating a Blueprint for Peace in Somalia" at <http://www.intlcrisis-group.org/projects/showreport.cfm?reportid=911>. The report depicts the situation on the ground and has noted that the TNG has collapsed and shows no sign of life on the streets of Mogadishu.

<sup>6</sup> See the article by Shannon Field, "Somaliland elections boost oil prospects", SUNDAY INDEPENDENT, April 20 2003, page 7 and the article by JJ Cornish, "Hope in the Horn of Africa", MAIL & GUARDIAN, April 25 2003, page 20.

<sup>7</sup> "Interim Statement of the South African Observer Mission on the Somaliland Presidential Elections of 14th April 2003", issued on 15th April 2003. The 10-person South African election observer team also included members from the Johannesburg-based Electoral Institute of Southern Africa. See [http://www.news24.com/News24/Africa/News/0,,2-11-1447\\_1348911,00.html](http://www.news24.com/News24/Africa/News/0,,2-11-1447_1348911,00.html)

<sup>8</sup> Farah, Nuruddin. *Yesterday, Tomorrow: Voices from the Somali Diaspora*. London: Cassell. 2000.

<sup>9</sup> See "Somalia: Review of 2002", dated 17th January 2002 on the website of the United Nations Integrated Regional Information Network <http://www.irinnews.org>

# The regulation issues

## of genetically modified organisms in South Africa

by  
Neo Masithele

### The Context

Attainment of food security in South Africa and in Africa as a continent is a challenge not only to government but all sectors of society. It is a challenge for the agricultural sector more so, as it is directly involved in the production of food. South Africa is far from an ideal country for crop production, as less than 15% of its land is arable and there are serious climatic constraints, including periodic droughts. Despite these circumstances, productivity must increase to provide food security for a growing population.

South Africa recognises potential benefits that can arise from the use of biotechnology to address these constraints on food production. The development of the government National Biotechnology Strategy is an attempt to provide a framework for this. The Strategy aims at harnessing the benefits of biotechnology for sustainable development, including increased food production and mitigation of adverse environmental impacts on food production. The South African government therefore embraces biotechnology with the proviso that the application of the technology is properly managed.

Before this strategy was developed, activities around agricultural biotechnology were already regulated under an Act of Parliament – the Genetically Modified Organism Act of 1997 (Act No.15 of 1997), which addressed the potential risks associated with the introduction of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs).

### Objectives of the Genetically Modified Organism Act

The object of this Act is "to provide for measures to promote the responsible development, production, use and application of genetically modified organisms; to ensure

*that all activities involving the use of genetically modified organisms (including importation, production, release and distribution) shall be carried out in such a way to limit possible harmful consequences to the environment; to give attention to the prevention of accidents and the effective management of waste; to establish common measures for the evaluation and reduction of the potential risks arising out of activities involving the use of GMOs; to lay down the necessary requirements and criteria for risks assessments; to establish a Council for GMOs; to ensure that GMOs are appropriate and do not present hazard to environment; and to establish procedures for the notification of specific activities involving the use of GMOs".*

### Administrative Structures for Implementation of the Act

The Act makes provision for the appointment of various decision-making bodies, namely the Executive Council, Advisory Committee and the Registrar. This Act is administered by the Directorate Genetic Resources within the National Department of Agriculture, where the Registrar resides. Since its implementation in December 1999, all activities with genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in SA are conducted according to a permit system and therefore all permission and responsibility resides with the legally established authority.

The Registrar for GMOs (Senior Manager: Genetic Resources) receives all applications for activities with GMOs. Once he/she is satisfied that the application is compliant with then provisions of the GMO Act, the application is forwarded to the Advisory Committee. Members of the Advisory Committee are appointed by the Minister of Agriculture and consist of ten scientists

who are experts in fields related to GMOs. This Committee conducts risk assessment (food, feed and environment impact) of all applications. In the event that there is not sufficient expertise in this Committee, the committee appoints relevant sub-committees to assist them. Based on the report of the committee, the application is recommended to the Executive Council for consideration.

The Council is the ultimate decision-making body and consists of officials from six government departments: the Departments of Agriculture, Health, Environment Affairs and Tourism, Labour, Trade and Industry and the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, and the chairperson of the Advisory Committee. If the Council is satisfied that a certain activity with a GMO may be conducted, the Registrar is authorized by the Council to issue the necessary permit.

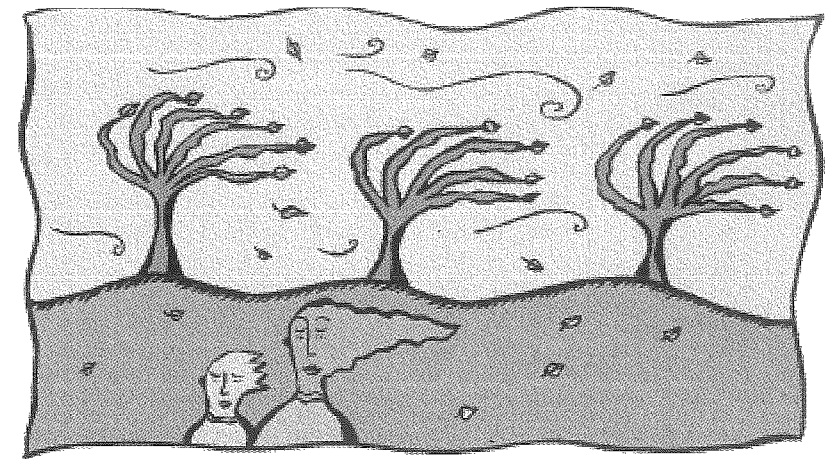
Under the GMO Act provision is also made for the appointment of inspectors. These are officials within the National Department of Agriculture and they are responsible for monitoring GMO trials through inspections of trial sites at regular intervals during the planting/trial season. They also inspect and monitor off-loading of consignments coming into South Africa.

To date SA has approved commercial use of four GM crops, viz. insect resistant maize (Yieldgard or MON810), insect resistant cotton (Bollgard or Line 531), herbicide tolerant soybean (Roundup Ready or Lines 1445 and 1698). Additionally to these, the following events may be used for food and feed but not commercial planting, maize events T25, B+176, soybean events GTS 40-3-2 and A2704-12 oil seed rape events Topas 19/2, Ms1Rf3. A register of all permits issued since implementation of the Act, the Act itself and regulations on the Act, are available on the department's website at [www.nda.agric.za](http://www.nda.agric.za).

### Implementation Experiences

Since its implementation, a series of concerns have been raised and demands made to the National Department of Agriculture to freeze all activities related to GMOs. Some of the concerns raised thus far are:

- **Loss of Biodiversity:** The diversity of traditional seeds that have been developed through a very sophisticated system of knowledge passed on from generation to generation, over centuries by local farmers and indigenous people, are being replaced by genetically engineered and hybrid seeds.
- **"Genetic drift" or "biopollution" from GMOs:** An indirect consequence resulting from pollination between conventional and GE crops, is the occurrence of genetic drift, i.e. the movement of genes



“ The South African government... embraces biotechnology with the proviso that the application of the technology is properly managed. ”

that causes non-target organisms to express unwanted genes, i.e. biopollution.

- **Creation of "super weeds" and "super pests":** Mention is made of major pests and weeds that have developed through only a few years of growing GE cotton and corn potato in the USA. These pests and weeds force the farmers to spray crops with higher and higher doses of herbicides and synthetic pesticides.
- **Socio economic impact:** The Act does not allow consideration of socio-economic impact during decision making.
- **Untargeted pests and insects are harmed by GMOs:** Many GE plants have been developed to express a gene that was taken from *Bacillus thuringiensis* (B+) that acts as a biological pesticide. Studies conducted indicated that B+ was deadly to Monarch butterflies and kills beneficial pests and insects related to GE crops.
- **Questions about the claims of increased nutritional value of GE crops:** Various GE crops are being promoted as cures to diseases and nutritional deficiencies. For example, golden rice has been engineered to contain large amounts of Vitamin A, a vitamin necessary for sight. Research showed that a single serving of golden rice would not be adequate to solve the Vitamin A deficiency. They thus argue that focus should be placed on traditional crops that are rich in Vitamin A and not GE crops engineered to contain higher quantities of Vitamin A.
- **Human health and food safety effects including the potential for toxicity, allergenicity and antibiotic resistance:** Because GE foods may contain genes that are not natural to the product, food allergies, often toxic, may result from eating these foods. GE foods may also have an impact on a per-

son violating his or her religious or moral beliefs by imbibing foods that ate contaminated with genes from sources that are believed to be sacred.

### Some responses to the above arguments include the following:

All crops naturally contain a variety of chemicals that act as a defence system against insects, bacteria, viruses and fungi. When eaten in small quantities, these chemicals pose no risk. During the assessment of GE crops, particular attention is paid to the compositional analysis of the GE crop compared to a conventional counterpart, and any additional components are thoroughly tested for their potential to cause allergies and toxicity.

On the issue of traditional seeds that are being developed over centuries by local and indigenous people that are carefully adapted and selected and that such diversity is destroyed when replaced with commercial seeds; both hybrid and GE varieties can equally be applied to non-GM seeds. This is therefore not a concern only related to the use of GMOs.

Gene transfer from any crop to wild species by means of pollen is a natural process that occurs constantly and is well known in conventional breeding (Bodenmuller, k.2001 InterNutrition – Swiss Association for Research and Nutrition, Switzerland, Health relevant and environmental and genetic engineering). In addition, genetic drift can only occur between related crop species. South Africa does not have any wild crop species of the same taxonomic group as the GMOs currently approved in S.A.

The fear that new, aggressive weeds could be created by genetically modified herbicide tolerant plants has to date not been confirmed. Likewise, pollen transfer from a field of GE plants to a neighbouring field of organic or conventional varieties must be differentiated according to plant species. The Department of Agriculture, through an inspection service, also monitors all trials with GE crops to ensure that cross-pollination does not occur. Furthermore, the extent of pollen flow does not correspond to gene flow. In crops such as potatoes, which reproduce vegetative, gene transfer has not been known to occur at all (Bodenmuller, k.2001 InterNutrition – Swiss Association for Research and Nutrition, Switzerland, Health-relevant and environmental aspects of different farming systems: organic, convention and genetic engineering).

In SA, if the safety of a GMO cannot be demonstrated, the product is not approved. To date only four crops have been approved for commercial use; i.e. insect resistant maize, insect resistant cotton, herbicide tolerant cotton and herbicide tolerant soybean. None of these have sexually compatible relatives in this country. In the event that closely related exotics do exist, no evidence of out-crossing could be found. Importantly, cot-

ton, soybean and maize are not invasive or problematic crops in SA.

Regarding farmer dependency on more expensive seeds from multinational companies, it is quite true that GE seeds are more expensive than conventional seed, but this is because the price includes a technology fee. An independent survey of smallholder farmers in SA designed to explore the economic benefits of their adoption of B+ cotton was conducted in November 2000. This survey indicated that farmers have, during the 1998/1999 season, experienced a per hectare increase in yields of 18% compared to non-adopters, and a 13% reduction of pesticide costs compared to non-adopters. These results outweighed the increase in seed costs (100% ha) to give a substantial increase in gross margins of 11% (Independent survey – Farm level impact of B+ cotton in South Africa, MONITOR BIOTECHNOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT No. 48, December 2001).

Many conventional foods have the potential for toxicity and allergenicity. Genetically modified foods are however assessed so thoroughly that they can be considered as safe as conventional foods. In this regard, the Department of Health has kept abreast with and participated internationally in relevant work conducted by the Joint Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)/World Health Organisation (WHO) Codex Alimentarius Commission. Draft regulations on the labeling of foodstuff derived through certain techniques of genetic modification, prepared by the Department of Health, also address moral and religious concerns.

Other scientists are of the view that the genetic modification of crops has a tremendous potential of alleviating vitamin and other deficiencies that cause major health problems throughout the globe. The example that can be used is the "golden rice", which has been modified to contain "beta-carotene". White rice is the staple food for most of the 3,5 million people in the world. The kernels lack beta-carotene, without which the body cannot manufacture vitamin A. It has been stated that about 100 to 140 million children suffer from vitamin A deficiency and that more than half a million of them go blind every year. In addition, vitamin A deficiency also weakens the immune system and many children succumb to ailments such as pneumonia, measles and diarrhea. Although the consumption of this golden rice may not provide the total recommended daily allowance, it constitute a very important contribution towards eliminating vitamin A deficiencies. Further research in the field of genetic engineering could lead to even more progress in this regard.

### The African Context

These debates and concerns are not confined to South African situation alone, but across the continent as well. South Africa has been in some African quarters criticized as being pro-GMOs and yet GMOs are not

good for the continent. In Africa, so far, only Kenya, Egypt and South Africa have formally adopted the use genetically modified crops. The reasons for this vary, depending on the country.

Some countries have adopted a precautionary approach, arguing that due to uncertainty with regard to the effects of genetically modified organisms, it's better to err on the side of caution. Other countries have not adopted the use of genetically modified crops in their agricultural systems due to lack of capacity, which vary from the absence of the requisite regulatory infrastructure and expertise (scientists to do the risk assessments) to financial resources to ensure traceability and implementation of such a system.

Some African countries have been reluctant to adopt genetically modified crops within their systems due to trade restrictions imposed by their trading partners. While the European Union has revoked its moratorium on the deliberate release of genetically modified organisms and has embarked upon a process to develop systems that will ensure consumer confidence in the regulation of biotechnology, individual countries continue to request verification from exporting countries that their beef was not fed with genetically modified maize. Examples of such countries closer to home are Botswana and Namibia and similar requests have been to South Africa.

This then places the onus on these countries to develop a labeling and traceability system, a system currently under development in South Africa. Draft regulations on the labeling of foodstuff derived from certain techniques of genetic modification are in place with the Department of Health. However, most other countries on the continent do not have the legislative mechanism or the capacity to implement such a system.

Despite the potential of biotechnology in agriculture to contribute to food production needs of South Africa and those of Africa at large, caution should still be exercised as to the risks and concerns related to GMOs. Apart from the concerns highlighted above, there is always the possibility that genetically engineered or new hybrid seed may replace traditional seeds that have been highly developed over centuries by local farmers and indigenous people.

Within the context of the food shortages in the region for example, some countries rightfully fear that some of the grain may be planted without the necessary restrictions to avoid contamination on non-GM maize, while others may not have the necessary capacity to monitor that the grain is not fed to livestock, jeopardizing their exports with their northern trading partners as already indicated.

The very fact that there is no scientific capacity or proper logistical infrastructure (e.g. distribution that does not encourage contamination), poses a dilemma for these countries to act swiftly enough and decisively on the issue of humanitarian assistance that might hurt their trade in the long run.

It should also be appreciated that in these countries, humanitarian assistance is normally not dealt with by the Ministries of Agriculture or Environment, which can be said to be the competent authorities on bio-safety issues. Hence, before decisions are taken, proper consultation needs to take place in order to arrive at proper balance between being precautionary and facilitating the necessary humanitarian assistance to the needy sectors of population.

### Conclusion

South Africa, in comparison with most sister countries in the region, has the capacity to deal with biotechnology including introduction of genetically modified organisms. Notwithstanding the capacity, South Africa has only released four events of genetically modified organisms compared to for instance, the United States where there are about fifty-four (54) events commercially.

Cognisance should therefore also be taken of a possible loss of biodiversity, hence the administration of the GMO Act in South Africa, which subjects GMOs to the necessary risk assessments.

All these different views have prompted the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Agriculture and Land Affairs to open official dialogue among different stake holders so as to afford them to contribute constructively to the debate.

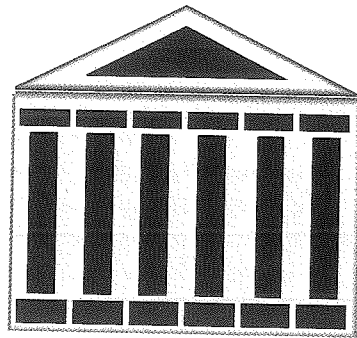
# Reinventing the SUES

## African University

by

Professor C. Tsehloane Keto

(Vista University, Tshwane)



### Background and context

The biggest challenge facing humanity for thousands of years has been the need to create, preserve, improve and transmit its social heritage from one generation to the next in order to survive biologically and prosper generally. In the last five thousand years, learning centres were created in different parts of the world employing diverse epistemologies to fathom new knowledge, develop it and transmit it to younger learners. Sages in these centres have used different strategies to disseminate this information through oral and written communication.

It is a unique demonstration of the human genius that people in different parts of the world have employed different pathways to knowledge creation, transmission and dissemination successfully. It is also an indication of that same human genius that improvements have been, and continue to be made on earlier innovations and discoveries for the betterment of future generations.

Learning institutions have been created to nurture and encourage the activities of knowledge production, invention, language usage, aesthetics, writing and other verbal and nonverbal forms of systematic symbolism to support the growing knowledge heritage of humanity. Universities and technikons are the modern institutional versions of this process of knowledge production and dissemination.

In some parts of Africa, these learning centres are indigenous creations with a long history of their own. In other areas they are institutional transplants imported into the continent after conquest or during the days of colonialism. In other instances learning structures are blends of indigenous institutions and social practices with imported institutional forms. The challenge that faces South Africa and Africa today is to transform all these knowledge centres and to review the assumptions behind their curriculum structures so that they can be aligned to solve the problems and provide for the needs

of the continent through African-centred solutions.

An African university – in order to be truly African – should at least be Africa centred. That means the institution's endeavours should begin with the African continent as the pivotal centre of analysis. This can then be followed by the reorganization of the rest of the institution to facilitate the realisation of the vision and mission of a distinctly African university. The form and structure that an African institution of higher education should take, should follow the pattern suggested by the perceived function of the institution within the broader society and espouse the values of Ubuntu.

Given the human resource crisis that faces Africa during this early part of the 21st century, the vision and mission of an African institution of higher education should be to pursue knowledge and to cultivate scholars, leaders and professionals who have competencies that will assist the development of the African continent; who are imbued with critical thinking skills and firmly rooted in the Ubuntu values of respect for the dignity of the person and a commitment of service to community, country, continent and world.

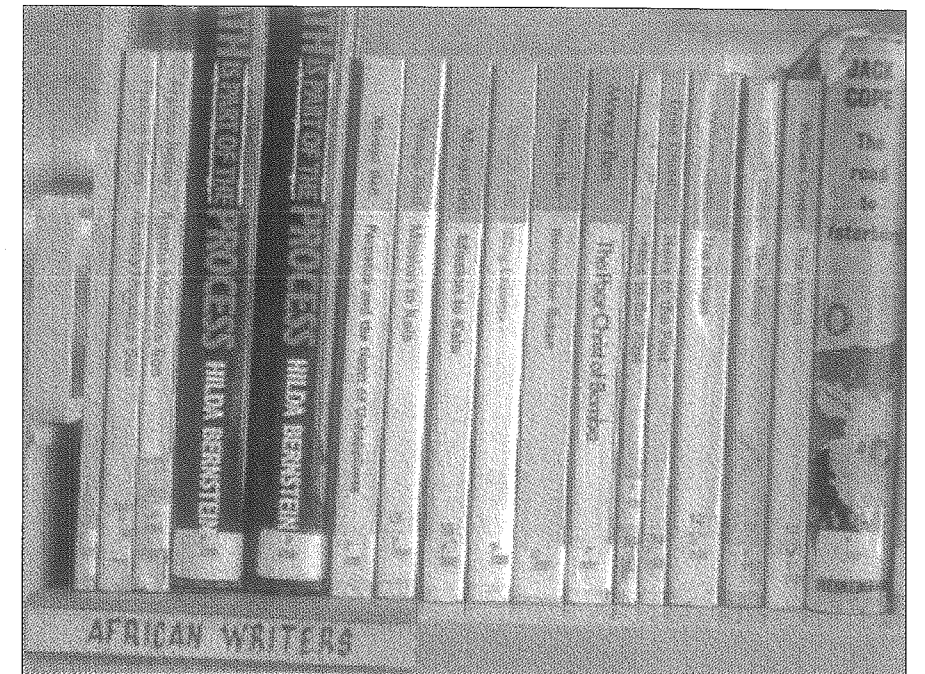
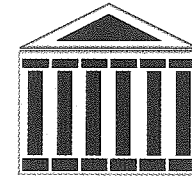
### The African curriculum

The curriculum of an African institution of higher education must therefore be configured to accomplish its mission. It could, for example, consist of five categories of subject areas that are distributed as follows:

- **Creative Production** which draws on the lived experiences of the people as expressed through the **writing and study** of prose and poetry; the composition and study of music that is indigenous and/or mixed with music from other regions of the World; the creative invention of the **performing arts** that mirror, praise and satirize the lives of the people through theatre and dance; and the **visual arts** that reflect on the felt experience of the people through painting and sculpture.

Creative production has been an area of demonstrat-

“ African Institutions of higher education should be values-based organizations that do not shy from interrogating or criticising areas of the social heritage of Africa when this is necessary ... ”



ed African excellence that is recognised in the world. Yet this area requires support of African society to develop young artists who will carry on the traditions of the African idiom in the arts into the future; innovate with the idiom and ensure that the idiom does not get suffocated out of existence in African hands.

- **Human Sciences** which, through study and reflection, bring about a better understanding of the human condition through the social sciences, history, religion, and philosophy. This area of study should emphasize the critical role of ethics and other values-based studies in society. These would be values that assist the smooth functioning of that society.

For example, a nation without knowledge of its history is truly like a tree without roots as Marcus Garvey pointed out during the early years of the 20th century. Collective memory and social analysis should not depend on external assumptions and seek recognition from external sources only. Validation of African research, exposition and interpretation should be firmly rooted in African institutions and scholarship. There should be disagreement and debate within African schools of thought and these should be encouraged. There should also be acknowledgement of external contributions to scholarship but the relationship should not be a colonialist one whereby there are more experts on Africa outside Africa than inside Africa nor should there be a continuation of the experts on the cultures of African people who speak no African languages.

- **Formal Studies** that include mathematics, statistics and logic to emphasize relationships within groups and sets. The fundamental concepts of numeracy would also be included. Learners should also be made aware of the use of numbers to hide,

exaggerate or distort reality. This could be accomplished by emphasizing critical thinking skills. African contributions and African styles in these areas should be brought to the attention of the students. The complementarity of Afro-circular and Euro-linear thinking should be interrogated in these fields of knowledge.

- **Science and Technology** which through basic fields such as biology, chemistry, physics, and applied fields such as engineering provide information on the "what" and the "how" of nature in order to stimulate thought and achieve development. With the dire development needs of the African continent being what they are, this area should be a major priority for institutions. Emphasis in the introductory courses should be to connect what happened in Africa in the last five millennia with what is current in these fields today.
- **Indigenous Knowledge** systems which may or may not fit exactly into the above categories because of their unique and informal origins. African institutions should be tasked to incorporate these areas into their subject offerings and their curricula as a matter of urgency. The fact that a lot of African indigenous knowledge was not known to the European scholars of the past colonial era should not be used to carry on the wall of silence against African contributions to knowledge. The integration process may also call for a re-organization of the fields of knowledge to accommodate the new discoveries since the end of the 19th century with the renewal of fields of study as a result of the inclusion of the African contributions to perception and perspective.

Thus African Institutions of higher education should be values-based organizations that do not shy from interrogating or criticising areas of the social heritage of

Africa when this is necessary. However, this process should begin with the recognition and respect of the African's cultural centre.

The process of bringing about the African Renaissance should contribute to an appropriate framework of the programme mix available in Africa's institutions of higher learning.

### African Pedagogy

The teaching styles of an African university should combine the art of verbal communication, the African flair for the practical and the use of modern technology for innovative delivery. A flexible mode of delivery that integrates contact and distance learning in order to reduce costs and provide access should be investigated and a realistic blend of the two to maximize success for learners should be the driving force.

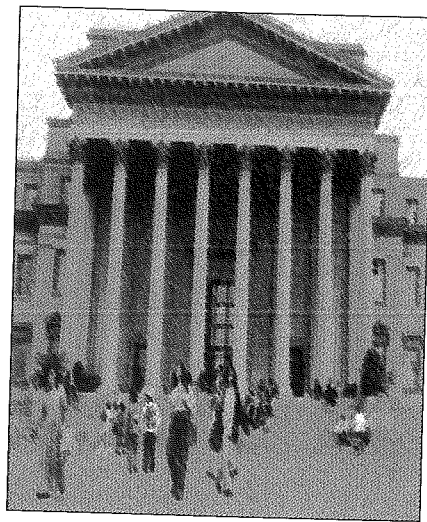
There should be cooperation between the academy and the community through the participation of staff and students in community-based projects and the organic link through the involvement of community leaders and sages in the institution's teaching and research agenda.

The crosscurrents of experience, information and innovation would prove useful for the stimulation and integration of mode II knowledge that emanates from the community with mode I discourse that is produced by the university's traditional scholars.

### Core modules

Students at an African institution of higher education should share a common base of knowledge. Therefore they should be required to register for core modules of varying duration in the suggested areas that follow. However, students should also be given the opportunity to receive credit for these modules through an assessment process. The suggested number of weeks for each module is indicated in brackets. A continuous assessment system that includes oral performance should be implemented. These requirements should be completed within a semester or a six month time-frame:

1. **Introduction to Ethics in Society:** As part of a values-based programme of their education, regardless of the fields of study or specialization that they will ultimately pursue, students should be exposed to the main ideas about ethics and understand the practical value of ethics in the smooth running of society in Africa.[4 weeks]
2. **Introduction to the Heritage of People in Africa:** This module would introduce students to the diverse heritages found on the African continent,



“ *The teaching styles of an African university should combine the art of verbal communication, the African flair for the practical and the use of modern technology for innovative delivery.* ”

their origins and history as well as their philosophical underpinning in Ubuntu.[8 weeks]

3. **Science and Society:** This module would show the interaction of scientific innovations with developments in society through the impact of technological inventions on social dynamics and human culture. Examples should be drawn from the African experience.[8 weeks]
4. **African International Relations:** This module would elaborate on the relations between and among various regions and countries in Africa in the last two centuries. The consequences of these relations should be indicated with an emphasis on southern Africa in the last century. This information would set the contextual stage for a discussion of the African Renaissance and the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) within world affairs.[6 weeks]
5. **Multi-lingualism and Multi-culturalism:** which would interrogate the special challenges of multi-lingual and multi-cultural societies such as South Africa. The higher education curriculum should then address competencies and specialties found in other higher education institutions and compare with those of institutions in other parts of the world. This should provide answers to what it means to have a society grounded in the human experience of Africans.[6 weeks]
6. **Development Studies:** Since the biggest challenge facing the African continent currently centres around the issues of social and economic development, all students should be exposed to the ideas and theories of development. It should be necessary to use examples of successful development strategies followed in African, Asian and Latin American countries and regions and also explain those that failed.[6 weeks]
7. **Computer Literacy:** The computer has become a vital tool for work and communication in the 21st century. For this reason, all students should be made familiar with the use of the computer in performing their assignments and tasks. An elementary

knowledge of the use of the computer should be mandatory for all students who graduate from the university. [6 weeks]

8. **Introduction to Numeracy:** The use of numbers in presenting information and expressing relationships has become important in the lives of people. Relationships between quantified elements are often used to illustrate or to buttress decisions. It is therefore critical that students understand the valid use of numbers and statistics in order to avoid being deceived by statistical information.[6 weeks]
9. **Critical Health Issues:** The major challenges facing Africa and the world centre around the sporadic outbreak of pandemics that threaten the future of humanity and undermine efforts to create sustainable communities and economies. HIV/AIDS is only one example of this threat to the future. An understanding of the impact of such diseases to human existence would boost the quality of the decisions young people make in their own lives.[6 weeks]

The motifs of an African higher education institution should reflect some inclusion of motifs found on the African continent and/or influenced by the historical experience of Africans. Motifs from other cultural experiences of humanity can be incorporated to represent the full spectrum of the global village. However the tendency to re-create

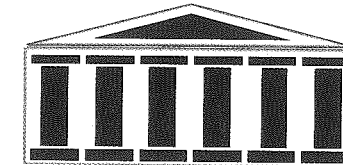
Eurocentric fantasies in Africa should be strenuously avoided in the days of the African Renaissance.

### Language of instruction

The languages of instruction of such an institution of higher learning should include languages that originate and are rooted in Africa. These languages should, at the least, assist in the process of instruction. Foreign languages that qualify as access-to-information tools should also be encouraged and supported. In South Africa, for instance instruction should be provided in at least two languages and preferably three. Therefore when a university such as Stellenbosch is required to offer instruction in Afrikaans and English, the University of Cape Town should be required to offer instruction in English and Isixhosa. Universities in KwaZulu-Natal should offer instruction in English and Isizulu.

In order to share the burden of providing access to

“ *The languages of instruction of such an institution of higher learning should include languages that originate and are rooted in Africa* ...



... *In its operations the university should address the issue of gender equity judiciously. It should recognise that the majority of Africans are women.* ”

as many people as possible, no institution should be allowed to be monolingual in the service of a multilingual society. All institutions would be expected to offer instruction in the widely spoken languages in the region of the country where they are located.

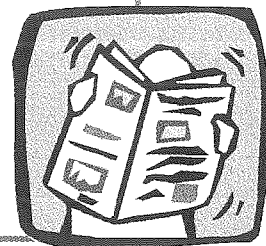
### Ethos

The values of Ubuntu/Botho should inform the administrative structure of the institution and reflect on one hand the respect for the dignity of students, workers, professors and administrators. On the other hand it should take cognisance of the knowledge of professionals and the need to facilitate the transmission of that knowledge to those who are learners. Learners should respect their lecturers because of their knowledge but the lecturers should also respect the learners and demonstrate this by recognising that even lecturers do grow in knowledge and wisdom as a result of their interaction with the inquiring minds of the learners. The lecturers should appreciate the constant challenge to improve their own knowledge and wisdom so that they do not become a stagnant intellectual factor within the institution. The

ethos of the whole institution should therefore be infused by the need to become “an African learning organization”.

In its operations the university should address the issue of gender equity judiciously. It should recognise that most Africans are women. Therefore, the majority of the talent and abilities of Africans are vested in women. To sideline or ignore this pool of able African minds is a self-defeating exercise that will only hamper the development of African universities and the development of the African continent. In the process this state of affairs will only compromise the future of Africa.

# The motive forces:



## A rejoinder to Annie Molelekwa

by  
Christopher Malikane

COMRADE ANNIE MOLELEKWA (AM) has raised an important challenge to my paper (UMRABULO, 2002, #15). AM advances two arguments: 1) my paper "failed to raise critical issues of the current phase of the NDR", 2) there are no disagreements on who constitutes the motive forces. My rejoinder to cde AM will demonstrate that both these allegations are unfounded.

The fact that I do not discuss Gear and state asset restructuring does not mean that these issues are not linked to the motive forces debate. AM denies the connection between policy controversies and the underlying controversy on the motive forces. This is the type of denial that, whilst it acknowledges the changing class realities of our country, assumes that class tensions in the *motive forces* are at the level they were in Morogoro or Kabwe!

### Critical Issues of the Current Phase of the NDR

I do not deny the urgency of the issues that AM regards to be current, but the theoretical framework within which they are conceptualised even by the movement in its documents is very problematic from an ideological point of view. And this is where my contention lies. Underlying these issues is a class struggle that happens within the context of a (dying) CST. Because our theory of struggle characterises our revolution as national democratic, it is imperative in this dynamic context to conduct a class analysis of the motive forces.

Depending on the balance of class forces, a revolution sets the pace and direction of class formation and hence transformation. This automatically changes the complexion of the motive forces. For a theory to be alive, it has to be nourished to cope with these changes by developing new concepts and categories, or certain theoretical relationships between social categories

espoused by the theory may require revision or amplification. But AM seems to be unconscious of these theoretical issues, and how such issues have a bearing on political practice – especially the "policies to be pursued by the democratic government".

What AM wants is to engage in debates relating to resource allocation, Gear, and the restructuring of state assets *without regard* to the complexity posed by *class relations in the motive forces*. AM unjustifiably denies class struggle among us on these issues. This encourages the thinking that class struggle is *outside* and not inside the movement as well. As many leaders of the movement have noted this class struggle is perfectly healthy, as long as it is understood within the framework of a national liberation struggle. AM denies these class contradictions altogether at the level of policy, thus denying the very nature of our movement!

Indeed a strong tendency exists in our movement which views contradictions that currently shape the NDR in party political terms, not in class terms. This serves no one at all except those who always want to see the Alliance groping forward with some grey areas. In its "*Tasks of the NDR*", the ANC (2000) warns against the rise of neo-liberalism. But this neo-liberalism is said to emanate from the DP! Even the SACP (2001) talks about "the real danger" posed by the DP. In the motive forces this ideology appears to be absent. And so the ANC continues to say: "The best antidote against these forces against transformation, is confidence in the motive forces, mobilised always to be in political action." Thus a class analysis of both the secondary and principal, subordinate and dominant contradictions in the current phase of the NDR is actually reduced into an analysis of how the DP and others seek to sabotage the ANC-led democracy. This is theoretically problematic.

The importance of a class analysis is that it eluci-

dates the social, and not merely the party political content of our policies. As the over-used saying goes; no revolutionary practice without revolutionary theory. If a class analysis of the motive forces (and the "enemy"), and a consensus on who constitutes the motive forces are absent, and of no immediate consequence then on what grounds are we to talk about a revolutionary movement or policy? The call by the SACP for a rigorous class analysis is therefore urgent.

Identifying the class composition of the motive forces (and the enemy) is just the beginning. A further analysis is required to appraise the social relations within the motive forces and the strategic political relations between these, including hard questions such as: Does the class that *should* lead *actually* leads? AM fails to raise these questions because apparently, "the current debates are based on failure by the Alliance to give expression to...[a]...working relationship". Therefore, AM asserts without justification that the Gear and privatisation controversies whilst current, are not class questions but technical questions of organisational co-ordination! But these controversies reflect a deeper problem in the political relations within the motive forces, made worse or caused by the non-expropriation of White-monopoly capital.

But who constitutes the motive forces *even if we, for the sake of engagement, grant that this is not an immediate question?* Unfortunately AM gives no answer except the impression that such a question is not of immediate concern. A revolution changes the complexion of the collective of motive forces and these changes have a bearing on the class content of our political practice. To AM, this is irrelevant and hence there is apparently no link between the motive forces and political practice ("policies to be pursued by the democratic government"). AM's approach is not theoretically founded, since a revolutionary movement must always assess the composition of its motive forces, and on that basis analyse the balance of forces as a way of formulating strategy and tactics. That is why every Congress has a section on Strategy and Tactics, and in the section the topics necessarily include the "motive forces" and the "balance of forces".

### The ANC and its Allies on the Motive Forces

AM says: "I didn't quite realise that there are disagreements on who constitutes the motive forces".

Furthermore we are told: "...there are no disagreements between the ANC and its Allies on who constitutes the motive forces". But Alliance documents show that indeed there is a seething debate on the motive forces. The debate in the Alliance is *not* about class leadership of the NDR, neither is it about whether the Black bourgeoisie is part of the *main* motive forces. It is simply about whether the Black bourgeoisie is on the side of national liberation or not. I have argued that it is inconsistent to argue that the Black bourgeoisie in

general is the enemy, and maintain that ours is a national democratic revolution. Consequently *it is inconsistent to argue that capital in general is not part of the motive forces*, and yet maintain a struggle for the liberation of Blacks in general, Africans in particular independent of class. Cde AM does not "quite realise" the practical significance of this theoretical inconsistency.

We are all aware that the NDR is not a drive to enfranchise the elite. Now AM claims that I "suggest that we should build the black bourgeoisie as opposed to a white bourgeoisie". This is misrepresentation, since nowhere in my paper is such a position put forward. I said in the context of national liberation the movement *couldn't* be neutral in the subordinate contradiction between the Black and White bourgeoisies. Because our revolution is driven by a front of classes, in which Black people in general, *independent of class*, are objectively opposed to colonialism and its legacies, the movement *as a leader* needs to give critical support to the Black bourgeoisie (forcing White financial capital to open favourable lines of credit to the Black bourgeoisie, challenging White domination of the backward and forward linkages of the economy to create a solid basis for Black economic presence, in short de-racialise the private capitalist sector). This is what I mean by stimulating a subordinate contradiction to weaken the principal enemy of the NDR. Otherwise there is theoretical inconsistency.

To demonstrate the disagreements on the motive forces start with the SACP (1962): "As its immediate task the SACP works for a united front of national liberation. It strives to unite all sections and classes of the oppressed and democratic people for a national democratic revolution to destroy White domination." Thus as long as this White domination persists, the Party will strive for unity of all the dominated classes, *including the unity of the Black working class and the Black bourgeoisie*. The SACP (1989) clearly acknowledges the existence of a contradiction between the Black and White bourgeoisies, wherein the Black bourgeoisie is stifled by White monopoly. But this contradiction is subordinate and therefore it has very limited, *though progressive*, potential. It is not a neutral contradiction in relation to the stability of CST.

This contradiction, as the Party (1989) shows, objectively locates the Black bourgeoisie on the side of national liberation and therefore forms a material basis for this class to be part of the motive forces. But later the SACP (2000) says: "instead of simply proclaiming the 'black bourgeoisie' as a 'motive' force, it would be more useful to analyse the capitalist class in SA in all of its diversity, and then analyse what aspects of our NDR programme different strata and segments of the bourgeoisie may (or may not) support, and for what reasons." This is a gradual shift of position by the Party regarding the composition of the motive forces, especially the Black bourgeoisie. The following year the

SACP (2001) issued a belated critique of the ANC's 1997 Strategy and Tactics document: "These Black bourgeois strata are not, incidentally, nor could they be, 'a' class separate from the wider South African bourgeoisie – after all, there isn't a second capitalist economy in South Africa." In the same article, the Party explicitly says it is not its core business to argue whether the Black bourgeoisie is strategic or not. This is clearly inconsistent with the principle of "unity of all oppressed classes", unless now White domination is argued to be over.

What remains then is to take the Party's 2000 and 2001 critiques to their logical conclusion: if there is no Black bourgeoisie separate from the wider SA bourgeoisie, then there is no Black working class separate from the wider SA working class, no Black petit-bourgeoisie separate from the wider SA petit-bourgeoisie. The national factor therefore no longer dominates, the class factor becomes both dominant and determinant, and hence the NDR becomes irrelevant. This is one expression of the theoretical inconsistency that AM says is not of immediate interest!

Look at the ANC documents. The ANC (1969) gives leadership to the working class and is vague about the Black bourgeoisie, although it says that our struggle is not "an elitist drive". The ANC (1994) says: "The main motive forces of the democratic transformation are primarily represented by African workers and the African rural poor. These forces are also represented by black workers in general and the black middle strata." Thus, in 1994 the *main* motive forces did not include the Black bourgeoisie. This reflects ambivalence of the movement with regard to this class. If this class was not part of the motive forces in general, then the movement wants to liberate Black people, some not welcome in our ranks as *a social category*. And so theoretically the Black bourgeoisie would not struggle for national liberation with us, and yet it would enjoy the gains that come along with the revolution *as a class!* This is another expression of the theoretical inconsistency that AM says is of no immediate consequence.

The Black capitalist class became explicitly recognised by the ANC as forming part of the motive forces in 1997, perhaps in recognition of the practical implications of this inconsistency. The ANC (1997) says, "The rising Black bourgeoisie and middle strata are objectively important motive forces of transformation whose interests coincide with at least the immediate interests of the majority." This position is also articulated in the ANC NGC 2000 documents. The Programme of Action of the Alliance (1998) says: "The national liberation movement's primary mission therefore remains the organisation, education and mobilisation of *all the classes* and strata that objectively stand to gain from the success of the cause of social change." The Alliance knew that the Black bourgeoisie stands to gain in the "dismantling of White monopoly of the economy", a critical aspect of White domination. The Ekurhuleni

Declaration (2002) presents no class composition of the motive forces: "all the classes and strata that share ...[the creation of a national democratic society]..." as an objective are the motive forces. The declaration thus shelves away the debate.

A careful reading of the above documents shows a level of historical ambivalence regarding the Black bourgeoisie. This ambivalence cannot be assumed to express a historical consensus, *not on the class leadership of the revolution*, but on the objective position of the Black bourgeoisie in this revolution. Despite all this documented evidence, AM pleads ignorance to the motive forces debate and does not see its immediate importance. Yet AM acknowledges that "the only concern that came was from the SACP...[that]...the number of progressive "motive" forces has now multiplied to six." In the light of this theoretical divergence on the motive forces, and "the only concern of the SACP", the questions posed in my paper become of immediate importance since they relate to a strategic framework for policy formulation and unity of those suffering from White domination. No revolutionary policy without class analysis in the immediate, in the medium, and in the long run!

Cde AM appeals to Slovo (1988) on the need for debate, AM effectively does exactly what Slovo discourages – dismissing "genuine worries about some of our approaches and formulations" as of no immediate consequence. Slovo indicated too that the immediate interests of the proletariat and the emergent Black bourgeoisie coincide – to struggle against White domination. What AM does not appreciate is that since 1988, documents that question this thesis emerged – a thesis which has practical implications for the unity of the motive forces and our thinking about what an NDR is.

## Conclusion

As I have noted in my initial paper our class, national and gender struggles inter-penetrate. We should not deny the existence of class contradictions among the motive forces. Conflicts over policy should not be masked as conflicts due to institutional co-ordination. If state power is the highest form of political power, then conflict over state policy is a fundamental class question. But the national question requires us not to simply create neat poles of class conflict in order to expedite analysis. Such theoretical practice is dangerous; it amplifies secondary contradictions, and nullifies *progressive* subordinate contradictions.

As a priority we must not squander opportunities for the advancement of the Black working class, but we should not squander opportunities to advance other Black strata and classes *at the expense of White domination* too (stimulating subordinate contradictions). For the NDR is essentially this: all-round Black progress at the expense of White domination. Therefore if this progress has *at least* a neutral effect on the living con-

ditions of the working class, but is at the expense of White domination, this is consistent with the NDR *even if only the Black bourgeoisie benefits* because the principal enemy is weakened. If this progress improves the living conditions of the working class, *the better!*

But currently the non-expropriation of White capital forms the basis for the secondary contradiction between the Black bourgeoisie and the working class to sharpen because the Black bourgeoisie accumulates at the expense of state capital, in a process dominated by White monopoly – the principal enemy. The sad part of this situation is that this secondary contradiction tends to overshadow the dominant contradiction of the NDR. If the movement fails to address this problem urgently, we must rest assured that "the non-working relations" in the Alliance will persist with greater intensity. Hence, my paper sought to begin from the beginning – to delineate class forces in relation to the social structure of colonialism – the national question, and on that basis give an analysis of contradictions that is consistent with the NDR theory. Anyway if "the principal contradiction is not the NDR", as AM boldly asserts, what is the character of our revolution?

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# South African treason arrests resurrects ghosts of the past

by Stan Winer

**T**HE SUBVERSIVE STRATEGY of white supremacists currently on trial in South Africa should not be viewed in isolation of past strategic doctrines and a ruthless ensemble of clandestine techniques that underpinned the former apartheid state. The subject may be of some importance, because the present derives from the past and the future from both. It also reflects a central problem not only of history but also of all human experience: the problem of truth and illusion.

The strategy of at least 10 South African conspirators currently detained on suspicion of high treason and right-wing terrorism is contained in a document uncovered by investigators. Three senior serving SANDF army officers are among the detained men. The document outlines plans by the alleged conspirators to establish a rebel army of about 4 500 to overthrow the government and replace it with a military regime run entirely by white supremacists.

The alleged conspirators planned first of all to unleash chaos in the country to cover the rebel army's movements while a 50-man death squad would eliminate "traitors" and blame the actions on black people. The rebel army, to "restore order", would then contrive a 10-day electricity blackout under cover of which airports would be closed, aircraft grounded, and arms depots and combat vehicles seized. A final stage would be the inauguration of a military government.

This alleged strategy bears striking resemblance to the theoretical writings of General Andre Beaufre, the main strategic theorist upon whose ideas the rightwing Organisation de l'Armee Secrete (OAS) terrorist movement relied heavily fighting the Algerian independence movement during the late 1950s. Significantly, Beaufre's military textbook *Strategy* was required reading at the South African military academy during the apartheid years. The apartheid SA Army also sent a young army officer named Magnus Malan to serve as a military observer in Algeria during the 1950s under the command of General Beaufre. Malan was later promoted to commander-in-chief of the apartheid SA Army

before becoming minister of defence in the apartheid cabinet. While Malan was himself cleared in a court case a few years ago of "any wrong-doing" during the apartheid era, the subversive strategy of the currently detained conspirators can be seen as part of a convoluted continuum of white supremacist violence. It is virtually also a textbook rendering of the subversive techniques employed in the late 1950s by the OAS.

## The Algerian connection

The OAS, as described by Anthony Bocca in his excellent book *THE SECRET ARMY*, was made up of embittered right-wing French army officers and fanatical Algerians of European descent striving to retain Algeria under French colonial control. They were anxious to avenge the earlier defeat of the French expeditionary corps by the communists in Indo-China and also the army's other humiliations in Morocco, Tunisia, and at Suez. In their ranks were covert action specialists working for the French army's 5th (Psychological Action) Bureau, and officers commanding French Foreign Legion and paratroop units in Algeria. Communist guerrilla warfare, according to them, did not have the objective of capturing strategic territory as in conventional warfare, but aimed to "conquer" the population through secret politico-military networks and the systematic application of "action psychologique". From now on communism was to be fought on "equal terms", using the communists "own" methods. Their objective was to create a climate of tension, anxiety and insecurity, thereby conditioning the masses to accept State authority while alienating the masses from the liberation movement.

The theoretical framework of these seditious officers rested on the fact that the communist Viet Minh in Indo-China had linked inextricably all military operations to political, social, psychological and especially ideological elements. It was therefore essential to create an extended military battlefield that included all aspects of civil society, especially the social and ideo-

logical spheres. Having "identified" the enemy's techniques, the proponents of "counter-terrorism" then sought to neutralise the enemy by adopting the enemy's "own" methods and turning them against the enemy. Hence the coming into being of a strategy combining political misperceptions with a sophisticated array of psychological warfare techniques.

The collapse of the OAS came about after a failed 1958 military revolt in Algiers and a "general's putsch" in April 1961 which brought down the French government and threatened the political survival of its Gaullist successor, the Fifth Republic. Having failed to secure the "moral regeneration" of France many of its members were forced to flee abroad, notably to Argentina and also to Portugal where Lisbon became their strategic centre with official encouragement from the Portuguese secret police. In return for asylum and other incentives, they helped train foreign counter-insurgency and parallel police units forming the embryo of future "counter-terrorist" groups deployed around the world under the tutelage of battle-hardened OAS fugitives.

By 1984 one veteran of Indo-China and many African campaigns, Colonel Bob Denard, virtually controlled the Comoros islands together with a band of French mercenaries. The Comoros rapidly became a secret staging post funnelling arms from South Africa to the right-wing rebel Renamo movement in Mozambique. Denard, before he obtained political asylum in South Africa, also made it possible for this country to build and operate a sophisticated electronic eavesdropping facility at Itsandra on Grande Comore Island. From here the fascist, apartheid state could monitor both maritime movements in the Mozambique Channel and ANC radio communications in neighbouring Tanzania.

In Lisbon, meanwhile, other former OAS members plotted to destabilise and destroy national liberation movements throughout Africa and their exploits galvanised right-wing extremists everywhere. An internal report written by one former OAS member was captured in the mid-1970s by leftist officers of the Armed Forces Movement in Lisbon. The captured document, shown to journalists including the author of this article, endorsed bluntly a "strategy of tension" that would "work on public opinion and promote chaos in order to later raise up a defender of the citizens against the disintegration provoked by subversion and terrorism". As one seasoned cold warrior put it: "When you've got the masses by the balls, hearts and minds follow."

## The Rhodesian connection

Such ideas found resonance in Zimbabwe-Rhodesia as the country's first free election campaigns approached a climax in February 1980, when several churches became the targets of terrorist bombs. A well-orchestrated press campaign swiftly attributed the bombings

to "communist atheists" – an apparent reference to the national liberation movement. Then, in what turned out to be the last in a series of explosions, somebody blew himself up when the bomb he was planting exploded prematurely. Papers found on his body identified him as a pseudo terrorist – in fact a member of the Rhodesian army's Selous Scouts counter-insurgency unit. The Rhodesians had also used "pseudo gangs" – special forces posing as Patriotic Front guerrillas – in the murders of missionaries based in remote districts, the murders then being attributed falsely to the liberation forces. The Rhodesians had extensive experience in counter-insurgency doctrine dating back to 1956 when British Commonwealth forces in Malaya had included the Rhodesian African Rifles, and the Rhodesians had also modelled their "pseudo gangs" along the lines of the British counter-insurgency strategy during the 1950s Mau Mau uprising in Kenya.

Former Rhodesian soldiers, after Zimbabwe became independent, were to find many opportunities for exercising their talents in the South African Army's so-called Civil Co-operation Bureau (CCB), which was formed in April 1986. In fact, the CCB itself had evolved originally from D-40, a Special Forces unit made up almost entirely by former Rhodesian soldiers, which in turn transmuted into Barnacle, 3 Reconnaissance Regiment. By the late 1980s the death-squad activities of the CCB, combined with those of the SA Police's so-called Vlakplaas unit had become synonymous with a "third force" in South African politics – the other two forces being the liberation movement and the former apartheid government. This "third force", however, might well have been nothing other than a parallel hierarchy asserting openly the strength of its covert institutional support in the highest circles of apartheid governance. Given South Africa's long and tortuous history of parallel hierarchies, of visible and "invisible" government, the notion might not have been as far-fetched as it seemed.

## The fascist connection

The rightwing Ossewa Brandwag, committed as it was to the defence of Afrikaner nationalism against parliamentarism, had mustered nearly half a million adherents in South Africa in the early 1940s. Its leaders, including John Vorster who later became prime minister, were interned at detention centres during World War II for their Nazi sympathies. Interned with him was Henrik van den Bergh, who was later to head South Africa's secret police. By the time Vorster became minister for police and then prime minister in the 1960s, the fundamental precepts of fascism were already firmly enshrined in South African law. From those precepts would evolve some of the most repressive "security" legislation the world has ever known.

It was an ideal climate for the creation of the so-called Joint Management Centres (JMCs) in the mid-

1980s, operating in 34 state-designated "high-risk" areas as a key element in the national security management system. The police and military that controlled the JMCs were endowed with influence in decision-making at every level, from the Cabinet down to local government. In the battle for hearts and minds, if the JMCs deemed that certain information be published, the government's Bureau for Information carried out the task. Others, the police and army death squads, preferred a more direct approach: psychological warfare through state-sponsored terrorism.

The JMCs, with their parallel civil and military hierarchies, consisted essentially of networks enmeshing tightly each component in a shadowy and elaborate infrastructure exerting social control. This arrangement verged on the very fringes of constitutionality and beyond, operating as it did beyond the confines of parliament and bearing a close resemblance to the Nazi Schutzstaffel (SS) in Germany during the 1930s. With its own communications, command and control structures, the SS too had constituted a state within the State. The organisational structure of the JMCs, corresponded in all major particulars with the functional purposes of the SS, imparting looseness to the chain of command in which the pervasive influence of the State could not be attributed readily, while simultaneously narrowing the circle of decision. Subordinates were encouraged to interpret what their leaders wanted without needing to ask directly for authorisation. This favoured rapid though not necessarily well-thought-out decisions. Not only were the identities obscured of those taking the decisions, but also the decisions themselves remained largely unknown. The South African State President, like Hitler in earlier times, was surrounded behind the scenes by an omniscient and junta-like team of securocrats accountable only to themselves. The collegiate nature of Cabinet government was fatally weakened and few if any of the most important security decisions were made in Cabinet.

The JMCs also had some other useful historical precedents: the system was modelled loosely on British counter-insurgency doctrine in Malaya during the 1950s when the British colonial authorities first recognised the importance of tying together civil and military measures into a single cohesive counter-insurgency policy. This included the selective "neutralising" of independence movement leaders, as euphemistically referred to by the British Army's former Chief of General Staff, Brigadier-General Sir Frank Kitson, in his textbook *Low Intensity Operations*. The Americans later adapted that doctrine to their own "low-intensity operation" in Vietnam, with the added refinement of a wide-scale political assassination program – the CIA's infamous Operation Phoenix.

## The American connection

The Western society of nations, in defence of "Christian

values", provided the South African government and its white supremacists with a further "legitimising framework" in 1981, when Ronald Reagan took office as president of the United States. His administration quickly reversed a policy established under the Carter administration that banned any sharing of intelligence with South Africa. With American intelligence providing the South African Directorate of Military Intelligence with information about the South African liberation movement exiled in Africa, the South African government was in effect given the green light by Washington to escalate state-sponsored terrorism. Just a few hours after US Secretary of State Douglas Haig declared the "war against international terrorism" to be a top security priority for US foreign policy, South African commandos started launching raids into neighbouring territories. When South Africa launched a full-scale military invasion of Angola in August 1981, the newly installed Reagan administration engaged in steady apologetics for this aggression and vetoed its condemnation in the UN Security Council. Official US statements held that the "incursion" – a relatively benign word that implied a modest and temporary intrusion – was "a defensive action against a Soviet-supported state".

South African secret agents also carried out sabotage and assassinations in Zimbabwe, and as the end of 1981 approached, an attempt was made to mount a coup against Zambia's President Kaunda while a major effort was made by Pretoria to arm and support right-wing counter-revolutionaries in Mozambique. In consequence of this regional destabilisation plan Mozambique would suffer the gravest situation it had ever known. The effects of drought were to combine with the South African-sponsored civil war to cause an estimated 100,000 deaths in 1983 alone.

The apartheid South African government also knew it could draw on the technical support of far-right organisations based in the United States. These included the Institute for Regional and International Studies (Iris), headed by Robert D'Aubuisson, the former far-right president of El Salvador who is suspected widely of running death squads there. Iris was and still is closely linked with and virtually indistinguishable from the World Anti-Communist League (WACL) – a Mexican-based neo-fascist group with branches around the world and drawing support from diverse elements in a loose consortium of the international ultra right. The function of Iris, in the words of Major-General John K. Singlaub, head of WACL, was to "provide technical assistance to those who ask for it and can't get it from government sources." In a letter on White House stationery read at WACL's 1984 conference, Reagan expressed warm greetings to all gathered. He observed that there were "eight active anti-communist resistance movements in every corner of the globe. All free people should stand in unity with those who risk their lives in the defence of liberty." And finally: "WACL has long

played a leadership role in drawing attention to the gallant struggle now being waged by the true freedom fighters of our day." The US had just been judged guilty of State terrorism by the International Court of Justice, for having covertly mined Nicaragua's harbours.

In South Africa itself, with "legitimacy" having been conferred by Reagan on the use of such methods, it was not long before covert activity of all kinds became predominant forms of political behaviour, to be condemned only when the "other side" used them. Although the exact numbers may never be known, by mid-1987 the SA Human Rights Commission knew of at least 140 hit-squad attacks in the country, while about 200 people had died at the hands of South African agents in neighbouring states. The Truth Commission would later document more cases running into the thousands. The atrocities were falsely attributed by the media to "internecine strife" within the ranks of the liberation movement. Sweeping censorship laws saw to it that most people knew very little about what was really going on. Even without the State of Emergency regulations, there was the Defence Act, the Police Act, the Prisons Act, the Internal Security Act, the Publications Act, and the Protection of Information Act. Together they defined a range of "security offences" prohibiting journalists from doing their jobs and historians from making sense of it all. Two histories emerged: a secret conspiratorial history, censored and unmarked, which nobody was supposed to get wind of, and a public chronicle based on mass deception, a socially engineered arrest of consciousness, and cognitive and causative disorientation away from reality.

## Climate of tension

By the early 1990s, in the face of mounting successes being chalked up by freedom fighters and with the Reagan administration no longer around to support it, the apartheid government was forced into political negotiations with the liberation movement. This evidently incensed die-hard South African fascists in the security forces. What they then contrived was not an outright military coup d'etat along classical lines, but selective intervention in the form of attritional terrorism. Indiscriminate terrorist attacks on rail and road commuters became an almost daily occurrence in the Johannesburg area, leaving hundreds of civilians dead or injured. The military precision that accompanied the attacks indicated the involvement of highly trained and well-organised military or ex-military men. This all-out assault on civil society was identical with the objectives of the OAS in Algeria and consistent in all major particulars with those of the 11 right-wing conspirators currently being detained in South Africa. Namely: to create a climate of tension with the intention of conditioning the masses into accepting that only elements of the former regime, if reinstated, could defend the masses from chaos, anarchy and terrorism.

The cynical manipulation of base fear in the service of minority reached its climax. In the run-up to the country's first democratic elections in 1994. The former apartheid regime – then part of a transitional government – made much of wooing black voters on a platform proclaiming "black leaders have failed to halt the violence", which was blamed by white politicians on "warring black factions". The gunmen involved in many of these "black-on-black" incidents used Soviet-made AK-47 rifles and Makarov pistols to create the impression that ANC "terrorists" were responsible, and police reports always blamed the ANC. As amnesty applicants would later confess to the country's Truth Commission, the SA Police diverted taxpayers' money to a police-run strategic deception unit called Stratcom. Former Stratcom unit head Vic McPherson disclosed to the Truth Commission that more than 40 undercover police agents, paid informers, unwitting "sources" and "friendly" journalists throughout the South African mainstream media had participated in Stratcom projects during the late 1980s. Jailed security police death-squad commander Colonel Eugene de Kock later admitted in court that his own involvement in Stratcom during the 1980s included clandestine attacks on white people, which were falsely attributed to black people, in order to provoke a right-wing backlash.

## Reconciliation?

This then is the tortuous background against which is taking place in South Africa the current trial of white supremacists aiming allegedly to overthrow the country's first democratically elected government. Until they go on public trial, however, the full scope and intensity of the conspirators' organisational structure remain unclear. Nor is the extent known of any involvement on the part of international fascist organisations. But mainly it remains to be seen whether or the conspirators will get off as lightly as did their predecessors. There is widespread dissatisfaction in the country over the generous amnesties that were handed out by the Truth Commission to the perpetrators of serious human rights violations during the apartheid era. If genuine reconciliation is to occur in post-apartheid South Africa, the government must be seen to be clamping down very decisively, once and for all, on militant right-wing extremism. It could well be the government's last chance to do so in a political landscape pregnant with suppressed violence.

# The WSSD kick-started a debate on a news system of values

by Kanyo Gqulu, ANC Member

THE World Summit on Sustainable Development provided a bit of something to everyone. Governments the world-over, saw this Summit as an opportunity to engage the best minds in the world with a view of creating a bright socio economic future. Governments argued, that a healthy balance between people, prosperity, and the planet is needed if we are to have sustainable life on earth.

Businesses wanted to develop a strategy that would see them continue to generate high profits for their shareholders, whilst at the same time maintaining a symbiotic relationship with the environments they operate in. In this regard the newly passed Minerals and Petroleum Resources Bill, creates space and a framework that would make it possible for mining companies to truly live this symbiotic existence. The Bill speaks of mining companies engaging communities around which mining activities ensue, so that socio economic development moves in parallel with the extraction of profits by the company. This approach will benefit both the mining companies and the communities concerned. After all, it is advisable for companies to legitimise (communities support and patronise companies they draw benefits from) themselves to people in the environment they operate in, and to project a positive image of themselves.

Various non-governmental organisations also staked a claim on this WSSD process. At the centre of their debate is a view that, in most developed countries, prosperity has happened at the expense of both the people and the environment. They sight numerous examples of countries that are major contributors to environmental degradation and climate change; that some of the "natural disasters" are causally linked to industrialisation. To make matters worse, NGO's claim that though the repercussions of these actions impact on everyone, not everybody is consulted before action is taken.

Our own country, South Africa, led by a democratically elected government, presented a view that promotes an inter-connection between the plight of humanity, development for prosperity, and a well-maintained environment, that will continue to support even future generations. The subliminal message inherent in this view, is the fact that our value system has to change in order for this to be possible. For an instance, we have witnessed a disaster of international proportions in the corporate sector. Here I refer to the scandals of Enron and World.com to mention but a few. At the heart of these sagas, is a value system that preaches greed as a virtue.

In the 1980's Hollywood gave us a treat in a form of a film

(Wall Street) in which one of the leading characters proudly pronounces to a highly receptive group of shareholders, that greed is good. As far back as that time, Hollywood was mimicking a prevalent value system of the day. Prominent glossy magazines glazed their cover pages with twenty-something's who had made it to the million status within a very short space of time. With their Porsches and Rolex's, these dude's were the heroes of our time. To a certain extent, though time has passed, our measurement of success and the people we idolise, have not changed much. Of course the blind per suet of these models of success comes at a cost, to the individual, society, and the environment. In the movie Wall Street the character personifying greed (Michael Douglas) buys companies only to sell them as separate pieces thereby maximising his profits whilst rendering a lot of people jobless. In his quest for greatness, he stops at nothing, even laws are broken, and lives are shattered.

The life that Hollywood sort to imitate through its art, is now playing itself out in the current stories of Enron and WorldCom. It would seem that humanity is caught in a vicious circle, of art imitating life and life in its turn imitating art. Clearly our destination is the bottom of the pit and doom is on the horizon.

Through the WSSD process, there is a possibility of finding our salvation. We can embrace a new value system that echoes the ancient philosopher, Plato and his teacher Socrates, when they said everything should be done in moderation. The proper balance between people, prosperity and the planet, teaches us not to value greed and admire material success as the only measurement of people's true value. It tells us that the huge 4x4's that we admire should not tempt us to want to acquire them at a cost to other people and even ourselves. Here I refer to those who will steal in order to acquire their object of desire. Alternatively we put ourselves in serious financial strains so as to impress an impersonal crowd with the latest German sedan.

I conclude with an epitaph on my grandmother's grave which for me encapsulates the true value of a human being; on her tombstone it is written, *that heroes are also those whose hands till lands and whose words mould minds*. She too was such a one, in her death was her birth for the grass on her grave will always grow. People like her teach us that life's fertility lies in the sporadic moments of brilliance. Surely, these are also found even in the mandane and ordinary things we daily do.

## AN OPEN LETTER

# To the President of the Republic of South Africa on Peace in the DRC

YOUR EXCELLENCY. It is with profound respect that I write this letter. The year 2002 can be referred to as South Africa's year, Africa's year and more appropriately President Mbeki's year. It was South Africa's year because the entire world came to South Africa in September 2002 for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg. This more than anything, proved South Africa's ability and stature in the international community. It was Africa's year because of the birth of the African Union (AU) in Durban with the promise of a new beginning for the continent. It was Africa's year because the world appeared ready to help the continent out of its poverty and stagnation through the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). NEPAD represents a new commitment by African leaders to the continent's socio-economic renewal. It was your year in that you played a central role in bringing the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) to South Africa and make it a success. You became the first Chairman of the AU and NEPAD was your idea. It started as the Millennium Partnership for Africa Recovery Programme (MAP) which you championed through the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and the international Community. You indeed deserve congratulations for a work splendidly done in 2002.

This letter to you, however, Mr President focuses on another area where you have spent much of your energy in 2002, that is, the **Search for Peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)**. South Africa and yourself in particular have been saddled with a truly great responsibility for the African continent. South Africa and yourself must not shy from this awesome responsibility. At this point I would like to remind you the words of the late President Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere, on 23 April, 1998, when he addressed the South African community. He stated:

Sometimes history and circumstances confer on some individuals and countries unavoidable responsibility. Africa is in a sorry state of affairs. It is in danger of losing the Vision of its Founding Fathers, if it has not lost it already. In our eagerness to please and imitate the rich and powerful of this world, we have lost a sense of idealism. So when I hear South African leadership calling for an African Renaissance I gained fresh hope for Africa. So, yes, be sensitive! But please, please, please, don't be too shy. Don't be too diffident. You have a responsibility.

The African Renaissance was your new vision long before you assumed the mantle of the President of the Republic of South Africa. As the President you are in a position to make that vision a reality. But there cannot be an African Renaissance and a New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) in the midst of wars and armed conflicts on the continent. The search for an African Renaissance and the implementation of NEPAD must therefore start with the search for Peace on the continent. We applaud your efforts in trying to re-establish peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) that has been at the centre of what has been referred to as Africa's first world War, putting the armies of seven African countries against each other since 1998. On one side was the Tutsi Alliance of Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi and on the other side was the Southern African Development Community (SADC) alliance of Angola, Namibia, Zimbabwe and the DRC. Armies from other countries like Sudan, Chad, Libya and Central African Republic briefly took part in the war. The war in the DRC, which your predecessor President Nelson Mandela tried to prevent from escalating in 1997, threatened to divide the continent. It in fact divided the Southern African Development Community (SADC) between the then President Kabila Military supporters-Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe and the rest of the SADC members.

There is no need, Mr President, to remind you of the interconnectedness between the war in the DRC and the conflicts in Rwanda, that culminated in the 1994 Tutsi Genocide, a repeat of the 1959 killings; and Burundi, that started in 1993 with the killing of the first democratically elected Hutu President. The war in the DRC has been in part an externalisation of the civil wars in Rwanda and Burundi. A lasting peace in the DRC is in part dependent on the resolution of the conflicts in these two countries. There are expectations of elections in Rwanda in 2003.

But the question being raised is, what will happen if the Hutu majority gained electoral victory against President Kagame's Tutsi regime? Shall we have a repeat of what happened in Burundi in 1993, when the Tutsi rejected the Hutu victory? The Burundi Transitional Government is in place, thanks to your government's provision of troops to guard the Hutu leaders from exile. Your Deputy President, Jacob Zuma's efforts appear to be paying off, with the signing of a cease-fire between the transitional government and the National Council for the Defence of Democracy - Front for the Defence of Democracy (CNDD-FND) but the Hutu people - National Liberation Forces (Palipehutu-FNL) have not yet committed themselves to a cease-fire. It is therefore important Mr President, that your attention should equally be focussed on developments in Rwanda and Burundi in 2003 as on the DRC. The Hutu-Tutsi conflicts and struggles for hegemony must constantly be kept in sight as the implementation of the December DRC National Dialogue agreements for a transitional government take place.

The current progress in the DRC peace process, that includes an agreement on the formation of a transitional government is the outcome of your efforts. Your government paid for the Inter-Congolese Dialogue in Sun City in March-April 2002. You devoted your personal time and efforts to achieve a settlement at this Dialogue. While total success was not achieved you were able to build a foundation for the peace process to go forward. Your efforts paid off when a peace agreement between Rwanda and the DRC was signed in Pretoria in July 2002. This was followed by a similar peace accord between Uganda and the DRC in Luanda, Angola in August 2002. Rwanda and Uganda are the principal backers of the main rebel groups in the DRC. Signing peace agreements with the DRC made it possible for the rebel movements to agree to the formation of a transitional government under President Joseph Kabila in December 2002. The road to peace in the DRC, however, is

still long and hardulous. Your government will have to back the agreements that it has brokered. We are already heartened by your governments announcement to provide troops to the United Nations (UN) peacekeeping force to supervise the implementation of the agreement. Your government, however, will need to do more than just provide the peacekeepers. Additional help will be needed by the transitional government in the next two years. You are familiar with the operations of the transitional arrangements having been the Vice-President under the Transitional constitution between 1994 and 1996. You should share your experiences with the DRC.

The DRC transitional agreement appear to have taken from South Africa the concept of multiple Vice-Presidents. The Vice-President in the South African situation was to be awarded on the basis of the electoral strength of each party. For a party to gain a vice-presidency it had to have 15 percent of the total votes cast. The electoral outcome left us with only two vice-presidents, one from the African National Congress (ANC), yourself and one from the New National Party (NNP) former President De Klerk. The power sharing worked because of the existence of a dominant party both in parliament and senate. The situation in the DRC is completely different, the Vice-Presidency are being awarded on the basis of the assumed strengths of the various groups. There is an assumed parity between the three armed groups: The government, which retains the presidency and a vice-presidency post, the Congolese Liberation Movement (MLC) which gets a vice-president post and the presidency (speaker) of the National Assembly and the Congolese Rally for Democracy (GOMA) that also gets a vice-presidency. This parity mirrors the existing territorial division of the DRC between the three. These armed groups are balanced by two other groups referred to as the political opposition and the civil society. The political opposition, at times referred to as the unarmed opposition is awarded the vice-presidency while the civil society is awarded the presidency of the senate. The above parity is repeated in the 120 seat Senate where each of the above five groups obtains 22 seats (a total of 110) and in the 500 seat National Assembly where each of the groups obtain 94 seats (a total of 470). The remaining seats in the Senate and Assembly are given to the Mai Mai (4 and 10), the RCD-ML (4 and 15) and the RCD-N (2 and 5).

Each of the three armed groups has hopes of dominating the transition and taking over the Presidency at the end of the two year period. Because of this they are likely to thwart the efforts

of the presidents within the transitional government and to curtail each other's power by seeking alliances with the unarmed opposition and civil society. One should therefore anticipate a period of intense power struggle during the transitional period. All efforts must be made to ensure that this does not translate into renewed armed conflicts among the three groups, each attempting to control Kinshasa. This scenario is not far-fetched. One should remember what happened in Angola in 1975/76, with the triumvirate leadership of the transitional government. The MPLA, FNLA and Unita each attempted to take control of Luanda by military means reigniting a civil war that has lasted for 30 years.

The mistake made during the Angolan transition in the mid 70's was that each armed group was left in full control of its army during the transition. This allowed each group to use its military strength to push the others out. We know of the outcome. The same mistake was repeated in the early 90's when Jonas Savimbi participated in the elections and after losing used his army to restart the civil war. **Thus the containment, demobilisation and disarming of the armed groups should be a top priority of the transitional government and the UN peacekeepers and verifiers in the DRC.** It is only when the military option is denied to the armed groups that they will accept participating in the electoral process.

The electoral process will not be an easy task either. The multiplicity of parties and civil society organisations that will demand participation in the elections makes it difficult to devise an appropriate electoral system and guarantee an open and fair outcome. One should not forget what took place during the so-called Third Republic and the National Sovereign Conference between 1990 and 1996 in the DRC. 131 parties sought registration for the National Sovereign Conference. Ethnicity, the temptation of money and position and personal rivalries made it difficult for the National Sovereign Conference to function and allowed President Mobutu to retain power. The transitional Senate and Parliament risk to be a repeat of the National Sovereign Conference. Ethnicity and regionalism are likely to play a major role in the current set up given the fact, that the country is divided into three military administrations. The armed groups are likely to seek or enforce alliances with regionally based parties and civil society organisations in their jurisdictions. The solidity of the regional/ethnic alliances will depend on the resources available to the armed groups. It is the free exploitation of the DRC's natural resources that allowed the civil war

to escalate. The UN panel of Experts on the illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the DRC Report, released in October 2002 has documented the facts. One needs to implement its recommendations during the transitional period. **The crucial issue will be the establishment of a central control mechanism for the country's natural resources. Unless this is done, the natural resources will continue to fuel ethnicity, regionalism and war.**

The organisation of elections in a very wide and infrastructure deficient country will be a daunting task. The international community and the African Union in particular, will have to help the transitional government in this regard. This should go beyond the provision of electoral infrastructure and finances and the provision of electoral teams and observers to the devising of an appropriate, effective and efficient electoral system.

But Mr President the transitional power arrangements and the electoral systems and outcomes are not the main preoccupations of the majority of the DRC citizens. The Pretoria Agreements are important to them only if they can help to end the human tragedy; the killings, the rapings, the starvation, forced immigrations and general destitution. What the DRC citizens need from the international community and in particular the SADC member countries are major relief supplies in terms of food, medicines and shelter materials. Life in the DRC war zones, particularly in the Eastern part has been disrupted to such an extent that most of the people can barely survive. To survive they will need massive relief supplies.

International relief supplies will flow in the DRC in larger quantities if the SADC member states mount a major relief effort of their own. Of course, most of the SADC leaders will point to the poverty and starvation in their own countries and declare that they can do little to help the DRC. But Mr President you can still remember the sacrifices of the citizens of the Frontline States to the liberation efforts in South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe. The people were able to contribute to the liberation struggles despite their poverty because the leaders mobilised them behind the liberation sacrifices. SADC leaders should do the same now and call upon their citizens to contribute whatever little they have to the relief efforts in the DRC. This will not only show the world our determination as Africans to help our own brothers and sisters but will rekindle the spirit of African Unity and common efforts. Your main task, Your Excellency, in this regard will be to mobilise the South African citizens and make them understand why it is important to support

relief and peace efforts in the DRC and the Great Lakes in general. There are already those in the country complaining about your spending too much time and energy on Africa's problems. **These should be made to understand that South Africa will succeed and move forward only if Southern Africa, SADC and the continent moves forward. South Africa's destiny is tied with the entire continent's destiny.** This is what the liberation struggle in this country underlined. Apartheid could not have been defeated without the rest of Africa's support.

The more challenging task with regard to the relief efforts in the DRC, however, Mr President, will be to ensure that the armed groups do not interfere with the relief efforts. Accessibility to all the people in the DRC should be guaranteed. The peacekeepers must ensure that relief reaches where it is most needed. Any armed group that prevents the relief efforts in any form must be sanctioned by the international community. The people of the DRC have suffered too much in the past seven years. Let 2003 be a year of hope and renewed spirits for the people of the DRC.

What is requested from you Mr President is that your attention on the DRC should not now diminish since you have achieved what seemed impossible, an agreement on the transitional government. The peace process in the country is just beginning. Success will depend very much on your commitment to the peace process, the securing of commitment from all the SADC leaders to the peace efforts in the DRC, the mobilization of the people of South Africa in support of your efforts in the DRC and above all, your ensuring that the DRC does not fall off the international radar now that the peace process has begun. In other words, let the problems of Africa be solved by Africans.

You have demonstrated that the future is in our hands – to overcome the shackles of the past, to redevelop ourselves, our people and our continent – to find humane, creative and fearless ways of dealing with those who presently oppose such peace – to move in the flow of humankind's best, most creative imagination in the direction of our most profound vision and dreams for peace in Africa.

Mr President, your efforts in 2002 to bring about peace in the DRC are greatly appreciated by all Africans and the people of goodwill throughout the world. Their expectations are that your efforts will continue in 2003 and that you will come up with new ways, in that healing process for the people in the DRC, to achieve peace. The choice for peace in Africa will be made by the people of Africa.

There is a New Africa coming. A new world of

our children, not yet born, or just beginning, but waiting to live, to grow, to become their best possible selves in peace and prosperity in their motherland.

With my very best wishes for a prosperous and fruitful 2003.

**Professor MZOBANZI MZOBZ MBOYA**

# Accelerating local economic growth

by Zweli Sizane, Gauteng

## Introduction

Like every concept in a class divided society, economic growth is interpreted in terms that seek to serve the interests of either of the two main contesting classes. To a capitalist-oriented person growth might be measurable in terms of percentages of profit growth margins, the smokescreen being Gross Domestic Product indices. To a revolutionary, armed with our tools of analysis, growth, can be nothing but a people's centred matter measurable only in the relative reconciling of people's immediate needs as against the dispossession that, in our case also has historical systemic backlogs.

The people's centred growth approach cannot be but one that we as South African revolutionaries must relentlessly pursue, for to do otherwise would be like indulging in ballroom dance games (pardon the pun), whilst fringe elements are fast gnawing at our mass base. Can we afford the luxury that we might have gotten used to?

What does a Revolutionary Movement do upon coming to power? Does it sit and wallow in the comfort of their victory and do nothing about approaches to real work in the service of the people? That approach has to take into cognizance the fact that much as we may all be agreed on any matter, partisanship will for some foreseeable period plague us.

Are we bent on a continuity path of further alienation of the previously marginalized and dispossessed of the masses of our people? To do so, would be like the proverbial monk, forever cocooned in time and space in an era of religious persecutions while history has long bypassed the necessity for such seclusion.

It will be very folly for revolutionaries who are guided, among others, by dialectical and historical materialism to keep on unduly hiding behind glass doors when the dominant class has had to be coerced to open its eyes to the effects of its own ideological prescriptions.

## A Recap on Strategic Tasks

Within the broad framework of our Strategy and Tactics are identifiable the 5 Pillars of Struggle, (these are Strategic Tasks of the National Democratic Revolution in our country), approaches that are fundamental to confronting challenges facing the Nation.

These Five Pillars are:

- Building and strengthening the ANC as a Movement that organizes and leads the people in the task of

Social Transformation;

- Deepening our democracy and culture of human rights and mobilizing our people to take an active part in changing their lives for the better;
- Strengthening the hold of the democratic movement on the State power and, transforming the State machinery to serve the cause of social change;
- Pursuing economic growth, development and redistribution in such a way as to improve the people's quality of life and,
- Working with Progressive Forces throughout the World to promote and defend our transformation, advance Africa's Renaissance and build a Just New World Order.

Much as these five pillars can only have the desired effect if implemented simultaneously, the balance of forces is such that we have no alternative but to prioritise two or three of them while engaging quite vehemently with the forces that project an anti-people agenda from the corridors of the Developed World.

The engagement of those forces that are against people's aspirations has to occur mainly in the corridors of international institutions. Those acting outside of those corridors (on the streets), together with some of our own formations, are doing so with their sights aimed at the same institutions, probably complimentary to our internal efforts.

## Election Manifestos

In seeing to it that we continue on a course unfettered by the most anti-people of the forces of capital, we must ensure that we are implement what we have articulated in our Elections Manifestos. In particular, in our 2000 Local Government Elections Manifesto:

- Provide all residents with a free basic amount of water, electricity and other municipal services, so as to help the poor. Those who use more than the basic amount will pay for the extra they use.
- Strengthen the Masakhane campaign, with improved services for all to inculcate the culture of payment.
- Forge social partnerships in the fight against HIV/AIDS by accelerating the implementation of our "Together We Can" Campaign, with a focus on prevention, large scale provision of condoms, development of treatment strategies, research and the creation of a supportive, sound and caring social environment.

- Shape plans and programmes to meet the needs of the aged and people living with disabilities. Services and buildings will be made increasingly accessible to them.

Probably what we have to ask ourselves is which exactly of the above issues have we managed to put to realization. I reckon that the ANC has been able to fulfill and continue to fulfill almost all issues that were raised in the Local Government Elections Manifesto of 2000. However what we have not really come to terms with, is the whole issue of Local Economic development on which we are really scraping the bottom. The whole exercise of seeing to it that we develop Integrated Development Plans (IDP) is but a beginning towards the development of a concrete economic policy, especially, at District and Metropolitan level.

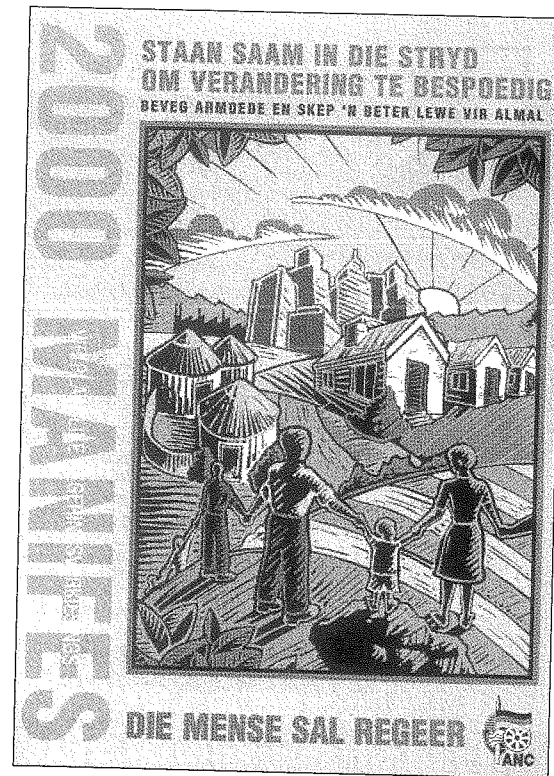
What is central to the whole IDP process is that its implementary phase should not be interpreted at a micro level; vending, spaza and small business only. We cannot be seen to be party to the abandonment of a mass economic programme, as reflected in our newly adopted Strategy and Tactics. The development of an analysis process that will culminate in the unfolding of an approach that embraces a complete auditing of companies that are operational within a given municipality such that, inclusive with the cooperative and small business sectors, a comprehensive strategy can be developed that will encompass an inclusive embrace to local economic development.

An all-rounded, embracive approach covering all sectors that are key to economic development, may then be comprehensively drafted and put across as a proposal for a policy framework.

### Partisan Interpretation of Policy in Implementary Frameworks

It becomes imperative that in the process we also transform officials at local governmental levels into community development cadres. Keyed in to that would be the correct interpretation of policy implementary frameworks, in ideological terms.

The Classical Liberalism and revolutionary interpretations of economics and political economy are diver-



Together speeding up change... **The ANC's 2002 Local Government Elections manifesto place great emphasis on local development.**

gent and can never be collapsed into the same interpretation even by the most expert of Western trained economists.

Our tools of analysis compel us to look at economic policies as guided by the Marxist Thesis of Labour Theory of Value, especially its aspect of the Theory of Surplus Value, how it is accumulated and appropriated. Throughout societal development, from the time that Historical and Dialectical Materialism was researched and synthesized, scholars of that class that expropriates profit, that can only be derivable from labour, have been at pains to come with interpretations of their political economy that are attempts to negate the truthfulness of the science in the Labour Theory of Surplus Value.

What it boils down to, is that the ANC, as the Party in Government, through its Public Representatives must ensure that Resolutions adopted in National Conferences are inter-

preted, reflective of the character of the Movement, which is a working class and poor people's partisanship, within the ambit of concrete reality facing the National Liberation Movement, the struggle to eradicate vestiges of colonialism and colonialism of a special type.

### Economic Structure

The structure of any economy is seen in the manner in which the Forces of Production and the Relations of Production are structured. Key to that would be issues pertaining to Property Relations as elaborated at the National General Council of 2000 in Port Elizabeth:

*"Changing South African society in a manner that decisively improves people's quality of life requires boldness in thinking that shakes up convenient comfort zones:*

*For instance, in dealing with matters of the allocation of capital for investments, to look at the balance between bank-based and Stock Exchange systems of raising capital; incentivised and enforced savings; assistance to SMME's; fostering of the co-operative sector and so on, should we be satisfied with merely maintaining and tinkering with the so-called 'modern sophisticated economy and infrastructure that the white man bequeathed us' or should we search for bold and creative solu-*

*tions? Related to this is the question of the size of the budget deficit and departments' capacity to spend."*

(ANC Agent for Change. UMRABULO No. 8, 2000)

The mode of production is the barometer that elaborates the above. Key to that is the equilibrium between the relations of production and the forces of production. However as reflected in the 1997 Mafeking Resolution on the National Question, the resolution of property relations becomes central to ending racism and poverty and economically emancipating our people.

The economic policies that are put in place have to be seen to be reflective of an attempt to move away from production relations that seek to benefit the few and, in the context of the National Democratic Revolution, tilt this imbalance away from the few that are expropriating profit, inclusive of Black Economic Empowerment.

Meaning that an integrated approach to the economic emancipation of the people of South Africa will be locatable within the frameworks that we put in place, IDPs included.

### The Local Economic framework

The manner then in which we approach Local Economic emancipation has to be reflective of the above elements, scientific, such that they embrace all tenets of our societies development as adopted in resolutions directly addressing the legacy of the past.

It becomes important that we move away from frameworks that are seen to be skirting the involvement of people in the real economy as prevailing in the Metropolitan and District areas.

A fundamental mistake would be to see Local Economic issues only in terms of Municipality Services and, whatever frameworks and structures that may be existing in some of our Municipalities agencies and utilities. Added to that, would be an attempt to create a parallel micro-structure that in no way touches the mainstream local economy and, thus, companies.

Our strategy should include integrating issues of Human Resource Development, so that future needs of sectors that are active in an area are appropriately planned for. We must also target and project sectors that are going to be decisive in the poverty eradication programme and begin to influence our education and Human Resource Programmes. This integrated approach should touch on all facets of Human development. At National level – where the final processing and prioritizing of IDP programmes occurs – this is done in an integrative and integrated as possible.

### Conclusion

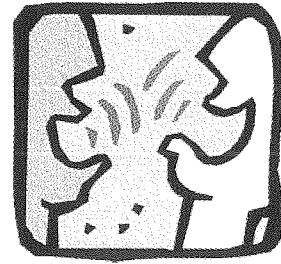
In conclusion, it becomes imperative to paraphrase the Deputy President of the ANC, Cde Jacob Zuma, at the height of discourse in the Alliance, the importance of

partisan interpretation of concepts and, in the formulation of policy implementary frameworks.

Central to the production of the Cadre of Community Development Workers is an approach that is as comprehensive as possible to be able to defeat the scourge of poverty and put our country's growth into a people friendly one.

# The principles of internal party democracy of the ANC

## Are they suspect? Who is a 'dempsey'?



by P.S. Liholo, ANC Member, Protea Glen

**T**HE ANC'S INTERNAL PARTY DEMOCRACY has been criticized, on a number of occasions, as a tool that inculcates a culture of silence and discourages critical alternative views or dissident opinions. It is said to be going against the very fiber of our constitution by suppressing freedom of speech and freedom of the press. Furthermore, the ANC is claimed to be autocratic by imposing decisions upon its members, without proper consultation and debate. In a nutshell, the ANC is anti-democracy.

It is quite ironic that an organisation that has fought for so many years for the establishment of a democratic order could suddenly turn its back against the very same order in the new dispensation.

The point that needs to be made is that "Freedom of Expression", which includes "Freedom of press and other media" and "Freedom to inquire, receive or impart information" without limitations or regulations, is self-destructive. For an example, one cannot encourage hate-speech, incite violence, belittle other people's rights or publish false or inaccurate information about individuals or organisations, all in the name of "Free Speech".

Therefore central to the conventional wisdom of the ANC, is the principle of "Democratic Centralism". The principle openly and genuinely acknowledges the complex dynamics of human interaction within a given social milieu. It acknowledges the uniqueness and different cultural backgrounds that are brought to bear when the decisions are to be taken by any group of people and therefore the inevitable differing opinions.

In that context once a decision has been taken, after due debate, agreeing or disagreeing, the respective members are expected to abide by the decisions, defend and carry them out. Any critical view should be expressed and handled within the established structures of the organisation. Furthermore, certain procedures need to be followed before communicating any decision, or expressing an opinion regarding the decision to an outside body.

To use one example, outside the ANC, even a media

institution like Freedom of Expression Institute explicitly states in its constitution that one has to get authorisation from the chairperson before communicating to the press. That in itself is censorship. Therefore there should be nothing extraordinary when the ANC applies that principle to its members.

It is clear that the intention is to organise and regulate public debate in order to maintain unity and protect the integrity of the organisation, by immunising it against the external bodies or individuals that might take advantage of the unavoidable internal differences. The intention is not to suppress the "spoken word" as there is a room for debate, persuasion and possible permission being granted to publicly express one's ideas.

Therefore any person, who joins the ANC, at his/her own discretion, should understand and embrace all the principles that inform its discipline, culture and tradition. If one has a serious problem with the established norms and values, one needs not join the organisation. Until one puts a strong case on the table and persuade the majority towards a different direction, the principles will remain intact.

Not long ago, we observed and felt the direct impact, as a country and continent, the devastating consequences of the actions of an individual, Charles Dempsey, who decided to act on his personal capacity during the voting process within the FIFA executive, on who should host the soccer world cup in 2006. He decided to go against the mandate and instructions of his Federation and country. His behaviour was correctly described as an "international embarrassment" to his respective constituencies and the soccer fraternity as a whole, despite the fact that it was his democratic right to vote or not to vote.

Therefore several questions should be asked and answered: should this kind of behaviour be allowed and encouraged by any organisation or institution? Should Mr. Dempsey be dubbed and hailed as a "torch-bearer" of the freedom of expression and adherent of true democracy, just because he had the tenacity to speak-out against the majority? I hope not.

If we were to subscribe to the universal principles mentioned above, without qualification or limitations, there wouldn't be any need for individuals to organise themselves into social or political groups, as we would all be governed by the same criteria i.e. the constitution of the country. While that sounds desirable, that would be oversimplifying the very complex nature of human interaction. Naturally, people will always organise themselves and there will always be a need to regulate the behaviour of the members. The 'dempseys' with their personal agendas or ulterior motives, among others, to destroy and tarnish the image of the organisations they claim to be representing would infiltrate any group that operates without internally developed procedures.

In October 1999 Trevor Ngwane took a decision to publish an article through the press, on his "personal capacity as the councillor" against the policy position of his organisation, Igoli 2002. That raised eyebrows within the ANC and was subsequently called to disciplinary hearings where his case was hopefully dealt with in a fair and democratic way.

On the 29 July 2000 he was invited as a guest speaker to the AGM of the Freedom of Expression Institute (FXI). He carried on with his public criticism of the ANC, and used the Constitution of the Republic to motivate his behaviour. At the time he was still awaiting the outcomes of disciplinary hearings.

Some of the issues he addressed were: his "worrying personal experience within the ANC, the "draconian manner in which his case was handled" and the fact that he was "telephonically dealt with". He criticised the decision-making processes within the ANC, in particular the way in which Igoli 2002 was adopted as a government's policy, the way in which the cadres are deployed and his perceived erosion of the internal party democracy. At the end he was hailed as a "true voice of the poorest" of the poor by having the tenacity to speak-out against the majority. How did his actions differ from those of Charles Dempsey?

What needs to be emphasised and corrected is that he contravened the constitutional procedures of the organisation no matter how 'true' his views were. He consciously knew what the consequences would be.

Of great concern to Ngwane, is that he did not understand why he was removed from "his state positions", e.g. as the chair of the Town Planning Tribunal of the Northern Metro Council. According to him, when he was suspended as the deputy-chair of the ANC in Pimville, he was supposed to have retained the state positions.

Well, he must be reminded that he got the elected positions because of the political mandate from the ANC. Therefore, councillors can be withdrawn and replaced at any time by their parties and vacancies are filled from the party-list. What he must also know is that even an independent has to leave the seat if he/she joins any party after the election. The idea is to main-

tain the proportionality of the council.

As regards the Igoli Plan or even GEAR, we are told that full consultation was done. The consultation process included the government, at all its levels, labour, business, political parties, civic any other interested party. However, a point that needs to be made is that consultation and debate do not mean there would be a unanimous agreement among the stakeholders involved, as each group represents its own interests. Given that reality there can't be an endless consultation and debate. The state has the responsibility to govern and deliver as well. Ngwane has since left the ANC for an anti-privatisation group out there.

However, the questions that need to be asked are the following: Was consultation really done? What does consultation mean? Does it mean informing the people present about the predetermined decision or allowing the debate and discussion to take place before taking the decision? If the latter was the case, how was the decision reached? Was it through a compromise, consensus or vote?

Such questions need to be asked for one does not understand the rationale behind the opposition to the aforementioned policies, especially from Cosatu and SACP, if they were democratically agreed upon. If Cosatu and SACP were totally against the policies from the onset, they should not have deployed their respective members into government who are, quite ironically, presently implementing the very same policies. Equally important, they should not have rallied behind the 'capitalist' ANC during the elections. I suppose Ngwane did the correct thing by leaving the organisation when he felt he was forced to do what was morally and ideologically against his conscience and principles. Whether a plan is liberal, neo-liberal, Marxist, Neo-Marxist or a combination of all, is an ideological debate that is beyond the scope of this brief response.

What I know from personal experience of conferences or consultative forums, is that people are given a chance to talk but don't and only the few, the 'known', ones end up dominating the discussions and, quite inevitably, the decisions will be based on their views. They keep quiet both because there was a feeling that a decision has already been taken and therefore what would be the point of participating anyway, or there was just not enough time to prepare for the issues on the table.

Perhaps that is the reason why some people would distance themselves from such decisions that are perceived to be against the workers interests. However I have no sympathy for those who would keep quiet, for whatever reasons, and distance themselves afterwards and go out to 'mobilise the masses' against the decision.

Nevertheless, few observations could be drawn from Ngwane's experience. One is that he was either not able to put his case strongly and convince the majority, both at an ideological and practical levels or his message fell on deaf ears.

Assuming the latter was the case, he could have carried on with the politics of persuasion. He could have used the journals within the ANC or Alliance e.g. UMRABULO or the THE AFRICAN COMMUNIST, to "probe, question, articulate and disagree". Eventually his case could have been heard, not only by "his constituency" but also by the broader mass within the Alliance, if it had anything constructive to offer.

What is really the point or the objective of debating through the press, if one is a party representative in public office? Who was Trevor trying to convince and at whose expense?

Nelson Mandela, including many others of course, spent many years in prison, trying to persuade the leading Afrikaners and the white community in general, into accepting the injustice that they were unleashing upon the African people. His message kept on falling on deaf ears until one leader, FW Deklerk, was convinced. That acknowledgement paved the way for a true democratic engagement. Wasn't that a 'miracle?' The moral political point, here, is that true leadership goes with patience and the ability to sell one's idea.

FXI seems to be developing a trend of inviting only 'anti-ANC' guest speakers to its AGM's. Quite interestingly, on 29 June 2001 another figure was invited to yet another AGM, as a guest speaker. Those close to him regard him as an 'intellectual'. I would prefer to call him an 'academic intellectual'. The name is Professor Siphoo Seepe. Does that ring the bells? Such 'intellectuals' don't like to be criticised, even though they claim that other people are intolerant and unsympathetic to criticism. However that does not mean there is nothing that can be learnt from them.

His brief was "Is the space for intellectual debate or engagement expanding or narrowing?" Even though the question was not specifically directed to the ANC, it was clear from the examples he cited in the paper and off the paper that the ANC was a point of focus and analysis.

Some of his famous observations are that the ANC President, Thabo Mbeki is becoming too powerful and therefore intolerant to criticism. He achieves this by 'centralising power' and surrounding himself with 'Yes Men'... and women!. He has delinked the ANC's provincial chairmanship from premiership so that he could 'hand-pick' his premiers, advisers and he appoints Director Generals who will make sure that people who occupy important positions in government are 'Yes Sir' people. The ANC is behaving exactly like the apartheid government that took decisions on behalf of African people for they could not 'think' for themselves.

Therefore, given the above developments, – according to Seepe – the intellectual terrain within the ANC is definitely narrowing. Why would there be any debate if all the people will always agree with the President on every issue? "President Mbeki is slowly but surely becoming 'Mobuto or Mugabe'".

Prof. Seepe's observations can be quite 'convincing' and intellectually appealing for an unsuspecting and uncritical mind. What is disturbing is his attempt to reduce organisational decisions to an individual. The picture he is painting to the outsiders is that President Mbeki woke up one morning and announced publicly that, "From now onwards the provincial chair will not automatically become the premier. I will choose my premiers. I will choose Director Generals. That is final, sit back and shut up or bear the consequences".

If that could be the case I would be equally disturbed and leave the ANC. However as an ordinary member of the ANC I believe that the above decisions were taken democratically by relevant structures within the movement on the basis of the conditions that were prevailing at the time. I fully understood the reasons given thereof. I would also want to believe that the decisions were preceded by rich intellectual engagement. It might not be desirable decisions but I hope they can still be reversed once the conditions have normalised i.e. when people have internalised the true meaning of democracy.

Factions were developing within the organisation out of the natural desire to occupy high positions within the political ladder. These factions would eventually destroy the organisation from within, had the leadership not intervened. The leadership, of any organisation, has the responsibility to provide both the moral and intellectual direction to its followers in times of 'crisis' without any permission from any outside body.

Perhaps the critics, such as Seepe, wanted the ANC to sit back and allow 'the people to choose their own leaders' no matter how destructive the methods of lobbying are in the long run, if it claims to be a truly democratic organisation. What must be noted here is that no matter how noble the idea of 'Democracy' is, i.e. 'Leaders by the people for the people' the reality is that we are living in the era of 'Representative Democracy'. That means structures or bodies are democratically established and empowered to make or consult and make decisions on behalf of the majority or constituency. Quite inevitably, people will get appointed, which of course is creating some of the problems today. It is true that leaders were not appointed in the past. They emerged out of the need and took initiatives to address that need.

The point is that the majority can decide but not upon every issue. It sounds painful but its true.

Even the institution that the respectable Professor represents does take decisions, sometimes painful, on behalf of the students.

Therefore it would be intellectually naïve and oversimplified to liken President Mbeki with Mobuto or Mugabe or our government with the governments of such leaders or apartheid government.

However, as ANC members we must also be introspective about our own contribution to the democratic cultures and values of the movement. There is develop-

ing a disturbing tendency among some ANC members at different levels to censor themselves, when they are suppose to speak out and express their opinions on a given issue, policy or non policy.

We are scared to question the silence, inaction or belated responses of the leadership at a political level to deal with comrades who bring the name of the organisation into disrepute and or that have contravened or compromise the principles of the organisation.

If such behaviours and many others are allowed to pass by unchecked and double standards are applied, then there is no reason to talk about established procedures and principles that should be adhered to. If members do not speak, decisions will always be taken on their behalf and the culture and tradition of the movement will indeed become suspect. It will always be perceived as a tool to suppress alternative views from some people while immunising others at the same time.

The question is, whom do you blame? Is it the members who are quiet or is it the very nature of political organisation and culture that unconsciously silences?

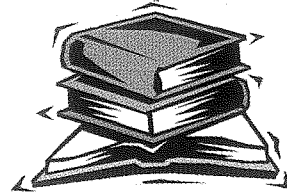
In conclusion, people do come and go within the ANC. Some "jump before they are pushed" and disappear into the political wilderness or form their own parties to pursue their ideological agendas, while some fight a bloody political battle before they succumb.

Nevertheless, the noble "Principles of Internal Party Democracy" can only remain intact within the ANC if fairly and fully applied under all circumstances regardless of position or political credentials of an individual, otherwise they will remain under constant threat.

"Who is a 'dempsey'?" Have you answered that question? I hope so.

# The trial of Henry Kissinger

by Christopher Hitchens; Verso: London (2002)



Review by

*Vishwas Satgar*

*Executive Director of the Cooperative and Policy Alternative Center (COPAC)*

**T**HE RAW NERVE of ignorance is cut open by Christopher Hitchens' book *The Trial of Henry Kissinger*. Written more from the standpoint of the prosecution, this book indicts one of the most important statesmen of the 20th century. Without being emotional or propagandistic the pages of this book are laden with nauseating facts obtained directly from declassified documents of the US security establishment, placed in the public arena by the Freedom of Information Act. Intelligently argued, corroborated and strengthened by comparing these revealed historical facts against the blatant inaccuracies (or sometimes lies) in Kissinger's own memoirs, a compelling case is laid out for the reader.

In our contemporary world the word 'genocide' is increasingly associated with monsters like Milosovic and Saddam Hussein. However, with the advantage of historical insight provided by Hitchens, Kissinger more than any other world leader has been responsible for the mass murder, execution, assassination and destruction of innocent human beings.

From the unconditional support given to the caudillo's or dictatorships of Latin America (particularly the role of the CIA in undermining the democratically elected government of Salvador Allende in order to install the dictator Pinochet), support for the destabilisation of Angola by the apartheid regime, the invasion of Cyprus by the Greek junta, the massacre of thousands of innocent Timorese people by the armed forces of Suharto and the illegal bombing of millions of Cambodians and Laotians during the Vietnam War, Kissinger more than any other "Cold War warrior" was responsible. The chronicle of death and destruction orchestrated by Kissinger's influence and power comes through in the pages of Hitchens' book.

Within the power structure of the US political system Hitchens exposes how bureaucratic power operates in the shadows to manipulate and "govern". Kissinger for his part was able to appropriate power through chairing the "40 committee" which was responsible for US covert operations. It was made up of the likes of an Air Force General, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Deputy Secretary of

Defense, Under-Secretary of State for Political Affairs and the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency. Using this power through the Nixon and Ford era, Kissinger, first as National Security Advisor and later also as Secretary of State, was able to unilaterally determine the course of history from 1969 to 1976.

The most interesting revelation of international relations and political history, referred to as the "secret of '68", was the extent to which Kissinger and Nixon utilized illegal and private diplomacy to undermine the Vietnamese peace negotiations, in 1968. They promised the South Vietnamese a better deal if Nixon came to power. The result of this intrigue was a withdrawal from negotiations after President Johnson ordered the halting of aerial bombardment. This coincided with US national elections and led to the victory of Nixon, according to Hitchens.

The Cold War is over but the continuities with the past are scary. A Republican government is strengthening its power in the US and is bent on "regime change" and waging a war against "global terrorism". Kissinger and his predecessors advanced US imperialist interests after World War II with cruelty and impunity, in the name of defending the "Free World" from the Communist threat. State terrorism and militarism shaped and composed US foreign policy aggressively during the Kissinger era – the highpoint of the Cold War. Today's global power game is no different except that the stakes for all of humanity are much higher. The theater for violent destruction of innocent human beings is not just the Western World or parts of the Third World but spans the entire globe.

Henry Kissinger is still respected within the power structure of US society. According to Hitchens he runs a consulting company for huge transnational corporations and governments and has global economic interests in various places from Indonesia to China. The current "warriors against global terror" still regard him as the paragon of professional opinion on US foreign policy.

In the midst of all this Hitchens challenges all of us to force the world, including the US legal system, to indict Henry Kissinger for crimes against humanity. The US was

responsible for ensuring that the Nuremberg legal principles were adopted by the UN and is meant to solemnly abide by it. More importantly, it has ratified some of the most important international human rights instruments like the Rome Statute, which establishes the international criminal court (for the trial of individuals), the Genocide Convention and the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Recently a Spanish judge took the first blow against Kissinger's heinous legacy of state sponsored terrorism by successfully forcing the prosecution of the former Chilean Dictator Pinochet. Emboldened by this, a French court issued a summons to Kissinger about the "disappearance" of 5 French citizens in the early days of Pinochet's regime.

Kissinger immediately fled France but the summons remains valid.

Before Kissinger's legacy of state terrorism plunges us into chaos, "the civilized world" needs to demand that he be tried for his crimes. If the US system is not able to deliver this it is important that we demand a Truth and Reconciliation Commission modeled on the South African experience, argues Hitchens. This is the least that can be done to have full disclosure on US perpetrated crimes against humanity committed during the Cold War. Such a courageous and prudent step by the most powerful nation in the world can possibly stop the incipient barbarism of global terror – state and non-state – in the present.

## The handbook on African Traditional Herbal Medicine

Synopsis of a forthcoming publication

*Eddie Mabitsela*

### Introduction

The history of African traditional medicine is as old as the story of the origin and development of the continent's socio-political systems. Fact is the advent of colonial conquest and consequently the imposition of especially Western solutions to health and hygiene, brought with it the castigation and ultimately the demonization of the African traditional approach.

This fact partly explains the reason why the knowledge was never allowed to evolve and flourish leading to the current situation where even indigenous Africans have themselves been somewhat distanced from it. The entire colonial period was a time of systematic destruction of the Africans' knowledge and belief in the efficacy of our traditional methods of prevention and cure in which politics and religion played a much significant role. Be that as it may, the knowledge systems of old have survived the persistent onslaught, at times against near impossible odds.

The current era of transition from Euro-centric dictates to the higher plateau of continental re-awakening creates space for a more assiduous revival of African medical know-how in the spirit of the African Renaissance project. Significantly, one of the main pillars of this renaissance is actually the concept of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS). We are fortunate in South Africa that Cabinet has since recognized the relevance of IKS and has through the appropriate departments of government sought to enact

laws to that effect. In this connection, no small a part has been played by the South African Chapter of the African renaissance (SACAR) and the official Department of Arts and Culture Heritage Chief Directorate.

### Elevating Traditional Medicine – A general outline

Outside of the foregoing, great initiatives are in place to help develop and refine strategies to re-elevate traditional medicine with a view to resuscitate confidence in historically known herbal remedies and cures. Importantly the strategies being explored also embrace the very important questions of veterinary and environmental relevance as well as the role of professional traditional healers.

One such initiative is "The Handbook On African Medicinal and Traditional Herbs" project. The project has as its background the amazing efforts of Rui Carvalho and his Herbal Africa undertaking. The locus of the initiators of the handbook is a committed group of professionals whose major aim is to enlighten and to empower the general public and the medical profession on the proper use and dosage of African medicinal plants. The aim is to publish a book in which the traditional and scientific components are merged. This will enhance its credibility as well as provide and inform the populace and medical profession with apt knowledge whilst laying bare the value of South African medicinal plants.

The book's uniqueness and value lies in its content. It

goes much further than academic descriptions and explanations. According to Tr. Doctor J Ngombe, "The secret of African medicine lies in the proper dosage and its preparation". This sentence will constitute the focal point of the work. And quite importantly because of current publications' failure to correctly explain the use of African medicines, there is a great deal of frustration among professionals and the public alike. The authors aim to correct past misinformation due to ignorance on the subject of African herbs and medicines. Importantly, fact will be separated from fiction in the entire body of the work.

We have already alluded to the fact that 'Western' education and colonial propaganda has done much to discredit our heritage and culture. As a consequence African herbs are often associated with witchcraft and the occult. This has to be corrected as a priority if we are to achieve the progress and international acceptability and respectability that Asian and other cultures have registered with their herbs.

Herbal Africa specifically focuses on the exploration, research, development and manufacture/packaging of African Herbal and Traditional Medicine. Its success has been such that it is attracting positive responses even among conventional medical practitioners as we write. Both the Medical Research Council (MRC) and the Council on Science and Industrial Research (CSIR) are being severally appraised and will continue to be consulted as key aspects of the project unfold. Because of these and other considerations, including the cost of modern medicine as imposed by the huge multinational pharmaceutical companies, an acute need to facilitate the accessibility of the knowledge and effectiveness of certain plants/herbs for medicinal purposes could no more be over-emphasized. From all this arose the idea of a generally user-friendly handbook that could benefit the professional and the layman alike.

Africa's healers, for long skeptical of outsiders and understandably secretive of their skills, possess centuries of accumulated knowledge and experience on medical plants. Our own researchers were the first to promote African herbal traditional medicines on the Internet, the first to encapsulate *Momordica balsamina* L one of the most popular medicines in Southern Africa, the first to manufacture an anti-malaria medicine based on African medicinal plants and the first to prove that Africa has a plant that kills the HIV virus while simultaneously allowing for human cell development (under research and development in tandem with CSIR). The caliber of researchers in our team constitute the invaluable source from which the book will draw in providing the necessary information for disadvantaged communities to also treat themselves against life-threatening diseases.

### Vision and Goals

We believe as we do that as it is being slowly proven, African herbs are able to deliver effective treatments for major diseases and ailments. This is where the authors focus their attention - tapping into centuries of wisdom and knowledge of the secrets of our natural resources, heritage and culture as well as enhancing this body of knowledge

with scientific data and fact.

In the immediately foregoing sense the authors seek to publish a worthy book that will become a benchmark of African herbal medicine and future publications on the subject; educate the South African and the overseas public; empower our communities with information and know-how to take control of primary health care; further help the South African market and industry based on African medicinal plants and to empower and to enhance the lives of the under-privileged thereby changing the credo; "he who cannot pay, dies".

At the end of the day we aim to produce a truly informative and representative handbook that can help facilitate the integration of African traditional healers with established scientific bodies in order to achieve set goals. Pharmacists, homeopaths, botanists, scientists and conventional doctors will verify the toxicity and efficacy of the data contained in the book in order to safeguard the public against overdosing or any other ill effects that can result from its utilization. The authors maintain that their goal can best be summarized as a small version of the human pharmacopoeia of Southern African medicinal plants. Fact is China exports over \$1 billion's worth of medicinal herbs. The handbook will give our herbs their long-deserved credit and will equally go a long way in placing our herbs in the international order books.

This article is precisely about this book project and how it fits in contextually to Southern African programs on national and community health issues. We believe that the timing of the project is more apt than expedient. This is particularly so for our country and people as we grapple with the problem of the HIV/AIDS pandemic even as we have to face up to the incredulous opinions of 'experts' who would have the world believe that African traditional herbal science is in no way capable of delivering effective solutions. The handbook participants will show that that the project is not offering/promoting alchemist panaceas but well researched and proven medicaments.

### African Century and Alternative Medicine

For several years now recourse to alternative medicine in the West has become almost a fad. There are reasons for this change of attitude, and they are wedded to efficacy versus costs. Of course the growing popularity of alternative medicine has also to do with cultures other than African. Significant amongst these is evidently Chinese, Asian, Japanese and Native American practices and own chemistries. To some extent the African way has also made inroads into Western culture. The power of the appeal issuing from alternative medicine is due to the fact that it relies on treatment that promotes health without recourse to artificial drugs. (In many instances artificial drugs are associated with debilitating side effects that may even be fatal).

In South Africa there has been a significant growth in recognition of the relevance of the African practice, consequently leading to a number of White individuals going as far as studying and graduating as Sangomas and Inyangas. Furthermore it is a fact beyond much dispute that most black South Africans believe in or have at least consulted

the traditional medicos at one point or another. In all appearances, the era of alternative medicine as a preventive, curative and/or complementary solution to illness and disease is already upon us. The business of the handbook will be to help facilitate and to harness this newfound enthusiasm within the parameters of proper ethical conduct. The anticipated impact of the handbook should go a long way in propelling affordable health for the purpose, among others, of placing the African Century on a sound footing in the globalizing world of today.

### Participants

Sometimes during the second half of 2002 a team was put together to work on the project from the planning stage, composition, editing to publication and distribution. The locus of the team includes Rui de Carvalho (Project initiator, Research, Website/write-ups), Dr PC Magan (Strategy, Marketing, Producer/GP/AR), Radithupa Eddie Mabitsela (Editor-in-Chief, /write-ups/AR), Johnnic Publishing (Publishers), Preferred funder, Epilogue (Oupa Ramachela), Dr Winston Leukes (Research trends), Production and Business Plan (Johnnic Publishing).

The broad list of other participants includes the following: Herbal Africa, IKS Institute, Institute of Traditional Healers, Selected experts/consultants etc.

Various Traditional Healers Associations including the African Healers Association and Association of Mozambican Traditional Healers (Ametramo). *Selected traditional healers*

### Potential Users

The foregoing motivations notwithstanding, the handbook will prove useful to the general public at home and abroad. Other potential beneficiaries may include:

South Africa, Conventional Medical Practitioners, Traditional Healers, Homeopaths, Pharmacologists, The Security Forces, Research Institutions, Libraries, Community Information Centers, Traditional Churches, Professional Institutions such as Universities, Technikons, Health Clubs, Schools, Kindergartens, Pharmacists, Veterinary Centers, Disease and Pest Control Points, Environmentalists, Industries (Factories, Mines etc), Villages and Homesteads, Individual Households, Holopathic Healers, National and Private Wildlife Parks lists of contents from prologue to epilogue follows below.

### Intellectual Property Rights

One of the principal considerations that have gone into the planning of the handbook is the issue of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) and how these can impact on the project as well as the knowledge and use of the products being promoted. This aspect is quite contentious as many of the items of interest reside in individual family and/or community heritages. It is not the business of the authors to try and resolve the matter arbitrarily. Consequentially we have seen fit, and we are convinced quite correctly so, to take the cue from the South African statutes on Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS).

The authors are pleased to acknowledge the decisively

revolutionary IKS Act that has been promulgated by the national legislature not so long ago. It is equally encouraging to note that the terms of this law also abide with international intellectual property requirements. Further to this, the authors are of the view that any outstanding issues relating to IPR will continue to be addressed through competent official structures and the relevant professional institutions such as the Directorate of Heritage, the IKS institute and others in conformity with patent laws etc.

### Quo Vadis

Obviously a handbook of this nature cannot be the alpha and omega on the subject of traditional medicine. Indeed the spectrum of knowledge and practice is as broad as it is complex. It would require more than an inspired foray into the history and evolution of all that has gone into its dialectical progression over the ages. The effort that is being made here is but a humble contribution to the larger body of both the field alongside unfolding research even in the face of unyielding challenges by multinational pharmaceutical companies and some of their allies in most governments in the continent and elsewhere.

In the foregoing context, the work is perceived as but an introduction, a general synopsis of a positively complex matter. It is with this thought in mind that the authors wish to unveil the work as first edition of a possible series. Hopefully it will open more organized and informed discussion on the pharmacological merits, curative and healing benefits of the knowledge that should lead to its better recognition and use by our people. Conventional medical practitioners and 'western experts' will understandably awaken to its usefulness, accessibility and cost-effectiveness. Environmentalists everywhere will also discover that traditional herbalists and healers also possess valuable knowledge in the harvesting of the plants/roots and preservation of the variegated environment in which they occur. After conscientious review, copious recording and classification, refining of data and further consultations, we hope and trust that a second edition will be forthcoming.

It is now estimated that this first edition will take about 18 months to complete as most of the research work is already completed as evidenced by the progress being made by Herbal Africa. The planning stage is done and the implementation phase is on track. The authors are also in talks with interested sponsors and are keenly awaiting more responses. When this is done, the collation of relevant information including interviews and photography to support the text will be embarked upon. The whole vision is to accompany the work with geographic data, mythologies and a brief lexicon interspersed with selected South African vernacular terminology.



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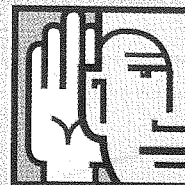
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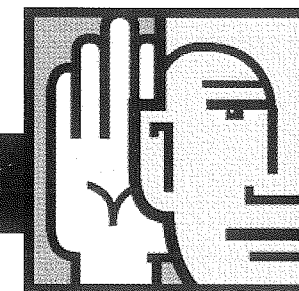
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