A woman’s place is in the struggle
The Shopsteward - a bi-monthly COSATU magazine - is unique in many respects. Most newspapers and magazines are owned by millionaires and reflect the outlook of the rich and powerful. The Shopsteward magazine is unique in that it is produced by South Africa's biggest trade union federation and gives a working class perspective on the big issues in the workplace, community, politics and the world. It also contains regular features such as letters to the editor, commentary and a variety of other exciting features on gender struggles, the economy and poetry, cartoons and book reviews.

Guidelines for Submission of Articles

I. Style and Length

The length for feature articles is 1200-1800 words. Letters to the editor must not exceed 300 words and opinion pieces must not exceed 800 words. Articles must be written in plain and simple English. Articles may contain words in other South African languages, with the English meaning bracketed. Articles must be relevant to workers and the working class in general, exciting and solicit debate and discussion. Articles about recent events or contemporary issues in South Africa and the world will be given preference for publication.

II. Due Date

The Shopsteward is published bi-monthly (six issues per annum). The due date for the submission of articles is the 01st - 08th of every month. Late submissions will not be considered.

III. Originality

The Shopsteward publishes original articles. We are therefore less likely to publish articles which have appeared elsewhere in whole or in part. Should you feel that republishing an article would be beneficial to The Shopsteward readership and that the article will reach a broader readership through The Shopsteward than the medium that first published it, then you need to bring this to the attention of the Editor. All sources cited in the articles must be referenced.

IV. Themes

Different issues of The Shopsteward have specific themes (Freedom Month, Youth Month, Women’s Month, COSATU anniversaries etc) therefore some articles must be tailored to suit the specific theme.

V. Article Review Process

The Shopsteward is particularly interested in fostering a culture of writing amongst workers; therefore, articles written by workers will be given special consideration. Articles will normally go through a review process, after which we will inform the contributor whether the article will be published or not. The review process largely depends on the adherence to deadlines provided by the Editor.
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Cover picture provided by Judy Seidman
R evolutionary greetings to all our readers! This issue of The Shopsteward comes to you after the 5th Central Committee, which took place on the 27-30 June 2011, at Gallagher Convention Centre in Midrand. Our Central Committee comprised of delegates from affiliates, our alliance partners and various local and international guests.

The 5th Central Committee was a significant and historic gathering. This gathering set the tone and pace for a living wage campaign, which our affiliates undertook in the immediate aftermath of the Central Committee. This campaign was waged on the streets by our affiliates including the NUM, NUMSA, CEPPWAWU, SATAWU and SAMWU. In the bargaining chamber and on the streets, our affiliates consistently preached the same message that a living wage is the primary means for workers to fight poverty, close the apartheid wage gap and create a just and equitable society. Drawing from the 5th Central Committee, workers argued that a living wage is a minimum wage sufficient to cover a specific quantity of housing, food, utilities, transport, healthcare and recreation.

To challenge those that accuse our unions of being the mouthpieces of the ‘labour aristocracy’, our affiliates impressively showed how a living wage would benefit underemployed and low-paid workers. We must add that a minimum wage is justified where market imperfections mean that a ‘free-market’ wage does not provide a big income to cover these needs. Those who argue against a minimum wage contend that it affects employment growth, since if the cost of labour is regulated and not determined through a market equilibrium price (which is assumed to be lower) it will be deter job creation and retention. This argument is extremely narrow and ignores the extent to which wage levels in South Africa arise from our history of colonialism and apartheid. Oppressive and discriminatory labour laws gave workers no rights and imposed exploitative wages, no job security, and no prospect of promotion or the acquisition of skills. This has led to huge inequalities which can only be narrowed by bringing the lowest paid up to an agreed minimum level. As well as improving the quality of life of the workers and their families, minimum wages stimulate increased demands for basic goods and services, which in turn stimulates manufacturing industry and economic growth. There is considerable evidence that countries with more equitable income distribution grow faster and create more employment. The economic characteristics of South Africa make the demand for a living wage a transformational issue, like land redistribution, black economic empowerment and employment equity. A living wage is one of the instruments which can facilitate and control income redistribution and reduce income inequality. We applaud the workers that took to the streets and exposed the hypocrisy of capitalism as a system that condemns workers’ wage demands whilst rewarding CEOs with hefty salary increases and bonuses! Our detractors and the prophets of doom wrongly predicted that our 5th Central Committee would be a boxing ring for different factions and camps in the movement. They speculated and purported the lie that instead of making a review of the implementation of the COSATU 10th Congress resolutions and mandate, this gathering would decide on the fate of some of the top leadership of the ANC and the state. When this did not materialise, the media chose another destructive angle of reporting, portraying an image of a COSATU at war with itself.

Our readers should find comfort in the fact that the 5th Central Committee was anything but a failure. In total, the 5th Central Committee finalised eleven resolutions. These include all the facets of the Living Wage Campaign: Organisational Development; local government and the recent elections; international relations and xenophobia. This issue of The Shopsteward is dedicated to the working class women of South Africa. We salute working class women who are subject to the ‘double shift’ of being workers who are exploited at the workplace and oppressed in the household. We pay homage to the black working women in this country who have have (and continue to) suffer(ed) a triple oppression as a class, as black people and as women. Certainly women are not merely docile victims of oppression. Women in this country have been powerful and active agents for social change.

Zwelinzima Vavi

Issue Highlights

You are sure to find this edition of The Shopsteward fascinating. We kick off with an article on the Living Wage Campaign. This is a campaign that has captured the imagination of workers across the country. We proceed from here to debunk two predominant myths about our Living Wage Campaign. The first is that the South African labour market is too rigid and the second is that high wages are bad for job creation and the economy. Be sure to read Andre Kriel and Mazibuko Jara’s articles for more on these debates. We also have a contribution from Ben Fine, who argues that by overlooking capital flight and exchange controls and by demanding wage moderation and sacrifices from labour, the New Growth Path carries on the tradition of the old growth paths in the form of GEAR and ASGISA. The issue also carries the Declaration of the COSATU 5th Central Committee, which highlights the many progressive resolutions taken at this gathering. As part of celebrating our heritage and culture as South Africans, Famous Gamede of the Creative Workers’ Union of South Africa (CWUSA) narrates a troubling story about the plight of film producers in the country. This piece explains why South African stories continue to be told by Hollywood producers and actors. The controversial land question also receives some focus in this issue with Thabo Manyat-hi interrogating the need for radical land redistribution and agrarian reform in South Africa. This issue also traces the spirit, trials and tribulations of women’s struggles in South Africa from the anti-pass laws resistance to the mass struggles of the 1970s and 1980s. As part of celebrating the 90th anniversary of the SACP, the issue also gives brief profiles of some communist women throughout the SACP’s history. We also cast our analytical net across the continent and the globe, bringing you articles on the recent South African government bailout to Swaziland; the terrible situation in Somalia; the anniversary of the Cuban July 26 Movement and interrogate the reasons behind London - one of capitalism’s citadels – burning from the fire set by angry and marginalised youths.

Happy reading - we look forward to your contributions

Phindile Kunene – Editor
The loan given to Msuwati should have instead been used to address poverty and unemployment in the country. That money belongs to us as tax payers, not somebody who can hardly run a small country like Swaziland. South Africa has offered Swaziland R2.4 billion rand instead of paying its employees, the public servants. The very same government agreed in 2010 that salary increments will be paid in May 2011. Instead of paying its employees, they are now coming up with terms and conditions. They are offering 7% and say if we accept it they are withdrawing the housing allowance of R800 because they are bringing the housing scheme, which will probably be the same as the GEMS medical aid, which belongs to Members of Parliament.

We are not stupid. Let the ANC led government stop playing games with us.

Moses Tsamai, Gauteng.

CAMBRIDGE FOODS FLOUTS LABOUR LAWS

My partner works for Cambridge Foods which she joined last year in March. Most of the time she tells me that some of her colleagues have been suspended or fired for reasons she does not understand.

This trend has been happening since she joined the company and it doesn’t get any better. The other day I asked to see her employment contract and she said she does not have one. She told me they were never given a chance to read their contracts. They were instructed to sign and never ask questions. She says at first they told the guy who was instructing them that they would like to take the contracts home to read over so that they could understand what they were signing. The guy asked them whether they were looking for a job and if they were not interested they should go home. As jobs are scarce, they signed the contracts. All employees in that company cannot access even a copy of their contract, even if you are going for a hearing.

They are told that they should contact CMC, which is an agency that supposedly hired them to work there. I have tried to look for this CMC agency but nothing comes under that name. When you go to different search engines CMC Motors comes up and CMC agency with offices and numbers from London, UK.

Now, the workers are afraid of making even a small mistake as they fear getting fired. The workers were told that they will be paid R2500 per month, but come month end some get R1800 while the highest gets R2200.

Steve, Johannesburg

NATIONALIZE THE RESERVE BANK!

I recently heard that COSATU was calling for the nationalization of the Reserve Bank. I was overjoyed to hear this, however I have not heard of the progress in that matter since. What is being done about it now? How can people like me get involved and help see the nationalization process through?

I think that most of the problems we face are the results of the free-market capitalist system put in place by forces beyond the control of the people. I believe the monetary system we have in place is not designed to serve the people and does not care for the well-being of our people. I recently watched a documentary made by an investigative journalist in the States about the monetary system in the USA. The film is called “Zeitgeist Addendum.” Most proponents of the reserve banking system will dismiss the film as “conspiracy” however it is truthful, informative and factual and he backs up his statements with evidence and facts. Everyone in the world should watch this movie if they are to get an idea of why our world is the way it is today. It is uplifting and empowering.

The most important thing revealed in this film is how the reserve banking system is designed to benefit the rich-ruling elite bankers while tax-payers are left bearing the costs of their mistakes. The fact that the 1913 and 2007/2008 collapses in the banking sector happened, tells us that this system is neither sustainable nor reliant.

This system is the reason why we have the income disparity between the rich and poor, why we have high unemployment, why there are wars, and why we have to pay exorbitant prices for food, water, electricity and housing. The film is easy to understand especially for laymen who are not familiar with economic and financial jargon.

I wish that COSATU will be able to see this film, it is available online for free. There are no copyrights on it so the film-makers encourage copying and distribution. Their goal is really to inform people on these issues. If our world is to change, we have to first make changes and one of those will be educating and informing ourselves about why things are the way they are. Can you please let me know what action we can take to stop the South African Reserve Bank and the government and corporations they support from ruining our country?

With the technology and scientific advancements humans have made, not one person should be living without food or water and in dire conditions. We can create a South Africa where there is no poverty, starvation, crime and unemployment. We can all be empowered to live sustainably with each other in a peaceful society.

I beg you to please take note of my message, I have lived with knowing how a handful of people rule our lives and make laws that benefit themselves and I am sick of it now. I want to make a difference and make people aware of this film.

Priya Maharaj, Cape Town

WRITE TO US AND TELL US YOUR VIEWS, SUGGESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

phindi@cosatu.org.za or

Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU)

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The merSETA, the Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Sector Education and Training Authority, has had its mandate extended from 2011 – 2016 in terms of the Skills Development Act [no. 97 of 1998].

The merSETA facilitates skills development in the metal and engineering; auto manufacturing; motor retail and component manufacturing; tyre manufacturing; and plastic sub-sectors.

- More than 6700 Apprentices and 8300 learners are undergoing training across merSETA’s five Chambers;
- More than 80 Qualifications are registered with the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA);
- Over 90 Learnerships have been registered;
- R10 million set aside for engineering-related studies in South Africa through bursaries;
- Curricula for 45 qualifications developed;
- The merSETA has supported the establishment of two Institutes for Sectoral and Occupational Excellence (ISOEs) in the welding vocation;
- 11 000 artisans trained under the Accelerated Artisan Training Programme (AATP); and
- 6000 SMEs to benefit from R90 million set aside for the development of SMEs.

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As the Anti-Walmart Coalition braces itself to square up with Walmart at the Competition Appeal Court in Cape Town, SACCAWU General Secretary Bones Skulu is confident that they will emerge victorious given the strong case they have put forward against the US retailer.

The Appeal which will coincide with the review lodged by government and will take place on the 20-21 October. Three Ministers are at the centre of the review. They are the Minister of Trade and Industry, Economic Development, Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries. They argue that the Competition Tribunal committed irregularities in making the decision and that the conditions attached to the merger are unreasonable. The Tribunal ordered that the merged entity must ensure that there are no retrenchments, based on the merged entity’s operational requirements in South Africa, resulting from the merger, for a period of two years from the effective date of transaction.

Secondly, the merged entity must, when employment opportunities become available within the merged entity, give preference to the re-employment of the 503 employees that were retrenched in June 2010 and must take into account those workers’ years of service in Massmart Group. Wal-Mart must also honour the existing labour agreements and must continue to honour the current practices of Massmart by not challenging SACCAWU’s current position as the largest representative union within the merged entity for a period of three years.

Lastly, the Tribunal ordered that the merged entity must establish a programme aimed exclusively at developing local suppliers, including SMMEs, funded in a fixed amount of R100 million to be funded by Wal-Mart and expended within three years.

While the government is seeking a review, SACCAWU wants the whole order for the two merging parties to be set aside. Skulu said that they were caught by surprise when the Competition Tribunal granted the order with the conditions which the two merging parties voluntarily submitted. “Initially we had fifteen demands or conditions, but the companies said there was no need for us to put these demands as they were going to be catered for by the law.” Skulu said that they wanted their conditions to be included because they were worried about Walmart’s behavior in other countries where it operated. “This company has put in place what it calls the Managers Tool kit on how to keep Walmart union-free.”

“As a result we demanded that the merged entity must have a closed shop agreement to ensure that all workers join the union,” said Skulu.

Other conditions that SACCAWU put forward included the following:

- There must be a commitment to no cancellation of any existing agreements, and no downward variation of terms and conditions of employment.
- Collective agreements and terms of condition agreements we have with Massmart must be extended to all countries where Massmart operates throughout Africa.
- The company must re-instate all SACCAWU members who were affected by the unilateral retrenchment as a result of Massmart repositioning itself for the takeover by Walmart.
- Massmart and Walmart must commit to local procurement policies aimed at developing local agriculture, food processing and manufacturing with clear decent work imperatives in job creation.
- Walmart must adhere to local labour legislation and policies of Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment, Employment Equity and Training.

As Walmart has set its eyes on approximately fourteen countries in Africa, SACCAWU has decided to elevate the Anti-Walmart Campaign to the continent under the auspices of Uni Global Union. The union’s African Region’s 12th Executive meeting adopted a programme of action to stop Walmart’s entry into the continent. Skulu, who is also the President of Uni Global Africa Region, said that they agreed to form a Trade Union Alliance that will raise awareness in the fourteen countries about the conduct of Walmart. The alliance was also tasked to report back on the work the Anti-Walmart Coalition is doing in South Africa. “We also agreed that the conditions we have put to Walmart in South Africa must be applicable to all other African countries,” said Skulu.

Uni Global also committed itself to assist SACCAWU and COSATU on the litigation against Walmart.

Mntungwa is COSATU’s Communications Officer.
If the strike actions the country has witnessed recently are anything to go by, the living wage campaign recently endorsed by COSATU’s Central Committee, is well on track. The federation’s unions which embarked on a series of strike actions are giving themselves a huge pat on the back for the victories they notched up during the wage negotiations. South Africa’s major cities came to a standstill when CEPPWAWU, NUM and NUMSA took to the streets to demand a living wage. The strikes came hot on the heels of COSATU’s 5th Central Committee which adopted a resolution to vigorously campaign for a living wage.

The Living Wage Campaign is vital in that it seeks to move many low or underemployed workers out of poverty wages and create a sustainable wage income strategy that meets all basic needs, improve skills and employment opportunities, and reduces income inequality and poverty.

The intransigence of the employers prolonged the strikes, with CEPPWAWU General Secretary, Simon Mofokeng. He said the frustration set in when the employers threw around offers as low as 4% while their demand was 15%. “We sometimes got an impression that we were dealing with a mafia that did not want to accede to the demands of the workers. However, the living wage campaign gave us a major boost and we were very clear that this time around we were going to war with the employers and we were not going to accept anything less than double digits.”

Eventually, the union settled at 8.5-10% with the employer. Other demands that the union put forward included the banning of labour brokers, 40-hour work per week and 20% shift allowance.

The double digits settlement is not the end of the struggle for the union. It has identified a number of campaigns its members will embark upon. “The strike has assisted us a great deal in raising the profile of the union. We are now going to build on this momentum by intensifying our recruitment campaign and revitalise the union structures,” said Mofokeng. Banning of labour brokers and occupational health and safety will also be high on the union’s campaign agenda.

NUMSA President, Cedric Gina attributes the success of the union’s strike to the preparatory work it undertook before the strike. In its National Bargaining Congress, NUMSA invited experts from the Labour Research Service to assist them in structuring their demands. “In the previous agreements, our members did not get real salary increases so this time around we wanted make sure that they are compensated for the previous increases,” said Gina.

He also ascribed the success of the strike to the fact that last year, the union organised two strike actions. “So our members were already mobilised in the engineering and rubber sectors.” Apart from the wage increases, NUMSA demanded the banning of labour brokers, which the auto and tyre sectors are beginning to phase out. “We are the first union which has been successful in this regard,” said Gina. Gina congratulated the NUM and CEPPWAWU for the achievements they also made in the wage negotiations.

NUMSA emerged with a 10% wage increase. As NUMSA, we are going to consolidate these victories by embarking on a number of campaigns which will include engaging the Reserve Bank and National Treasury on the strength of the rand.
The union will also be making a call to the Department of Trade and Industry to consider imposing export tariffs on scrap metal. “Exporting of scrap metal has resulted in number of local dealers closing down as it has become too expensive to procure.”

In its drive to revive manufacturing in the country, NUMSA is planning to engage the Minister of Communications around the strengthening of the ICT sector. We are now preparing to migrate from analogue to digital television and we need to engage the minister on how are we going to benefit from the manufacturing of set-top boxes. Linked to this discussion, will be issues around the ineffectiveness of BEE in this sector as it has shed a number of jobs.”

Gina condemned the media for portraying NUMSA strike as the most violent strike the country has ever had. “As much as we do not condone violence in our strikes, we would like to caution the media not to be sensational when reporting on strike actions,” he said. Gina paid tribute to Port Elizabeth and Durban workers who were knocked by a truck and to NUMSA members for being disciplined throughout the strike. Meanwhile, the NUM has credited itself for conducting the most peaceful strike. The union’s General Secretary, Frans Baleni lambasted the media for turning a blind eye to peaceful mass actions. Baleni was pleased with the outcome of the strike and the settlement reached with the employers. “It is important for workers to know that in such situations you end up getting what you have negotiated not what you have demanded,” said Baleni.

According to Baleni, the NUM made huge improvements during the negotiations as they managed to secure a 10.5% increase and a minimum wage of R4800 for the underground and lowest paid worker. “We also negotiated certain minimum conditions such as payment of R20 000 for retrenched worker, regardless of the period of service. In case a worker died, he will now be able to get a minimum payment of R30 000. The housing allowance will now range from R1600 to R7150.”

The NUM also put the issue of subcontracting into sharp focus as they have proposed stringent measures under which it can be allowed. The union also made an agreement with the employers to build a mine museum and monuments in all mining towns.

Baleni outlined a series of campaigns the NUM is going to embark upon.

They include:

- Alteration of hostels to accommodate families of miners by 2014.
- Recognition of prior learning to allow upward mobility for workers.
- OHS protest marches from all regions, culminating in a national protest on 4 October 2011.

Baleni was full of praise of the NUM members, particularly in the coal, gold and diamond sector in the manner in which they approached the strike. We really appreciate their understanding of the complexity of negotiations.

He also advised the workers who will soon receive their cash payments ranging from R2000 to R500 000 through the employee share scheme to use their money wisely.

SAMWU President comrade Nomvula Hadi leads municipal workers in the resounding call for a living wage.
We, the representatives of the now over two million COSATU members, meeting at this historic 5th Central Committee from 27-30 June 2011, have engaged in four days of intense, constructive and fruitful discussion of the key issues facing the workers, the people of South Africa and the world.

We were inspired and guided by the clarion call which is the theme of the Central Committee: "Building COSATU engines to enhance class consciousness for an alternative development path We broadly endorsed the comprehensive Secretariat Report and the two discussion papers prepared to stimulate debates: "The current international situation: implications for the left project" and the "May 2011 Local government elections assessment".

We are emerging from this Central Committee much stronger, more united and determined to spare no ounce of our energies in tackling the challenges we face. We commit to rigorously implement all the resolutions of the 10th COSATU National Congress held in 2009 as well as all the decisions of this 5th Central Committee.

We spent four days in this 5th Central Committee conducting thoroughgoing discussion and debates amongst ourselves to advance the mandate given by the 10th session of the workers parliament. We emerge not only with better levels of cohesion but also with higher levels of clarity on what needs to be done. Underlying all our programmes will be our endeavour to ensure the political transformation of our society and ensure that our Alliance programmes and government programmes advance a pro-working class political agenda. We shall continue to build the working class's consciousness and ideological cohesion. Lastly we shall continue building the engines of COSATU and the working class.

We remain committed to the full and speedy realisation of the goals of the National Democratic Revolution and shall spare no effort in ensuring that we play a decisive role in the resolution of the three interrelated contradictions, viz. national oppression of the majority by a small racist minority, the super-exploitation of workers, and the triple oppression faced by women, as a basis of creating a new non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous South Africa. As a leading detachment of the working class, we shall more than ever ensure that we earn our historic place as a primary motive force of the NDR. To us the most direct route to socialism is through a successful transformation of our society in a manner that addresses all three interrelated contradictions leading to our current national grievances. At the same time we reaffirm that the struggle for a socialist South Africa cannot be suspended. That struggle is ongoing and is certainly not in contradiction with the goals of the NDR for a fundamental transformation of our society. We seek to push back the market today, whilst ensuring that we build an activist developmental state that has the capacity to lead the transformation project. It must ensure not only a new growth paradigm, capable of addressing the triple challenge of poverty, unemployment and inequalities, but also meet the basic needs of our people.

We recognise the major advances our country has registered under the ANC government. This includes delivery of basic needs; which has meant millions having access to water, electricity, education, healthcare, etc. We congratulate this government on treating 1.2 million South Africans living with HIV/AIDS and aiming to treat 15 million more by June next year.

Unlike some, we do not underestimate the important role these gains have made to the lives of our people. We will continue to work with the government to ensure that even more is done on this front. We recall that at the end of the tenth anniversary of our freedom, we made a painful conclusion that in economic terms the first decade of freedom saw white monopoly capital gaining more than the working class. We have committed ourselves to ensuring that in the second decade the working class gains more. Yet, as we are left with only three years before the end of this second decade, we conclude that there can be no doubt that the trajectory followed since 1994 will continue. The working class have seen rising levels of unemployment, which today stands at 36,6% greater than any other middle-income country or
any comparable economy. Poverty remains widespread, afflicting 48% of our population who live on R10, 00 a day or less, though this figure could be over 60%, based on the 2010 UN Human Development Report. South Africa has become the most unequal society in the world, demonstrated by the fact that the richest decile is earning about 94 times more than the poorest decile of our population.

Africans, who constitute 79, 4% of the population, account for 41, 2% of the household income from work and social grants, whereas whites, who account for only for 9, 2% of the population, receive 45, 3% of income. The poorest 10% of the population, share R1, 1 billion, whilst the riches 10% share R381 billion. Our country is trapped in a developmental paradigm that has simply reproduced these conditions for 17 years now. Many are asking if there is a question as to whether the NDR has not reached a tipping point where it could be concluded that its main benefits have accrued more to capital instead of those who led the struggle for liberation. We commit ourselves to a new struggle to bring the NDR back on track. We are also determined that freedom and democracy means more than what we have achieved already. We want economic freedom, now! We are under no illusion as to what this means. We will continue to struggle to ensure that our economy is placed on a new job-creating developmental path. This will only happen if we restructure the economy, end the concentration of wealth in a few hands, end the domination of the mining/finance complex and end its export orientation. We demand that our state be more activist and interventionist and uses every avenue to drive this new development paradigm.

We have made an observation that in economic terms white monopoly capital has more reason to celebrate the 1994 democratic breakthrough. Profits have increased whilst the share of wages to the GDP has been falling. Exchange controls have been gradually lifted and big business has been allowed to list their companies in New York, London and Melbourne. Freedom has meant that they have increasingly moved off of our shores in pursuit of profits. Today more and more local companies are externally owned. We dread the reality that we will come to the same conclusion in 2014, at the end of the second decade of our democratic breakthrough – that in economic terms capital has more to celebrate than workers. To date our reality is that of grinding poverty, deepening inequalities and skyrocketing unemployment, which in affects black people more than it does white people. In this 5th Central Committee, inspired by our theme “Building COSATU engines to heighten class consciousness for an alternative development path”, we spent four days debating amongst ourselves, as delegates, with our Allies, and a host of other organs of peoples power that were invited to participate. We are happy that we have pursued the mandate of our 10th National Congress. We have begun to chart the way forward towards our 11th National Congress to be held in September 2012. We took a number of resolutions to ensure that our freedom means more than just the right to vote. Our line of march is outlined below!

**Intensify a Living Wage Campaign**

In our view a living wage is the cornerstone of a just and equitable society. The determining factor in the levels of poverty and inequality in South Africa is the pervasiveness of low-paid work, often termed ‘poverty wages’.

A living wage is not simply about meeting the minimum levels of food, housing, transport or education needs; it has to:

1. Move low-paid or under-employed workers out of poverty wages
2. Create a sustainable wage income that meets all basic needs
3. Improve skills and employment opportunities
4. Reduce income inequality and poverty
5. Challenge the contention that minimum wages effect growth in employment and will eventually result in declining employment

We resolved to take the Living Wage Campaign to new heights. We have agreed on the demands that will unite organised and unorganised workers, and unite unemployed workers with organised workers, with a particular focus on addressing...
paradigm aiming for full employment. We are determined to ensure that the remaining period towards the celebration of our second decade of freedom becomes the period for the working class, laying the foundations for a new developmental path.

**Lessons from the 2011 local government elections**

We assessed the May 2011 local government elections. We celebrate the ANC once again confounded sceptics and critics by posting a resounding victory by winning 63% of the vote. This victory is remarkable in that it occurs in the context of a massive economic crisis as a result of the worldwide recession. All political parties who presided over that crisis in Europe were wiped from power. It is not the time however for complacency. These elections reveal a number of organisational, political and socio-economic challenges that the Alliance must confront. Victory must not pull us into a comfort zone, and we cannot take the support received for granted. The writing is on the wall and we have chosen to act decisively to ensure that we address these weaknesses. We call on the Alliance to have a discussion on these lessons.

**We will build our organisation and improve its ability to effectively lead campaigns**

We are pleased that COSATU continues to buck the international trend in terms of continuous membership increases when ILO reports show a decline in trade union membership in many parts of the world. Our membership grew by 3.8% from 1 812 569 in the last Central Committee held in September 2007 to 2 070 739 in 2011 and we are still aiming for our target of four million members in 2015. We noted that while a number of affiliated unions are facing daunting challenges, on average COSATU unions are strong and growing with effective management of their financial resources. This is where the strength of the federation is drawn. We developed detailed strategies to ensure continued growth and better servicing of our members by their unions. We however noted with deep concern that we have not succeeded in effectively implementing our previous congress resolutions to organise vulnerable workers such as farm and domestic workers, those in the informal sector, taxi drivers, migrant workers, youth and women. We have instructed the Central Executive Committee to ensure that financial resources are released to ensure effective organisation of these vulnerable workers.

We urge the Central Executive Committee and the NOBs to continue ensuring that the current unevenness in the federation in terms of affiliates’ strengths is addressed more systematically. In this regard we reaffirm that COSATU has a right to intervene in any union if in the view of the federation the unity and cohesion of the union is threatened or if the union is not positioned to service its own members.

**We say No to Labour Brokering, Wal-Mart and electronic tollgates**

We have already submitted a Section 77 notice to signal our intention to embark on 2-day stayaway and other forms of protest action to ensure that labour brokering is outlawed, unless our demands are met. Wal-Mart will not be allowed in without conditions that will ensure that we protect our economy, in particular our manufacturing and retail sectors as well as local jobs. We demand a public transport system that is affordable, accessible and efficient. The electronic tollgates introduced in Gauteng, which will be a key feature everywhere in the country, must be stopped.

**We reiterate our demand for the restructuring of the economy**

We reiterate our welcome of the publication of the long-awaited New Growth Path (NGP). For more than 16 years COSATU has campaigned for the introduction of a New Growth Path, in recognition of the fact that our country is in an absolutely wrong and disastrous growth path that will continue to reproduce unemployment, poverty and inequality. The government’s NGP and IPAP2 contain many excellent proposals for restructuring the economy and creating jobs. Subject to further tweaking and reworking some of the NGP proposals have a potential to unlock South Africa’s potential.

Overall however the proposals falls far short of a comprehensive and overarching developmental strategy capable of unleashing a plan that will fundamentally transform our economy and adequately address the triple challenges of extraordinary high levels of unemployment, widespread poverty and deepening inequalities. Further, it will be sabotaged unless there is a fundamental change in government’s fiscal and monetary policies to provide the environment and finance for a developing, industrial, manufacturing economy. The NGP document in its current form does not adequately take forward the ANC 52nd National Conference economic resolutions and will require an overhaul if it is to succeed in uniting the Alliance behind the type of programme envisaged by all Alliance formations. We call on the Alliance to ensure that the commitment made by the ANC NEC to open a debate on the concerns of the allied formation is taken forward.

**The all round battle against corruption, greed and individualism**

We condemn the massive extent of corruption, in both the private and public sectors, and the theft and waste of public funds, which is bleeding the country dry. The country’s leaders must tackle corruption and hunt down culprits, regardless of their political affiliations or political and economic connections. As an example, leaders must go to the Eastern Cape and find out who was responsible for the collapse of the health and education departments, which has led to the end of free meals for scholars, textbooks and stationery not being bought, and the dismissal of temporary teachers. This is undermining the credibility of our movement. The ANC must find those responsible and tell them “sorry, comrade, you have to go!” The politics of patronage, corruption and greed has destroyed the ethic of self-sacrifice and service to the people that characterises the revolutionary movement. The dangerous growth of factionalism is increasingly not about ideology or political differences, but about access to tenders. The worst problem of all is the emergence of death squads in several provinces linked to corruption and the murder of people who have blown the whistle. There is a real danger that if all this continues, the entire state and society will be auctioned to the highest bidder, and we shall be on the slide towards a corrupt banana republic.

COSATU is setting up its ‘Corruption Watch’, which will be launched in December 2011. It is a concrete way for us to play an active part in the battle against this scourge. Delegates are aware of the need to promote a culture of service to the public within our own ranks. We have to keep reminding public sector workers that they are not just employees but revolutionaries, playing a vital role in the struggle to transform our society. Our adoption of under-performing schools is a concrete way in which we are serving our communities. Contrary to many print media headlines, we never intended to discuss the so-called ANC succession debates. In our view the challenge is not to embark on a
The battle against the HIV/AIDS

We listened to an inspiring, informative and passionate address by the Minister of Health, Dr Aaron Motsoaledi. HIV/AIDS remain a major health challenge. We noted with concern that since 2001 there has been an increase in the percentage of HIV prevalence in the country with more females being affected than males. We agree with the Minister of Health’s assertion that “HIV/AIDS is men spread and women suffered”. A staggering 10.6% of the population was infected by HIV in 2009. The World Health Organisation report in 2011 says HIV prevalence for those aged between 15 – 49 years of aged is 17%, which is an increase from 16% in 2009. We hail the HIV/AIDS and STI Strategic Plan for South Africa (National Strategic Plan, NSP) as a mark of a turnaround in the policies on HIV/AIDS. Thanks to this turnaround the Minister reports that 1.4 million people are on ARV treatment. In the past year nearly 12 million people have been voluntarily tested for HIV and 1.5 million people newly diagnosed as HIV positive. It is clear that we are far from defeating the scourge of HIV/AIDS. We recommit ourselves to the full implementation of the resolutions adopted by the 9th and 10th national congress of our federation. We will ensure that we fully participate in the drawing up of the new NSP.

Lessons from the international political situation

We debated the current international situation and analysed its implications for the left project, in particular for COSATU and its allied formations. Our Central Committee could not have been better timed in that it was convened in the wake of the biggest economic crisis whose impact is still being felt, not only economically but also in terms of massive social and political upheavals.

The centre of economic gravity has decisively shifted to the South and particularly China, with the developed world increasingly dependent on the South to stabilise their economies. The economic orthodoxy has been shattered and the current economic growth model is being questioned. The world is confronted with the prospect of a scenario of unprecedented progress and hope vs. deepening human misery and conflict. We have seen the rise of progressive left governments in Latin America. Throughout Europe, centre-left social-democratic parties, which adopted neo liberal economic policies, have been replaced by centre right parties. We have also seen the aggressive posture being taken by the developed countries, including against their own people, through attacks on workers and the adoption of austerity measures that have reversed all the gains the people have made in decades.

We debated the lessons from the rest of the world, including examples of working alliances, failed alliances, worker withdrawal from politics, splits in the unions, mishandling of alliances, launch of new left parties, etc. We noted that North Africa is not far away. We will continue engaging with all these lessons and scenarios between now and our 11th National Congress. We unanimously came to the conclusion that the only scenario which represents a viable option to us is scenario 1 - the strengthening of the Alliance we have with the ANC and the SAPC. We know it is difficult to maintain the status quo. We will avoid the emergence of other scenarios, none of which will be in the best interests of our members and the poor who yearn for more effective strategies to end their misery and deprivation. We will continue to engage with the progressive alternatives outlined in the discussion paper and other progressive alternatives, which will take us forward. We need in particular to study the alternatives being developed by the left governments in Latin America. We have resolved to support President Hugo Chavez’s proposal to convene the “First socialist international of the 21st Century.” We accept that the popular uprisings taking place in the North Africa and the Middle East are genuine revolts against dictatorial governments, which are led by both the youth and workers. We will engage with our sister unions in these regions, providing that they are genuine, independent, worker-controlled unions. We condemn the agenda of NATO, in particular that of the USA, France and others to use the need to protect the struggling masses against their dictator in order to drive a regime change agenda. We insist that for this scenario of a working Alliance to gain more ground the whole Alliance must be a strategic political centre that drives transformation, collectively. We committed ourselves to work tirelessly to drive the joint Alliance programme adopted in the 2011 Alliance Summit. The Central Committee heard rousing addresses from international guests. Sharar Burrow, General Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation, reported on the worldwide attacks by governments on workers’ wages, jobs and social benefits, and Phillip Jennings of UNI Global Union urged us to continue our part in the global resistance to the Wal-Mart takeover. We pledge our solidarity with the people around the world who are fighting for democracy, freedom and human rights, including in Swaziland, Palestine, Western Sahara, and Burma, and congratulate the people of Egypt, Tunisia, Bahrain, Greece and other countries who have been battling to overcome tyranny and attacks on their rights.

Conclusion

We call on our members to mobilise, increase their political and ideological cohesion, and remain united behind their demands, as summarised in this declaration. We call on the unemployed, in particular the youth and student formations, women and rural communities, to join us, the organised workers, in these working class struggles.

We call on our allied formations - the ANC, SAPC and SANCO - to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with us in the struggle to deepen our national democratic revolution and our freedom and to ensure that we address all the three interrelated and intertwined contradictions simultaneously. We shall spare neither effort nor energy to ensuring we succeed in these historic tasks!

Workers of the world unite!
Forward to COSATU’s 11th National Congress in 2012!
Socialism is the future! Build it now!
The death of Comrade Kader Asmal represents a further erosion of a generation of leaders who were at the forefront of the struggle against colonialism, in the South African context, the African continent and the rest of the colonised world. This long and concerted struggle against colonialism in the context of the South African revolution produced an abundance of committed revolutionaries who endured suffering and sacrifice. The list includes stalwarts such as Govan Mbeki, Anton Lembede, Walter Sisulu, Chris Hani, Ray Alexandra Simmons, Ruth First, Joe Slovo and Kader Asmal.

There were a number of defining features that characterised this generation. Key among some of these was the absolute dedication to the cause of the people despite potential and at times real danger to one’s self and family, absolute sacrifice at the face of adversity, willingness to carry forth any task on behalf of the people, scant interest in personal benefit and many other admirable traits that today are just but memories amongst many of our cadres. There is one element in the defining features of this epoch of leaders that perhaps is the most neglected. This is their intellectual prowess. Their ability to independently respond to key strategic questions that confronted the revolution over a sustained period of time. The movement did not just have revolutionaries but possessed an intellectual life represented by great intellectuals of their time. Intellectuals have an important place in the history of our revolution.

Gramsci poses the question: “Are intellectuals an autonomous and independent social group, or does every social group have its own particular specialised category of intellectuals?” He responds to this question in this way: “Every social group, coming into existence on the original terrain of an essential function in the world of economic production, creates together with itself, organically, one or more strata[1] of intellectuals which give it homogeneity and an awareness of its own function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields. The capitalist entrepreneur creates alongside himself the industrial technician, the specialist in political economy, the organisers of a new culture, of a new legal system, etc. It should be noted that the entrepreneur himself represents a higher level of social elaboration, already characterised by a certain directive [dirigente][2] and technical (i.e. intellectual) capacity: he must have a certain technical capacity, not only in the limited sphere of his activity and initiative but in other spheres as well, at least in those which are closest to economic production. He must be an organiser of masses of men; he must be an organiser of the “confidence” of investors in his business, of the customers for his product, etc. If not all entrepreneurs, at least an élite amongst them must have the capacity to be an organiser of society in general, including all its complex organism of services, right up to the state organism, because of the need to create the conditions most favourable to the expansion of their own class, or at the least they must possess the capacity to choose the deputies (specialised employees) to whom to entrust this activity of organising the general system of relationships external to the business itself. It can be observed that the “organic” intellectuals which every new class creates alongside itself and elaborates in the course of its development, are for the most part “specialisations” of partial aspects of the primitive activity of the new social type which the new class has brought into prominence.” It is important to note that one of the central themes of the above outline by Gramsci argues that every society must be studied from a context of a historically evolving organism, bourgeois society as we know and understand it today with its dominance on most if not all aspects of human life has not always existed. It is part of the historical development of society born out of the contradictions of feudal society. Alongside the birth of capitalism was the birth of a of a stratum of men and women who defined in intellectual terms the program of consolidating bourgeois society. As Gramsci argues: “Every social group, coming into existence on the original terrain of an essential function in the world of economic production, creates together with itself, organically, one or more strata[1] of intellectuals which give it homogeneity and an awareness of its own function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields. Gramsci proceeds to argue that: “However, every “essential” social group which emerges into history out of the preceding economic structure, and as an expression of a development of this structure, has found (at least in all of history up to the present).”
ment. As argued by Gramsci above we must and consolidating apartheid logic of develop-
its organisation – the whole of the Party in fact – and never forget it in our propaganda, writ-
ple idea – “man does not live by politics alone”
test the intellectual adherents of the old order – and always remember the path of apartheid consolidation. The apartheid system and its intelligentsia took this task quite seriously as manifested by the Afrikaner Broederbond which was the cream of Afrikaner intelligentsia dedicated purely to the task of building, maintaining and consolidating apartheid logic of development. As argued by Gramsci above we must remain cognisant that as society develops and a democratic era is ushered, intellectuals of the old order continue to exist. Their aim is to maintain old apartheid social relations and the class and racial privilege enjoyed by white South Africans.

One of the critical tasks of the democratic revolution of the people is to ensure that it creates together with itself, organically, one or more strata of intellectuals which give it hegemony and an awareness of its own function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields. These are the individuals who will intellectually define what must be done. These are the individuals who will contest the intellectual adherents of the old order in the fields of economics, arts, culture, health. In 1924 Trotsky in a document titled “Not by Politics Alone does man thrive” argues the following of the Russian Revolution: “We have got to soak ourselves thoroughly in this simple idea – “man does not live by politics alone” – and never forget it in our propaganda, written or spoken. Formerly, things were different. The history of our Party before the revolution was one of revolutionary politics. Its literature, its organisation – the whole of the Party in fact – was political in the most direct, immediate, and narrow sense of the word. The years of revolutionary transition and of civil war made the political interests and the political tasks still more acute and urgent. During these years the Party succeeded in gathering into its ranks the most active elements in the working classes; and also the fundamental political teachings of these years are quite clear now in the eyes of the working classes. Simply to repeat them adds nothing to them in the eyes of the workers, and is more likely to weaken their influence than to increase it. Now that we have conquered power and gripped it firmly by civil war, our fundamental duties are changed; they are to be found within the boundaries of economic and cultural construction; they have become complicated, fragmentary and scattered, and, in some ways, more ‘mundane’. Yet at the same time all our former struggles, with all the efforts and sacrifices that they needed, can only be justified in so far as we succeed in rightly stating and solving these daily inconclusive problems, which can be classed as cultural.” The tasks of transcending beyond political sloganeering and beginning to respond to questions such as how do we transform transform the apartheid economic structures to respond to the present needs, how do you restructure education as a whole such that it begins to undermine apartheid education logic, how do you create a working class responsive spatial developmental framework such that our people’s problems created by apartheid planning are undermined in a significant manner. The revolution was able to produce alongside itself its own strata of organic intellec-
tuals who attempted in the immediate period after 1994 to respond to these questions. Kader’s own contribution was in the specific areas of provision of a basic necessity of water to the people, transforming the education model and the question of entrenching a society embedded in a culture of human rights. Kader made his contribution with varying degree of success (and failure). This is the generation of intellectuals that is day by day living the world of the living. We must ask ourselves who will carry the baton going forth. Has the movement sufficiently equipped itself for its eminent departure? Are young people, in particular those in the ranks of our youth movements, in a position to assist the revolution in responding to these specific tasks in a manner that will begin to alter social relations? Today our universities are overflowing with students, all gearing themselves up for specialised activity in the various arms of the economy. But do we stop for a moment to ask ourselves what we are producing in these universities? Are we producing carriers and defenders of the people’s revolution or are we producing traitors of the people. In reality as Gramsci argues the intellectuals being produced are the dominant group’s “deputies or assistants” exercising the functions of social hegemony and political government on behalf of the dominant group. This hegemony is achieved in two ways. The first is the “spontaneous” consent given by the masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant group; this consent is “historically” caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production. Secondly, this is done through the apparatus of state coercive power which “legally” enforces discipline on those groups who do not “consent” either actively or passively. This apparatus is, however, constituted for the whole of society in anticipation of moments of crisis of command and direction when spontaneous consent has failed. Therefore the revolutionary intelligentsia, the intelligentsia organic to the working class has to contend with two opposing forces in its operation. These forces are the traditional intelligentsia of the old order and the intelligentsia created by the new order but adhering, at most times unconsciously to the logic of the old order. This is not some foreign phenomena. In our everyday lives we are confronted by the proponents of apartheid capitalism masquerading as constitutional democrats, primarily seeking to maintain white privilege in this country. Unfortunately they have been able to create their ideological replicas in black skins. These replicas cannot reason and find expression outside of the framework created for them by the privileged classes. This is not surprising given the fact that they have been offered the crumbs of the economy which places them in a position better than their toiling brothers. The likes of Kader Asmal fought fiercely against the traditional intelligentsia representing white privilege and its black creation. It fought with these forces not through sloganeering but in the intellectual arena and related terrains of struggle. Do we have a generation that can continue and sustain the struggle in the terrain of the battle of ideas?

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There is much to commend in the New Growth Path in terms of its objectives. First and foremost is to acknowledge the need for a break with the old growth path although there remain doubts over how the old is conceived and how the new breaks with it both in trajectory and driving force.

Second is the emphasis on addressing decent work, poverty, labour absorption, a social wage and a greener economy. It is far from clear, however, that in its goals the NGP represent either much of a break with the old growth path (as opposed to its achievements) or offer more than the buzzwords of developmental discourse.1

After all, the NGP could hardly explicitly seek to worsen working conditions, poverty, labour absorption, the social wage and the environment, and hope to get away with it in contemporary South Africa! Significantly, where the NGP is explicit in projecting pain rather than gain is in its clear intention of moderating wage settlements of those earning between R3000 and R20 000 per month (NGP, p.26). The presumption is that this will allow other objectives to be met but how (by what mechanisms) and how much (employment, social wage, poverty alleviation, etc) is left somewhat vague although it is advised, “it requires some sacrifice from union members … the New Growth Path must ensure that economic and social policies demonstrably reward any sacrifice by members with real gains for the working class as a whole” (NGP, p.29). How is this to be done let alone demonstrated? Unfortunately, this stance exhibits some considerable affinity with the old growth path, at least as far as the pain of union members is concerned, even if sugared by the promise of gain for others. The implication is that too high levels of (higher) wages are a significant burden on the economy in terms of employment generated and space for fiscal expansion. It is precisely such analytics that the NGP might have been expected to abandon without thereby degenerating into fiscal irresponsibility, although the latter will be charged whatever minor or major breaks are proposed from the dictates of sound finance and reliance on market forces. To put this another way, whenever there is unemployment of whatever level, there will be those who argue that it can be ameliorated by reducing labour costs. To whatever degree this is true, and it is clearly affected by a myriad of other, arguably much more important macro and micro determinants of employment, it does not begin to get to grips with the massive unemployment characteristic of South Africa that does not derive from the wage levels of unionised and better paid workers.

1See Cornwall and Eade (eds) (2010).
That this assumes some prominence in the NGP might be a compromise aimed at reassuring and incorporating business into a social partnership. But as the Framework itself observes that the country’s profit share is high and has been increasing, this would hardly seem to be necessary, effective or, to put it bluntly as the main effect of wage restraint, desirable.

Third, welcome within the Framework is the identification of some key features of the old growth path, not least dependence on the minerals value chain (but without mentioning the minerals-energy complex, see below), the misuse of commodity-based revenues, the undue dependence on short-run capital inflows, backlogs and bottlenecks in infrastructure, and monopoly pricing in key sectors. Addressing why these should have occurred and, correspondingly, how they will be remedied, remain weak other than through guilt by association with the past given rise to such negative outcomes, and the measures prospectively in hand sufficient to tackle them in the future.

Nor is this simply a matter of the right and new policies but of a shift in the balance of economic, political and ideological power, and its appropriate representation through policy. This is explicitly targeted, if not in these terms, by the NGP, and is the context within which to locate the NGP’s appeal to social dialogue and partnership, over and above its intent to moderate higher wage increases. The Framework recognises that its success depends upon participation with, no doubt, an eye to the resentment of the previously imposed and non-negotiable GEAR. “In South Africa, no technocratic solution – if it existed – could be imposed from above. We must develop this New Growth Path in conditions of active, noisy democracy” (p. 30).2 Yet, it is precisely such “noisy democracy” that has characterised the old growth path, and the Framework offers little or no explanation for why this has failed to deliver in the past. The one exception, to belabour the point, is to suggest the need to moderate increases of better-paid workers. Whilst some token sacrifices are also required of capital and their managers, this reworking of social dialogue and partnership, as with unemployment, is at most token and fails to confront how it will depart the old for the new growth path in terms of shifts in the balance of power and its representation in policy to achieve stated goals.

Indeed, the NGP might have acknowledged that it is labour and progressive noise in opposition to the old growth path that has allowed the new to emerge. But of equal significance to noisy democracy is the silent, undemocratic, even illegal manoeuvres of capital.

From Tradeoffs to Capital Flight
Despite the NGP’s partial virtues and strengths, there are arguably significantly deeper weaknesses and even inconsistencies in the Framework.1 The most immediate and striking is the starting point that, “Achieving the New Growth Path requires that we address key tradeoffs” (p. 2). These tradeoffs are then listed as between “present consumption and future growth”, across “infrastructure, skills and other interventions”, between high benefits and risks, a strong rand and competitiveness, and “the present costs and future benefits of a green economy.”

Tradeoffs or zero sum outcomes are only necessary when the economy is working at full capacity. This is evidently not the case in South Africa, as indeed is highlighted by the NGP’s account and targeting of unemployment. Further, immediately before listing these putative tradeoffs, attention is drawn to the need to address inefficiencies and constraints, each of which has the potential to substitute positive for zero sum outcomes. Indeed, this might be thought, at least in principle, to be one of the first calls upon policy.

Significantly, where the NGP is explicit in projecting pain rather than gain is in its clear intention of moderating wage settlements of those earning between R3000 and R20000 per month

as opposed to the promise of the future. Indicatively, we are told that 150,000 new security guards emerged between 2002 and 2008 (one in fourteen of new jobs); that the top 10% of households capture 40% of income; and that the share of profits rose from 40% to 45% between 1994 and 2009 (with a corresponding fall in share of wages). Good points but so what? Analytical leverage in embarking upon a new growth path requires a close and convincing account of what factors have worked at full capacity. This is evidently only necessary when the economy is

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Of course, it is symbolic of Keynesianism that, in the context of mass (and for South Africa, also chronic) unemployment, attention to tradeoffs as opposed to tradeups, is liable to be self-defeating. Moreover, emphasis on tradeoffs is equally more deeply symbolic both of neoliberal policymaking in general and the old growth path(s) in particular, raising doubts over how seriously a break has been made.

2 The text immediately continues, “The deep inequalities that rend our society complicate efforts to reach consensus” a recognition perhaps that the rich and powerful will defend their privileges and that consensus will not be able to redress them?

3 It is necessary to be mindful that this is a Framework and not a work of scholarship, and to be assessed as such. Nonetheless, the Framework reflects analytical stances, however consciously, fully, and consistently, and is open to be assessed as such.

4 The term risk recurs throughout the document and is indicative of being sensitive to conservative and financial reaction as well as unwittingly symbolic of the supposed commodity, risk, that is traded in financial markets.
Further, the rhetoric of tradeoffs is also indicative of an unfortunate, if inconsistent, approach to labour as expendable if not expended. For the inspiration for the tradeoffs revolves around the availability of non-labour resources and how they are deployed – we have to have tradeoffs because we only have limited resources (other than labour). But there is one crucial oversight that has been so commonplace in practice, and yet overlooked, to the point of almost absolute neglect, that it can only best be described as the elephant in the room. This is the issue of capital flight. It is and has been on an unprecedented scale, much of it totally illegal (and managed by large-scale corporations through transfer pricing – declaring value of exports from South Africa at a lower price than charged to importing countries). Illegal capital flight was certainly extensive during the apartheid period but it has attained new and dramatic heights subsequently, exceeding 20% of GDP in its peak year, 2007.

Unfortunately, far from addressing this problem, the record of post-apartheid governments has been at best to turn a blind eye, and at worst to facilitate it, as illegal capital flight has increasingly been legalised with a programme of relaxation of exchange controls. Recent developments indicate that this syndrome of ignoring the elephant is at last being rectified, but only in the most perverse of ways. Government only a year ago announced its intention to grant an amnesty for illegal capital flight upon payment of a 10% penalty, as a step towards removing all exchange controls. This is akin to recognising the elephant in the room by tolerating its presence despite the enormous (policy) space it occupies or precludes. The South African Reserve Bank and the Treasury have been little short of scandalous in their failure to report upon and, one must suspect, pursue illegal capital flight, let alone take into account what impact it has had on the economy. There has been little or no investigation of its incidence or the likely effect of the proposed amnesty. As far as these two lax guardians of sound finance and austerity are concerned, it is as if capital flight does not exist and, if it does, that it is best to work around it.6

In short, whilst the NGP calls for “Systemic changes to mobilise domestic investment around activities that can create sustainable employment” (p. 1) it overlooks the single most important proximate factor that needs to be addressed in order to achieve this goal (as well as failing to offer any analysis why South Africa’s long-term record is one of chronic underinvestment and how this will be remedied). Nor is this simply a matter of lost resources that might be compared with the savings from moderating wage increases. For capital flight also squeezes the frontiers along which putative policy tradeoffs are made. It is only when we get beyond its squeeze (and that of financialisation more generally that policies can be more fully engaged that not only mobilise investment but also in the appropriate activities. Thus, the tradeoff that the NGP should have targeted is between capital flight and the capacity for policy, not between policies with capital flight taken for granted or, it might be added, even condoned …

Financialisation Meets the Minerals Energy Complex (MEC)

Now, neither the effects of capital flight outlined above nor their causes spring from nowhere, alongside the other challenges posed for the post-apartheid economy. This crucial, even decisive, and certainly symbolic, aspect of the South African economy is the product and interaction of both global and domestic forces. At the global level, as starkly revealed by the current crisis, the world economy has been subject to what has been termed “financialisation”.7

In brief, financialisation has involved: the phenomenal expansion of financial assets relative to real activity (by three times over the last thirty years); the proliferation of types of assets, from derivatives through to futures markets with a corresponding explosion of acronyms; the absolute and relative expansion of speculative as opposed to or at the expense of real investment; a shift in the balance of productive to financial imperatives within the private sector whether financial or not; increasing inequality in income arising out of weight of financial rewards; consumer-led booms based on credit; the penetration of finance into ever more areas of economic and social life such as pensions, education, health, and provision of economic and social infrastructure; the emergence of a neo-liberal culture of reliance upon markets and private capital and corresponding anti-statism despite the extent to which the rewards to private finance have in part been derived from state finance itself. It’s the consequences of financialisation have been: reductions in overall levels and efficacy of real investment as financial instruments and activities expand at its expense even if excessive investment does take place in particular sectors at particular times; prioritising shareholder value, or financial worth, over other economic and social values; pushing of policies towards conservatism and

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6 For a full account, see Ashman et al (2011), a contribution based on submission in response to declaration of amnesty, see below.
7 Note also that, in my debate with the Harvard Group, it continues to fail to address this problem even though it could not be made more prominent in critique of them, Fine (2009a and b) and Hausmann and Andrews (2009). See below for implications for macroeconomic policy.
8 For an overview of financialisation, see Fine (2011c).
commercialisation in all respects; extending influence of finance more broadly, both directly and indirectly, over economic and social policy; placing more aspects of economic and social life at the risk of volatility from financial instability and, conversely, placing the economy and social life at risk of crisis from triggers within particular markets (as with the food and energy crises that preceded the financial crisis). Whilst, then, financialisation is a single word, it is attached to a wide variety of different forms and effects of finance even with the USA and the UK to the fore and other economies, such as Greece, subject to the severest of adjustments.

To some degree, financialisation (not the old growth path) is the key to understanding the malaise of South African economy and society, once wedded to an understanding of it as historically and currently dominated by the minerals-energy complex. What is this MEC, which is recognised at most in a token fashion in the New Growth Path by reference to “Dependence on the minerals value chain [and] ... Weaknesses in the state’s use of commodity-based revenue for economic diversification and skills development” (p.5)? It is the specifically South African system of accumulation, that has been centred on core sectors around, but more wide-ranging than, mining and energy, evolving with a character and dynamic of its own that has shifted over time. Its history and consequences can be traced back to the emergence of mining in the 1870s through to the present day. In the interwar and immediate post-war period, core MEC sectors drove the economy, furnishing a surplus for the protection and growth and, ultimately, incorporation of Afrikaner capital. State corporations in electricity, steel, transport and so on, represented an accommodation across the economic power of the mining conglomerates and the political power of the Afrikaners, an uneasy compromise of evolving fractions of classes and their interests forged through both state and market. The apartheid labour systems were less an accommodation than a common bond across capitals and against labour. But the divisions between Afrikaner and mining capitals precluded a more general strategy of industrial diversification out of core MEC sectors, leading to a partial vacuum in intermediate and capital goods capability, a failure to accrue economies of scale and scope other than in core MEC sectors, and an inefficient consumer goods industry surviving by protection upon demand.

But, by the 1970s, Afrikaner and mining-related capital had been sufficiently integrated for a common economic strategy to be adopted, as had always been the case for labour systems. But, with the collapse of the post-war boom and the Bretton Woods system based on gold at $35 per ounce, and the sharp rise in oil and energy prices, a huge premium attached to both gold and energy. As a result, an industrial strategy for diversification was scarcely considered let alone adopted. Instead, the 1970s witnessed an extraordinary state-led expansion of gold and energy production. Into the 1980s, the crisis of apartheid also precluded a state and/or private strategy for industrial promotion. But, whilst the core MEC industries remained central to the economy, capital controls meant that profits generated internally that were not illegally transferred abroad, see below, were confined to accumulation within the South African economy itself. This gave rise both to further conglomerate across the economy but, first and foremost, to the expansion of a huge and sophisticated financial system as cause and consequence of the internationally confined, but domestically spread, reach of the South African conglomerates with Anglo-American in the lead.

The MEC is the system of accumulation that was inherited by post-apartheid South Africa. And it has survived more or less intact over the post-apartheid period. This is not to say it has remained unchanged, quite the opposite, just as it has experienced significant change in the past. Unfortunately, those changes have, however, reflected the extent to which South Africa is the exact opposite of a development state (see below) and has been driven further away from being so. In particular, the South African economy over the post-apartheid period has been driven by what might be termed a backlog in financialisation and globalisation that was inherited from the apartheid period. These have dominated both the slow pace of domestic accumulation and the form and composition taken by the restructuring of the domestic economy. Whilst the MEC core sectors have strengthened, the fastest growing sector in the economy over the last twenty years has been finance and related services, now taking as much as 20% of GDP, although 40% of the population benefit from no financial services at all. Now according to the efficient market hypothesis (itself a form of tradeoff economics in the extreme), as far as those supporting financialisation are concerned, the role of financial markets is to provide for the efficient mobilisation and allocation of resources to investment. Has this been done by the South African financial system? Not at all, domestic levels of investment are running at half those generally acknowledged as necessary for developmental state status. And where are all the resources going? Well, one answer has already been provided, they go into the financial sector itself. I exaggerate somewhat as, of course, some financial services are completely essential, like high security protection of the rewards and properties of the most unequal society in the world (150,000 new jobs after all). But, effectively, far from adding 20% to GDP, financial services are taking away a quarter of GDP and cheekily suggesting that by doing so they add the equivalent to GDP. Across the world, three times as many financial assets are now required to serve one unit of GDP than thirty years ago.

See Freund (2011) for South Africa as a developmental state in the past.

4 There has been a subtle and unnoticed redefinition of GDP to include financial services where previously it was excluded. But what is provided in practice by financial services. The answer is trading in risk, putatively redistributing it to those more willing to bear it (as opposed to the reality of creating it for those who cannot). See Christophers (2011).
If this were true of any other input, such as energy, steel, or whatever, we would be outraged. But finance gets away with it. And, as already mentioned, the South African situation is even more serious and disturbing because this financialisation is not only associated, as elsewhere, with exaggerated rewards to those working within finance, and conducive to credit-based levels of consumption based on speculation in housing markets, it has been accompanied by the most extreme levels of illegal capital flight. As a component part of globalisation and financialisation, capital flight places the (macro)economy on the cusp of instability, and this has had to be accommodated in South Africa, and has even driven, macroeconomic policy to serve its needs. The Framework recognises this but in an elephantine way

A persistent balance-of-trade deficit funded with short-term capital inflows (essentially foreign investment in equities and in 2009/10 increasingly in interest-bearing assets), attracted largely by interest rates that were high by international standards. In effect, the country borrowed abroad to sustain government spending, investment and household consumption which remained heavily biased toward the well off. Both investment and domestic savings remained below the levels required for sustained growth (p.5).

This is all true but misses the main point. Interest rates have in effect been held high, whether intended or not, in order that short-term capital inflows (a source of volatility) can compensate for long-term (illegal) outflows. And the exchange rate has been held at a high level with the effect of making capital outflows worth more in foreign currency to those who benefit from them, whilst making it ever more difficult to sustain both the exchange rate and competitive economic growth. Indeed, it is not the case that short-term inflows, “enabled the country to spend more than it earned” (p.4). It allowed it to send abroad what it earned although, of course, “the country” is a euphemism for a very few select companies and individuals.

This is of profound significance for the restructuring of domestic industry which has not been driven by the need to fill in the hollowed out industrial structure inherited from apartheid, with its limited capacity to build upon the MEC core strengths and diversify through capital and intermediate to more competitive and higher quality consumption goods. Rather the conglomerate structure has been dismantled to create sectoral monopolies whose profitability depends upon high prices and not productivity increase, the very antithesis of the much needed three-high economy – high investment, high productivity and high wages. Again, this is acknowledged, if only weakly, in pointing to “Continued economic concentration in key sectors, permitting rent-seeking at the expense of consumers and industrial development” (p.5). What has been notably absent is the corresponding commitment to secure long-term finance for investment in labour-intensive domestic production to meet domestic consumption of basic needs, thereby creating jobs, alleviating unemployment and addressing the backlog of provision and inequality inherited from apartheid. Again, with token if significant exceptions, inequalities have strengthened post-apartheid.

Now it is against the accommodation of these various elephants in the room - financialisation, illegal capital flight, and the continuing imperatives of the MEC - that the hard tradeoffs highlighted by the Framework needs to be assessed. For instance, it is claimed without further specification that, “Global economic turmoil has also opened up new policy space for developing economies to go beyond conventional policy prescriptions (p.4).” If so South Africa is cer-

“Unfortunately, far from addressing this problem, the record of post-apartheid governments has been at best to turn a blind eye, and at worst to facilitate it, as illegal capital flight has increasingly been legalised with a programme of relaxation of exchange controls”
From China Syndrome …

This is exactly the opposite of the way in which China, for example, has been so successful over the past few decades. Its economic development has been primarily based on rapidly expanding domestic markets. This has been accompanied by relatively rapid growth in labour productivity, contingent upon very high levels of investment and has given rise to increasing real wages and even the emergence of shortages for skilled labour. A full account of the processes involved is not necessary here but one to highlight is the staggering dependence of China upon banks for finance for industrial investment. It is proportionately roughly four times higher than for the United States, and at least double that of most other countries. This is, however, indicative of the limited extent of financialisation of the Chinese economy, since finance has derived primarily from state-owned banks that have been policy driven. Of course, this does not guarantee developmental success in the absence of other conditions but these are precisely what have been present in China where, nonetheless, development is fraught by the tensions associated with sustaining international competitiveness and domestic economic and social stability. In short, though, the lessons to be learned from China for national developmentalism are, broadly and overgeneralising, in contemporary conditions, especially in the wake of the current crisis, that a corresponding positive role for the state depends upon: insulating the mobilisation and allocation of finance from financialisation in all of its forms (including illegal capital flight); the promotion of secure domestic provision of goods for domestic consumption especially as far as the meeting of basic needs and poverty alleviation are concerned; and a strong commitment to state provision of social and economic infrastructure attached to a “developmental welfare state” and targeted industrial (and other) strategies designed to expand employment and productivity in line with corresponding increases in wages. Significantly, the Framework only mentions China as a source of cooperative opportunity. This is an important factor, but it is one-sided. As far as China might serve as an enabling factor in the promotion of desirable developments elsewhere including South Africa, its size and diversity give rise to a complex mix of complementary opportunities and sources of competition. Inevitably, these are variously spread across different countries, at different stages of development, across different sectors, technological capabilities and levels of value-added, and corresponding position within global value chains/networks. Across the literature more generally, the levels of uncertainty and unevenness involved is conducive to appeal to the metaphor of China variously understood as the Engine, Conduit, or Steamroller as far as other economies are concerned, or a perpetrator of Flying Geese or of Sitting Ducks. Policy in South Africa will need to be much more extensive and refined if it is to escape its old growth path irrespective of its relations with China.

… To Developmental State

Lessons will have to be learned from comparative experience, not least from China itself. The Framework notably draws upon no comparative nor historical experience at all in identifying and justifying policies that might launch the NGP. The minor exception is the implicit, if token and obligatory, reference to South Africa as a developmental state with, presumably, some resonances with successes of the East Asian NICs and beyond. There are, however, essentially only a couple of uses of the term. One is for it to coordinate and prioritise the state’s efforts. The other suggests that its role is “to minimise costs for business” other than in making tradeoffs for greener economy and equity. This comes within an entire subsection on the developmental state which otherwise adds little other than that all state agencies should pull together. But, in order not to give the wrong impression, it is emphasised that, “A developmental state is not simply hostage to market forces and vested interests. Through careful alliances, clear purpose and by leveraging its resource and regulatory capacity, it can align market outcomes with development needs.” In other words, remarkably and unnecessarily, the developmental state would appear to be precisely conceived as a hostage to market forces and vested interests but, with a bit of leverage, may be induced to do something else as well. This is not the place to go into debate over the strengths and weaknesses of the developmental state paradigm itself, let alone whether South Africa comes anywhere near approaching conditions that might allow it to be defined as such – which it does not. In the 1980s, the DSP successfully deployed the empirical experience of the East Asian NICs to display the profound weaknesses of the neo-liberal Washington Consensus dogma and the essential role played by state intervention to bring about latecomer, catch-up industrialisation. In doing so, amongst its other limitations, the DSP placed undue emphasis upon the relations between (industrial) capital and the state at the expense of the role of labour (as well as welfare, democracy and other aspects of development other than industrial performance). Over the past decade, following a loss of popularity around the turn of the millennium, the DSP has enjoyed something of a revival. But, in doing so, it has been both diluted and indiscriminately spread in its application. Almost anything that the state does can now be perceived to be developmental, and claims as such can be made equally readily. Let us forget, and both reflecting and contributing to this revival, discourse around the developmental state in South Africa was the result of a failed attempt of the Mbeki regime in its death throes to restore some credibility to its old growth path and failing political popularity and credibility. Inevitably, its adoption for the NGP could hardly be faithfuller to the earlier version associated with the East Asian NICs, of excluding labour, social dialogue, welfare and so on. As observed, the revived DSP readily allows for these to be added on in superficial and token ways. The NGP accepts the necessity of incorporating labour into its developmental state but, essentially, in order to ensure it is complicit with the sacrifices it will have to make as opposed to them being imposed as is often supposed of the authoritarian East Asian NICs.

Twist Politics and Policies

Thus, what is striking in the Framework’s use of the developmental state is the

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12 See Fine (2011b) for some discussion of this, noting that it has only recently become more prominent in Chinese policymaking.

13 For my own (co-authored) contributions on this, see Ashman et al (2010a and b) and Fine (2004, 2006, 2008a and b, 2010a and b, and 2011a) and Fine and Rustomjee (1997).
shallowness in the politics of what is involved. The first reference to the developmental state is immediately followed by an appeal to “effective social dialogue that facilitates the necessary tradeoffs and sacrifices”(p. 6). It is complemented by four references to “social capital,” including this as a “job driver.” Once again, this is entirely without substance and serves more of a marker, intended or not, of worthy intentions rather than of addressing the evolving structures of power and privilege within South Africa. Having written two books ripping the notion of social capital to shreds, I can hardly be expected to be sympathetic to it. Again, this is not the place to rehearse my concerns other than to observe that social capital has served to raise self-help from the individual to the level of the collective (thereby for collectives to be blamed for their own condition for not helping themselves), has never been shown to contribute to policymaking (other than as an ideological support to the predetermined), and has studiously ignored the “social capital” of the rich, privileged and powerful. In short, this is evidence of little or no determination to shift the politics from that of the old growth path, primarily relying upon private capital. For, mass unemployment in South Africa to the contrary, it is simply asserted that, “in a mixed economy, private business is a core driver of jobs and economic growth”(p.28). We clearly need a new core driver if this is the case. Significantly, the discourse around mixed economy immediately after the demise of apartheid was attached to a compromise with the private sector in which the role of the state would be expanded. What is now presumed to be the old growth path soon changed this. But both undue reliance upon, and misreading of, the South African private sector are retained by the NGP. For, whilst appeal is made to the participation and cooperation of the labour movement, it is always in terms of an accord in which it makes sacrifices even if “with real gains for the working class as a whole”(p.29). In this respect, there is an asymmetry relative to capital from which only limited sacrifice is called for, although, in light of the severity of capital flight, its role is totally misjudged. For, even if it is accepted that “business has its weaknesses,” the NGP attributes this to the idea that it “has often been reactive and inwardly focused.” Indeed, “Too many business leaders have missed opportunities offered by the profound changes since 1994”(p. 29). On the contrary, business leaders have been extraordinarily strong not weak, aggressive not reactive, outwardly not inwardly focused, and have taken full advantage of the opportunities offered since 1994 – to take capital out of the country, to a large extent illegally! Interestingly, unlike unions who are to make sacrifices for the common good because of the presumed need for tradeoffs, the Framework indicts business for (falsely identified) weaknesses, missed opportunities, and so on, with the implicit presumption that it need not make sacrifices but merely improve its performance at nobody’s expense but to everybody’s benefit. An obvious question is why did business not take these beneficial opportunities in the first place, and credibility is beginning to be stretched as soon as we also throw in how much business has benefitted over the post-apartheid period in terms of profitability. Moreover, irrespective of egalitarian reasons for redistribution of income and wealth, even the mis-targeted indictments of business by the Framework are sufficient to suggest that public ownership needs to be an essential component for rectifying these deficiencies. This is accepted for “public” provision, such as health, education and much social and economic infrastructure, but needs to be extended beyond this, especially as business does not simply fail to take opportunities but positively campaigns and organises to prevent, even to circumscribe, the state from doing so as is so evident from negotiations for the transition from apartheid onwards. Significantly, though, despite its high profile in current debate, the option of extending public ownership is not seriously addressed in the Framework. This is not to suggest that nationalisation is an answer to all problems, or even the leading factor within policy. Rather, for each and every sector of the economy, assessment of policy must be accompanied by an equal assessment of why corresponding goals have not been delivered in the past and whether public ownership is necessary to override private business “weaknesses.” Nor are they liable to be troubled by the demands placed upon them in return for the government’s efforts to “moderate wage settlements” (p.26). In this, the government is unlikely to be able to succeed over the long term in its intention, although it will condition weaken, the strength and determination with which the labour movement will be able to engage in collective bargaining. Where it will definitely not succeed, and there is little evidence that it has given any thought on how to achieve them, is in the goals to “moderate price increases” and “to cap pay and bonuses for senior managers and executives earning over R550 000 per year.” To put it bluntly, if those earning this amount cannot find ways of getting around any (unspecified) mechanisms for imposing caps, they should not be in their jobs in the first place! Now, as a framework, the NGP rarely addresses policy in detail. But after a short introduction as first section, and context setting as a second section, the third section, and the vast majority of the document, is dedicated to the New Growth Path itself! As will be seen, it ranges far and wide but usually with a number of characteristics in common. First is the failure of the analyses and the proposals to draw in much way at all upon the peculiar circumstances of the South African economy, let alone those of a developing economy more generally seeking to undergo economic and social transformation. In short, irrespective of merits, with a few amendments in the wording, this document could be equally applicable to any other economy. Second, the merits of the discussion are few and far between and not simply for lack of attachment to the specificity of South Africa and its needs. For, it is not only the developmental state
that appears as a buzzword in the NGP but a sack of others as well, with no acknowledge-ment of the critical thought and failed expectations to which they have been at-tached elsewhere in the world and, indeed, within South Africa itself. Third, this renders much of the discussion mundane, conserva-tive, wrong, inconsistent or arbitrary and, most important of all, with little purchase on how there is a breach with the old growth path and with the economic, social, political and institutional conditions that sustained it. The specification of the NGP does open with a short discussion on sequencing the transi-tion to a new growth path across three phases – the short, medium and long term. These are more motivated by uncritical orthodox economic theory than empirical realities about what can be changed in certain time frames and with what priorities and, as such, are essentially arbitrary. The casual appeal to orthodoxy is then continued by seeking to balance the NGP’s supply-side emphasis against the role of demand, not least because in South Africa, “the domestic mar-ket is relatively narrow due to the relatively small population, low employment levels and deep inequalities” (p. 8). The proposed remedy is to draw upon Southern African re-gional markets. The issue here is not whether this is desirable in and of itself (together with export success) but the total failure to rec-ognise the solution to the problem that has already been identified in the way in which it has been posed. If low employment levels and deep inequalities are the source of low en but without much substance, and some of the rationale is troublesome. For example, 55% of a doubling of energy provision by 2030 is from renewables (albeit 25% from nuclear) implying, of course, 45% from non-renewables, presumably coal-fired. This does not do much for greening of the economy that is so heavily signalled elsewhere in the Framework. From job drivers, the NGP then shifts to yet another framework (beyond de-velopmental state and job drivers), involving “packages” for macroeconomics, microeco-nomics and social consensus. The macroeco-nomics covers less than a page, and makes the concession of a looser monetary policy but balanced by a tighter fiscal policy. Other-wise, it is difficult to discern anything that would distinguish it from the old growth path or trouble the IMF. At the risk of being unduly repetitive, the macroeconomic pack-age is one that fails to recognise the key issue of capital flight, and the corresponding im-pact this has had on both putative trade-offs and the levels of the exchange and interest rates. The macroeconomic package makes no reference to the levels of investment that need to be generated and how this will be achieved. This is sheer speculation but the macroeconomic package might just as well have been written by Treasury, or have been deferential to its continuing concerns (and those of the old growth path). For the undoubted need for lower exchange and interest rates is hedged by concerns that the benefits of these will be squandered in higher wages (and prices) rather than improved performance. The les-son to be drawn here is of the need to get beyond this simple impasse of macro-constraining the mi-cro, and to address the two together in terms of ensuring adequate levels of investment through total reform of the financial and banking system. The microeconomic pack-age, by contrast to the macro, is much more expansive and offers ten programmes16 and, interestingly, the goal of controlling in-flationary pressures (p. 17). This is a welcome if unwitting recognition that the division be-tween macroeconomics and microeconom-ics is unsustainable as inflation control surely belongs to macroeconomics. But I have something else in mind, that active industrial policy (programme 1), rural development (programme 2), labour market policies (pro-gramme 7), and so on are both macro and micro simultaneously or, more exactly, dis-solve the distinction between the two and should be considered on their own merits as specific sets of policies geared to bring about economic and social transformation. Each is of sufficient weight that it should not be considered micro, and each is of such sig-nificance that it should be integrated into

16 Those not mentioned in what follows are programmes eight (technology), nine (trade) and ten (Africa).
an understanding of the workings of the economy (and society) as a whole. There is much to commend, for example, the industrial policy that is being developed by the DTI, and what is now IPAP2. I am more or less bound to say this as, without wishing to claim any credit, it parallels closely the approach of the policy document that I wrote for COSATU some fifteen years previously, emphasising the need both to address vertical, sectoral policies, and horizontal, strategic initiatives (Fine 1997). But, amongst other such systemic considerations, I placed considerable emphasis upon the mobilisation and allocation of finance for investment, for which the NGP does offer a limited programme – essentially insufficient ends without sufficient means, ranging over reorientation and strengthening of the funding potential from existing state corporations and financial institutions such as the IDC, PIC and PostBank (p. 27).

The point, however, is not that we have too little financial activity but too much, within the private sector, and it is this that must be redressed rather than its being complemented by state interventions in parallel to make up for its deficiencies. Otherwise, there are some glaring inadequacies in the proposals. For competition policy (programme three), for example, there is a failure to take account of its inability to deal with the issues involved even if fully and effectively implemented. This was argued for steel in a paper drafted at much the same time as that on industrial policy and of course, the government’s problems with steel have subsequently worsened and revealed the limitations of its existing powers. Much the same has been exposed by the recent travels over the entrance of Walmart into South Africa to the apparent dissatisfaction of Minister Patel. The simple point is that competition policy is liable to be insufficient in and of itself as a lever of industrial policy. It is at most a heavily contested barrier to what private capital might do; it does not positively address the necessary issues of policy around levels of investment, markets served, employment generated, technology deployed, etc. Similarly, all the skills and training initiatives (programme four) in the world do nothing to improve outcomes in the absence of job creation. Moreover, reliance upon SMEs and microfinance (programme five) has surely long since passed its sell-by date given the voluminous critical literature in terms of how much it can deliver and what it delivers. Besides, the prospects for these depend much more on a vibrant economy than the other way around. Otherwise, there is a welcome recognition that BBBEEE (programme six) has been entirely unsatisfactory, but no attempt to explain why this should have been so as both cause and symptom of South Africa’s economic malaise. To put it in the vernacular, a new black elite has benefited from the processes of economic and social restructurings in a way that has been entirely parasitical and the exact antithesis of an aspiring indigenous, developmental bourgeoisie.

Concluding Remarks

The NGP Framework is strong on good intentions and rhetoric but, at the end of the day, is sorely disappointing. I have pointed to one major elephant in the room which it ignores altogether - capital flight. This beast is a major factor in and of itself and as a symbol of the power of finance that needs to be overcome if any new type of growth path is to come onto the agenda. Even if we are not blind to this elephant, there is another one on which it stands, the minerals-energy complex. This continues to drive the economy and underpins the symptoms that the NGP seeks to address. At least the Framework recognises the role played by the MEC in dictating a high capital-intensive trajectory at the expense of employment creation for serving domestic needs, if not acknowledging the MEC as such itself. Instead, it offers a few imaginary elephants of its own around which it gingerly manoeuvres, most of which reflect a lack of critical thinking, a failure to engage with South African realities and, most worryingly of all, a discourse of consensus-cum-sacrifice within the working class, not least to be delivered by trade union members in particular to allow “real gains for the working class as a whole” (p.29). Surely the time has come when "commitment to policies that support employment creation and equity” should be sought, if not demanded, from capital, even imposed upon it, rather than through the sacrifice of trade unionists? In this respect, careful reading of the Framework from such a perspective reveals that its politics are addressed at the labour movement with the aim of incorporating its quiescence in return for programmes which ought to be delivered in any case and which are all the less likely to be delivered the more the labour movement trims its energies. Of course, the NGP is but one policy document that sets the context within which policy will be debated, struggled over and, ultimately, implemented with or without intended outcomes being realised. And, equally, some might accept many or all of the criticisms levelled here, and more, and still see the NGP as a strategic step forward (over the old growth path) and the basis on which further progress might be built. Such postures can hardly be faulted for their optimism. Whether they represent realism is another matter and the more likely prospect is for a partially and watered-down programme, with limited impact, growing dissent within the intended social dialogue and partnership, and business, unemployment, inequality and poverty continuing as usual for post-apartheid economy and society that is so desperately in need of a genuinely new set of paths.

References

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Government’s new growth path calls for a social pact that includes proposed wage restraint, which means workers would moderate their wage demands. Various monetary policy statements by the Reserve Bank, research reports by Adcorp and other comments by mainstream economists support this gospel truth: high wages mean fewer people will be employed.

The policy prescriptions of mainstream economic orthodoxy have no foundation in empirical evidence. Leading development economists and economic historians such as Alice Amsden, Thandika Mkandawire, Hajoon Chang, Eric Reinert, Jomo Sundaram, Ben Fine and many others have shown how developed countries use higher wages to create sustained expansion of demand. Henry Ford even decided to double the wages of his employees so there would be effective demand for the cars produced by his company.

In South Africa’s case Chris Malikane’s models show that higher wages mean sustained and stable aggregate levels of demand. Such demand would contribute to sustained fixed capital investment and job creation, thus providing a sound basis for investment in long-term productive assets. In addition, if these demand levels are stable, stable cash flow to businesses and hence stable investment growth rates would be guaranteed. Lower wages mean low levels of aggregate demand, which in turn mean depressed production and therefore fewer people employed.

Mainstream economic orthodoxy can’t explain what causes unemployment and what will ultimately create jobs. Wits economist Seeraj Mohammed has consistently shown that South Africa’s unemployment crisis is structural, insofar as the capital-intensive minerals and energy sectors dominate and shape productive sectors. This shows how unemployment is systemically rooted in apartheid under development.

Mohammed has also shown that the global restructuring of production and the increasing inability of capitalism to absorb working-age people into formal employment are crucial systemic causes of unemployment.

The post-apartheid restructuring of companies and the economy as a whole, says Mohammed, led to growth in the services sector, which has not created large numbers of jobs. This restructuring also enabled huge volumes of capital, previously locked in the economy, to flow offshore and into financial rather than productive assets. For example, from 1992 to 2007 South African corporations chose to keep their capital liquid in financial markets rather than invest in production. Such decisions limit employment opportunities. The 2003 growth and development summit bemoaned the fact that, for the 1994-2003 period, the average level of investment remained below 25% of GDP -- the minimum level historically proved to provide enough capital to drive productive, employment-creating growth. More than any other factor, it is this investment...
strike by capital that has caused employment creation to stagnate.

The economists cited above show how job-creating economic development has taken place in the leading developed countries. In essence, it required what is today referred to as state-led industrial policy: sustained interventions to drive sectoral growth and development. In the case of East Asia these typically included the deployment of incentives and penalties to mobilise and direct investment behind a carefully defined state-led strategy to develop productive forces. These measures were primarily focused on manufacturing, but also incorporated productive activities in agriculture, mining and other sectors and were broader than a “competitiveness strategy”.

The proposals of the industrial policy action plan and the new growth path go some way towards a framework for industrial policy. Yet neoliberal prescriptions still dominate government’s economic policy. There is insufficient political power or will to build a development coalition that can drive restructuring towards job-creating growth.

Many now argue that globalisation has changed the game -- that, now, such industrial policy measures are obsolete. But globalisation has lost more jobs than it has created. The countries that have witnessed their economies grow while also creating jobs -- Brazil, China, India and Russia -- are all characterised by state-led industrial policy. In light of historical experience and that of the aforementioned Bric countries, I would argue that such policy has the potential to address the needs and interests of the unemployed in a way wage restraint cannot.

Nonetheless, industrial policy will come up against ecological limits, given the expansionist logic of capitalism in spite of finite resources. Thus the challenge for an ecologically sustainable industrial policy will be to work out options that shift the economy towards a low-carbon base. This implies a break from the domination of our key productive sectors by minerals and energy.

In addition to interventions in productive sectors, important measures to address the interests and needs of the unemployed must include a comprehensive social wage. This would provide adequate assets and a living income for all unemployed. Government already recognises this: there has been a massive expansion of social security, there is policy commitment to provide universal free basic services and pro-

The social-security system now in place is extremely limited. It does not overcome the systemic restraints of poverty, inequality and unemployment. The challenge of developing a comprehensive social wage must therefore be about providing livelihood opportunities as part of an overarching sustainable, job-creating economic development path. What is key here is the building of self-sustainable communities and local economies, including the stimulation of local consumption and trade.

Brazil’s provision of a minimum income to all unemployed fathers has shown the potential of such a scheme: it has begun to stimulate local economies in poor communities. Indian economist Kaustav Barnejee has shown that India’s rural employment guarantee scheme has had similar effects.

By providing 100 days a year of guaranteed wage employment to every household for unskilled manual work, the scheme has led to an aggregate increase in the minimum income earned by the rural poor in India. This in turn has generated upward pressure on agricultural wages.

It is possible for government to keep to the anti-poor, neoliberal policy package because the social weight and voice of the unemployed is absent. This absence has opened the door to a holier-than-thou appropriation of the unemployed by economic orthodoxy. It is nauseating to witness the Reserve Bank and mainstream economic orthodoxy speak for them, presenting wage restraint as the way to address their interests. Building the unemployed into a force to challenge government and business remains a huge political challenge not yet addressed by any social formation.

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An Economic CODESA – the starting point is to ask: What is it that has brought us on the brink of a precipice?

Phindile Kunene

Recentl y, the editorial and opinion pages of the national newspapers have been populated by calls for some form of an economic CODESA. The broad understanding of this Economic CODESA must be a multi-holder forum in which the economic future of the country will be discussed.

This call is a welcome break with the denialism of the past. No sane person today can argue that the status quo does any service to the nation, the poor black majority in particular. This discourse is also indicative of two things. Firstly, it means that the growing discontent and impatience amongst the working class, especially its unemployed youth section is unsettling powerful quarters of South African society. The message propagated by COSATU, that the first decade of freedom (characterised by jobless economic growth) has been benefiting the traditional beneficiaries of apartheid i.e. the white capitalist class and its stooges, is beginning to find resonance. Apartheid’s main victim, the black working class, continues to bear the brunt of inequalities and deepening of poverty. Additionally, many governments have been swept out of power by mass discontent following the global economic crisis which has caused job losses and trampled the living standards of the poor even further to the ground. The crisis in the Eurozone and the Arab Uprisings tell us that things cannot simply continue like this. Political freedom in the Arab countries like Egypt and Tunisia was the most immediate demand of the masses that went out on the streets demanding the removal of the country’s political elite. But to stop here, would be to miss the point. Income inequalities or growing gaps between the rich and poor; unemployment; decreasing standards of living and corruption also featured prominently in these uprisings. This reality is enough to scare any power holder, including business which is scared that talk of revolution might find resonance amongst the country’s poor and marginalised youths.

Here in South Africa, the call for an economic CODESA takes place against rising unemployment which is now 36.5% (when using the more accurate expanded definition). It occurs during a time of increasing cost of living which is not matched by the wages that workers earn. It also occurs against the backdrop of service delivery backlogs, where there has been slow progress in terms of overcoming the apartheid spatial divide, providing good quality housing to the poor and health and education. The victims of this dire situation are, as expected; black working class South Africans, both women and men, whose chances of survival rest with their ability to sell their labour power to capitalist who are only willing to pay peanuts for it. Meanwhile, the racial distribution of wealth and privilege remains a defining feature of our economic growth path.

In essence, the call for an economic CODESA must be situated within the context of a stubborn apartheid legacy – which resulted in racialised distribution of income and wealth as well as ownership of our economy. This legacy found new momentum in the post apartheid period, through neoliberal capitalism. What is unfortunate about the calls for this CODESA is that it has given new impetus to those who seek to attack labour and bash unions, portraying them as selfish and only concerned about their narrow interests at the expense of millions of unemployed South Africans. The right wing for instance has called for more labour market flexibility, privatisation and economic deregulation. They argue that business is not investing in our economy because "it is too costly to do business in South Africa". In what appears to be a defence of workers in the informal sector, Mark du Preez calls for less state regulation of the economy. He argues that as our problems deepen, "the state's natural inclination is to regulate and control, but its salvation surely lies in controlling less." Others who have joined this right wing chorus include the Minister of Finance Pravin Gordhan who calls for more labour market deregulation as the basis upon which to create jobs. All these analyses conceal more than they reveal. The correct question to ask is how did South Africa get to this point? What has driven us to the brink of precipice? The answer to this is twofold – apartheid’s legacy of massive racialised inequities and wrong economic policies, founded on the notion that the market is a God. Apartheid’s workings and legacy have been well documented and are less contested, and therefore deserve no further mention here. However, what is crucial is that the apartheid legacy,
combined with the neoliberal experiment that we embarked upon since 1996, have played a major and defining role in the crisis we are in today. It is because of the relaxation of capital controls that big companies such as Old Mutual, South African Breweries (SAB), Gencor etc flew off shore to the London and New York stock exchanges, taking with them South African jobs and crucial tax revenue. It is because of the blind belief in trade liberalisation, as propagated by the Bretton Woods institutions and the WTO that our manufacturing sector was virtually wiped out by the unbridled competition from goods from other countries. This has destroyed millions of jobs in the textile, clothing, white goods and electronics sectors. Added to this is that the strength of our currency, due to the massive influx of hot money into the economy - has out-priced our exports. Furthermore, manufacturers have also complained that the high interest rates charged by an independent and unaccountable reserve bank – has made it more difficult to borrow money an expand production and create jobs. To make things worse, a state driven privatisation programme in the late 1990s and early 2000s has meant greater profits for private companies and limited the scope for labour intensity, job creation, decent work, better wages and skills transfer. The working class faces the reality that money is the medium that determines access to even the most basic services and necessities. In essence, it is the very talk of “less control” and more “flexibility” that has resulted in thousands of workers in precarious jobs with no benefits, security and prospects for upward mobility. It is the same conservative fiscal and monetary policy that has allowed inflation targeting and speculative investments instead of generating decent jobs for the majority of the poor. It is the same logic that has placed us on the brink of a precipice. Talks about the fuzzy idea of an economic CODESA must begin by acknowledging this reality. As Aubrey Mashiqi notes, we need to forge a consensus to overcome the “kind of capitalism privileges that the market at the expense of society and the state, and promotes virulent forms of individualism and, in turn, blunts the primordial instinct of human solidarity.” Asking for more sacrifices from workers in the form of wage moderation or a downward variation of labour standards is simply no option. The call for a night-watchman state is also disingenuous and in essence prescribes as a remedy the very same poison that has landed our economy and the working class into an ICU. The best negotiation happens in the streets, through protest and class struggle, where the working class can aptly demonstrate who are the real creators of wealth in this country!

NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE IS THE BEST THING ANC GOVERNMENT CAN DO!

We read from the press that the Republic of South Africa (RSA) is considering instituting a programme of National Health Insurance (NHI) and your organisation is a very important stakeholder in this matter. We believe that this is one of the best public administration programmes the post-apartheid government can ever come up with. If NHI can be implemented successfully in RSA, then this Government shall forever be remembered for this one good thing if for nothing else.

That is guaranteed. National Health Services Administration is one of the primary things that Governments are there for and it is also one of the things by which citizens will judge their own Governments. We can never over-emphasise on this issue. As pleased as everyone is about the imminent inception of NHI, we want to hasten to add that the inception process of this particular programme is not easy at all. It is fraught with a lot of pitfalls into which an otherwise well meant programme like this one can very easily and quickly disappear completely with such a public, political and economic backlash as could shake the whole fabric of Government itself down to its roots. Our attached discussion papers illustrate this point very well.

For the love of Africa, we do not want to see such a pioneering programme on the African continent prematurely and quickly disappearing into the abyss of oblivion. We do not want the stereotyped mentality of Africans not being able to do good things for themselves being vindicated by such a failure. This is the reason why we have taken it upon ourselves to come in to help with ideas and suggestions in this discussion on NHI. This is the reason why we have sent these documents to you.

We believe that the success of NHI in RSA will breed success of similar programmes on the African continent as a whole and consequently the success of all Africans too. As proud Africans, we want to play our part in that success story, if only we can be allowed to do so. Our contact details are everywhere in the attached documents and in this email as well and we are only a phone call away.

Dr Cleopas Sibanda: Occupational Health Specialist
This article is the first part of a series of articles Celebrating the History of Women’s Activism in COSATU and the liberation movement. Part One highlights some of the key moments in the earlier history of women’s activism in the labour movement and the liberation movement more broadly during the 1940s to the 1960s. The purpose of reviewing these historic events is both to celebrate this history, and also to draw inspiration for the present.

One of the most important lessons to draw from our history is that even under the most difficult and dangerous circumstances, women and men have risen up to fight against oppression and for a just and equal society. This tells us that as the struggle continues, we can draw from the bravery and courage of ordinary women in the past, who have refused to be dominated and suppressed. The most significant feature of women’s organising in South African history is that in addition to their participation in the liberation struggle and within trade unions, women organised themselves as women. During different periods and contexts, the focus and content of the issues that women organised around differed, however there was consistent organising of women as women, around issues that affected them as women. This had a dual impact of providing an organisational space and home for women activists, while it also ensured that women were able to assert women’s and gender issues within the largely male-dominated organisations to which they belonged. This was achieved unevenly, though, from one period to another. Nevertheless, by coming together as women, they were able to challenge their organisations more strongly and powerfully to confront and address unequal gender relations in society as well as within their organisations.

The Early Years of Organising Women into Trade Unions and Liberation Struggles

When the ANC was formed in 1912 it did not accept women as members. The Bantu Women’s League (BWL) was formed in 1931 and led by Charlotte Maxeke. The BWL was mostly involved in passive resistance and focused its struggles against passes for black women.18

In 1943 women were admitted to the ANC as fully-fledged members. The ANC Women’s League was formed in 1948. Women’s League was formed in 1948.

There were a number of struggles led by women during the apartheid era. The most visible and highly publicised struggles included the bus boycotts, beer hall protests and the Anti-pass campaign.

African women began to enter formal employment in the 1930s and 1940s as a result of the growing economy and more importantly, the war, which led to an increased demand for women workers as men entered the military. Women began to organise other women into trade unions. Women factory workers learned new methods of organising and participated in building non-racial worker solidarity. They played a role in the Campaign of Defiance Against Unjust Laws during the 1950s where many of them were arrested. They also helped to organise progressive white, Coloured and Indian people in alliance with the ANC into the Congress of Democrats, the Coloured People Congress and the Transvaal and Natal Indian Congress. In some cases, women helped launch new unions through their organising efforts. For example, in 1940, Ray Alexander, a trade union activist and a communist, began organising food and canning workers, resulting in the launch of a new union in 1942.

17Parts of this article are extracted from the African Labour Research Network publication entitled The Status of Women in Trade Unions in Africa: Evidence from 8 countries, from the Chapter on South Africa, by Liesl Orr of NALEDI. The article is also drawn from Labour Pains: Women’s Leadership and Gender Strategies in COSATU published by NALEDI in 2007.

18http://www.anc.org.za/wl/docs/history.html
of the Food and Canning Workers' Union in 1941. She actively mobilised women and encouraged them to take up leadership positions. She was one of the first women in the unions to counter the widely-held belief that women do not make good unionists. Alexander said of women in trade unions:

"Women workers make as good trade unionists as men, and it is no more difficult to organise the women than the men. In fact they are often more loyal to the union that the men as the union has not only helped to improve wages and conditions of work but has also raised their status."

While women were capable, in Alexander's experience they often lacked confidence. Alexander recalls how she urged women to take responsibility. The focus of trade unions during their establishment was largely on the struggle for union rights, whilst simultaneously the liberation movement was focused on struggles against pass laws and apartheid repression. In fact, the trade unions themselves were part and parcel of the struggles of the liberation movement, since workers realised that they could not fight for worker's rights without fighting against the apartheid system, since the workplace was a key site of apartheid repression. Furthermore, workers lives at work were inseparable from their experiences within their communities.

Racial separation within the union and discriminatory wage scales reflected the divisions in women's lives. Black women now confronted enormous pressures starkly different from those of their white co-workers… The threat of passes for women, the insult of an inferior “Bantu education” for their children, and forced removal of long-established communities provided relentless reminders that racial oppression was an inescapable fact of daily life.”

Emma Mashinini, the first female General Secretary of CCWUSA (the retail union, now called SACCAWU) further illustrates the extremely oppressive nature of the apartheid workplace:

Of course, we had separate facilities. Canteen, toilets, changing rooms – all these were separated according to sex and according to colour. We had to address the whites as ‘sir’ and ‘madam’, while they often called us by first names, or, if we were being shouted at, we were called ‘maid’ and ‘Kaffir’.

In the early years of the trade union movement, whilst workplaces and unions tended to be male-dominated, there were a number of pioneering women leaders that actively organised women into unions to fight against their working conditions and to raise their voices as women.

Speaking of women in trade unions between the 1930 and 1960, Berger (2007) shows, through a study of the Transvaal garment workers and the food and canning workers in the Cape, the significance of trade unions for women during this early period, as well as in shaping future struggles:

Despite changes and contrasts, for both black and white trade unions remained one of the most important arenas of women's collective organising from the 1930s to the 1960s. Unions brought women into active public life, defying contemporary beliefs that they should accept their political and legal subordination without complaint. Through union activities, women were politicised, introduced to the pressing issues of the time and to a new world of debate, organising and protest. These experiences transformed the women involved, as well as the groups they helped to launch and sustain. Within these new political spaces, some women challenged racist practices and institutions, struggling to interact with one another on a basis of relative equality; they also acquired the skills to launch new groups with gender-specific objectives. In all these ways, trade union activism changed women’s personal and collective identities, helping to shape the contours of a later South African feminist agenda that challenged not only the unions, but also political organisations such as the ANC, which continued to maintain that national liberation should precede gender equity.

The significance of organising women into trade unions and other organisations cannot be overemphasised. On the one hand, this creates the space for women to come together, to be politicised and build solidarity. On the other hand, this means that women have the opportunity to politicise others about their particular experiences and struggles, and to create conditions for these organisations to take up these struggles.

The formation of FEDSAW

The Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW) was formed in 1954 and drew upon women from the ANC, trade unions, and religious and civil society organisations. At the Conference the catering was done by men to ensure that women participated fully in the discussions and proceedings. FEDSAW was established with two primary aims, to fight for majority rule and end apartheid; and secondly to unite women of different races into one organisation to fight for the rights and freedoms of all women.

The opening speech was delivered by the ANC Women’s League President, Ida Mtswana. She said, “Gone are the days when the place of women was in the kitchen and looking after the children. Today, they are marching side by side with men in the road to freedom.”

But at the same time, the struggle for women to organise freely remained intense. In addition to the political conditions of repression, women faced a struggle within their own homes for freedom of movement. Lillian Ngoyi addressed the issue of the participation of women at the FEDSAW conference, saying that:

22 http://www.anc.org.za/wl/docs/50years.html
23 http://www.anc.org.za/womenrole.html
24 http://www.anc.org.za/wl/docs/50years.html
“...there would have been many more women there but their husbands didn’t want them to go. The husbands wanted democracy, but then they won’t let their wives go to meetings.”

Women continued to fight against these contradictions, but there were also many women that did not feel free to participate in these struggles because of this and other factors.

The Struggle Against Pass Laws

One of the most well known struggles of women was the historic march on August 9th 1956 against pass laws. The democratic South Africa recognises this day annually in our celebration of National Women’s Day.

The courage and determination shown by women exerted a powerful force against the apartheid government. African women fought the pass laws tirelessly because passes were a symbol of their deepest oppression.

Initially, African women were in a better position than African men to join trade unions because they were not forced to carry passes. Rita Ndzanga tells how this allowed women to be active in the union movement of the 1940s and much of the 1950s:

"The fact that they did not carry passes before – not until the 1950s – had given us a freedom of movement which helped the organisational work. The men were a bit afraid of getting involved in the trade union movement because of the pass laws: they thought they might lose their jobs and they were afraid of their passes being cancelled."25

It is understandable that women resisted with all that they had because passes deprived them of their right to move freely, to engage in economic activity, to organise, and to choose to live with their husbands and raise their children within a stable family environment.

The government attempted to get women to carry passes as early as 1913 but was met with severe resistance from women. In 1954 FEDSAW (Federation of South African women) organised a massive protest. Over 20 000 women went to the Union Building in Pretoria and demanded to see the Prime Minister. He refused to see them and they then handed over a petition with more than 100 000 signatures. During this march the women famously sang:

Wathint’ abafazi, Strijdom!
Wathint’ imbokodo uzo kufa!
Now you have touched the women, Strijdom!
You have struck a rock
(You have dislodged a boulder)
You will be crushed!

Although women were deeply involved in all of the Congress campaigns of the 1950s, the leadership of the Congress organisations was dominated almost exclusively by men.26

Some examples of the other struggles taken up by women in the 1950s include the use of boycotts. In January 1957 the Public Utility Transportation Company increased bus fare by one penny. People began a boycott, walking up to nine miles each way, some having to leave their homes as early as 3 am. This boycott was organised primarily by women and led by a woman. The state responded with mass raids, arresting 6 606 people. A rally of 5000 people was attacked by two police baton charges resulting in 17 people being hospitalised. On top of that brutality, the government announced legislation that would result in a permanent end to bus services to African townships. But according to the ANCWL “The African people continued to resist and after five months the Native Transportation Amendment Act No 52 of 1957 rolled back the fare increase.”27

26 Frances Baard, My Spirit is not Banned, as told to Barbie Schreiner, 1986, page 45.
27 http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/misc/schmi123.html
29 http://www.anc.org.za/womenrole.html

After the bus fare fight women were challenged again. In 1959, the municipality of Durban attempted to end ‘illegal liquor’ sales. Beer brewing had been an important source of income for African women, and under the new law African men would have to drink in municipal beer halls. In 1959 women marched to express their grievances, others entered the beer hall and destroyed the beer. They organized a beer boycott which led to wide scale uprising all over Natal. An estimated 20,000 women participated, while at least 1,000 were taken through the courts. This is a key example of a struggle led and advanced by women during the apartheid era, and there were many other such struggles.

Fierce Repression of the 1960s

The apartheid government came down hard in the face of the mass protests in the 1950s, banning organisations and their leaders and forcing the African National Congress into underground activity and armed struggle in the 1960s. By 1963 all of the leaders of FEDSAW had been banned and it was effectively stopped from functioning. This was a bleak period for the South African liberation movement which led to the establishment of an underground resistance movement. The women leaders in the trade union movement who led to the establishment of an underground resistance movement. The women leaders in the trade union movement and the liberation movement broadly were not spared the brutality of the apartheid regime’s violence and violation. There are countless untold stories of women that faced rape and sexual violation in the apartheid prisons.

Women leaders such as Frances Baard, Elizabeth Mafekeng, Viola Hashe and Rita Ndzanga, amongst others were banned, jailed and brutalised. Others were forced into exile. Rita Ndzanga was detained and later gave testimony of torture during police interrogation, as did numerous other detainees. In 1976 she was detained again, during which time her husband Lawrence was murdered in detention. The apartheid state prevented Rita from attending her husband’s funeral.

The Significance of Organisation of Women into Trade Unions in the Struggle for Gender Equality

Today, it is the courage and sacrifice shown by the women of these early years of struggle that should be remembered when we debate the position of women and gender in the current struggles of the trade union movement.

The fact that women of these early years were able to endure the same hardships and persecutions as their male comrades and make contributions to struggle of this scale, should be enough validation for a commitment to ensuring that women’s activism and leadership is nurtured and proactively built. Their struggles are evidence enough to counter any argument that seeks to prevent women from having equal status and power in the trade union movement to men.

While the women that were active in trade unions and organisations in the 1940s and 1950s faced a major battle in dealing with the prejudices and restrictions that they faced, their role in laying the basis for women’s struggles and activism in later years cannot be over-emphasised.

As highlighted earlier, trade unions were both a home for women workers to advance struggles and become politicised, and simultaneously a site of struggle against patriarchy that operated within the unions and other organisations.

Berger (2007) argues that the contradictions around gender issues within unions really came to a head much more sharply from the 1970s onwards, coinciding with the colossal growth in trade unions and the mass liberation movement.

By the early 1960s, however, most unions remained male-dominated, receptive neither to women’s leadership nor to their particular concerns. They still awaited the confrontations ahead in the 1970s and 80s when independent unions began a new surge of organising in industries that employed both women and men. In this phase of trade union struggles, increasing numbers of women – such as Thembelile Nabe and Lydia Kompe – began to insist that sexual harassment and the household division of labour were not simply individual matters, but political questions that must be addressed by trade unions, political organisations, the state, and the men with whom they worked and lived.

The trade union movement, and women organising with the unions began to take up much more militant struggles against women’s oppression and capitalism during the later years of the 1970s and 1980s.

1973 was a significant turning point in the history of the trade union movement in South Africa, when a strike started at the Coronation Brick factory. What began as a dispute involving 2000 workers rapidly turned into a strike wave that swept the country. This revived mass struggles against apartheid, with massive increases in trade union membership and a renewal in organisation.

In Part 2 of this article, we will focus in more detail on women’s activism in the labour movement and the liberation movement during the 1970s and 1980s.

Integrating lessons from the past in struggles today

While struggles for women’s emancipation and gender equality have come a long way in the trade union movement, there is a lot that has not changed for black women organised in unions. Today, we have legislation and institutional mechanisms that have been established towards realising gender equality. But the strength, resilience and commitment of the women workers of the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, struggling against an all-powerful system that survived on the backs of their labour, are reminders of the path of struggle that has already been travelled and the need to persevere. While a few women have been able to benefit from democracy, what remains the same for the majority of women today is the racist, patriarchal, capitalist society which working class women and men are forced to live in and continuously struggle against. The struggle for gender equality is a struggle that challenges the very social relations underpinning the patriarchal capitalist system.

A key factor in the continued failure of unions to implement gender policy today is the unchanged capitalist and patriarchal social relations that exist in our society today. Therefore, the struggle for gender equality must be waged on all fronts, in the unions, in society, the economy, and the workplace. The challenge for women and men workers, therefore, is to rebuild activism and struggles to create new social relations and systems of production and reproduction that are based on human dignity, respect and equality for all.

http://www.anc.org.za/womenrole.html
This article is Part 2 of a series of articles celebrating the history of women's activism in COSATU. The purpose of this series is both to remember and appreciate the significance of women's activism during various periods in history, whilst also drawing inspiration for the present. Each period in history has offered different challenges and circumstances, yet the imperative to organise for change remains as vital as ever. Part 1 reflected on the activism of women in trade unions and the liberation movement during the 1940s to 1960s, while Part 2 focuses on women's struggles during the 1970s and 1980s. The later period was a time when women's struggles came into their own, when women began to organise separately in women's forums, and took up issues with a specific gender focus more strongly and vigorously than in the earlier years.

The revival and rebirth of trade unions and mass organisation in the 1970s

The Durban strikes of 1973 heralded a turning point in union and political activity. It began with a dispute of 2000 African migrant workers at Coronation Brick and Tile over pay, and turned into a strike wave that spread like wildfire across the country. Workers, students, women and community members revived political and resistance organisations against apartheid, sparked by these workplace struggles. Another key defining moment of the 1970s which followed the strikes was the mobilisation of students against apartheid education in 1976. Of course, these were more than moments, because what this period represented was the growth of organisation in all areas of life, precisely because racism, capitalism and patriarchy influenced all spheres of existence. The strike at Coronation Brick in January of 1973 was over in just two days and management pressured workers to settle within a week, but already the strikes had spread to other factories. By the end of March 1973, there had been at least 160 strikes, involving over 61 000 workers in every sector of industry. The Durban strikes had a profound impact on trade union membership, which increased from only a few thousand in 1972, to around 40 000 in 1974, and over 60 000 by 1975. But it was not only a growth in numbers that characterised this era, it was the centrality of shopfloor organisation, participatory democracy and worker control that were fashioned as the foundation of the workers movement.

As mentioned earlier, the focus of union struggles during the apartheid era was largely for union recognition, since the apartheid state did not recognise the existence of trade unions representing black workers. During the 1970s these struggles for recognition intensified and women workers were in the majority in a number of factories and stores which fought recognition battles.

The culmination of these struggles was a massive strike by SARHWU in 1987 demanding recognition of the union in Transnet. This led to the establishment of the Wiehahn Commission which signalled a new era in labour relations for black workers, brought about through the struggles of women and men workers all over the country.

While women were still a minority in formal employment and trade unions, the number of women activists was certainly growing. With the emergence of community-based organisations during the 1970s, there was also a flourishing of women's activism in their communities. One of the hallmarks of the struggles of this period was the way in which community and workplace struggles were consciously and organically interconnected.

Women's organisations were formed all over the country, forming part of the mass democratic movement. Women trade unionists were actively involved in these organisations, for example the United Women's Organisation in the Western Cape and the Natal Organisation of Women. According to Hassim (2006): the union influence also shaped the emphasis of UWO on the interests of working-class women and on linking women's struggles with broader union campaigns.

31 Parts of this article are extracted from the African Labour Research Network publication entitled The Status of Women in Trade Unions in Africa: Evidence from 8 countries, from the Chapter on South Africa, by Liesl Orr of NALEDI.

The article also draws from Labour Pains: Women’s Leadership and Gender Strategies in COSATU published by NALEDI in 2006.

Women workers advancing struggles in the workplace

While trade unions explicitly struggled against the apartheid state and its draconian laws, they also focused on bread-and-butter struggles affecting the daily lives of workers. These struggles were nevertheless also struggles against racism, as demonstrated by the quotes below:

“In the 1970s we fought to earn an extra cent and also to narrow our [working] hours…” By then we were all earning R10,50 a week, and only workers earning more than that could contribute to the Unemployment Insurance Fund. On the occasion we fought for our extra cent, I remember what a struggle we had, and how hostile the employers were. We went on a go-slow strike, and they were so angry, being used to dismissing us for the least mistake, being late or whatever. It took months for us to win – but when we did, we felt joy, great joy.” (Emma Mashinini, 1989)34

“There was a slogan in the Garment and Allied Workers Union (GAWU) at the time of election of leadership, against being ‘ja boas’ shop stewards. It was critical that we needed to transform the clothing industry union in terms of its leadership, in terms of its thinking. We also knew that it was critical to deal with bread and butter issues of the workers, for example a struggle for decent tea or toilet paper in the factory, or sanitary bins for women.” (Bonita Loubser)35

The women leaders and activists interviewed for Labour Pains36 were actively engaged in organising their workplaces, replacing the toothless ‘sweet heart’ unions unions – which did not challenge the bosses – with fighting unions. For example, Vanessa Jantjies of NUMSA worked at Tedelex in Atlantis, where a majority of women were employed. There was a union “but it was one of those unions that the officials just come and sit in the canteen and do nothing”. Vanessa heard about NUMSA through a friend who was a member of CCAWUSA. Together with other workers recruited workers to NUMSA on the bus from Cape Town to Atlantis every day until they had enough forms to fight for recognition. During this period trade union activists challenged racism and capitalism through workplace struggles. They also confronted patriarchy, taking up struggles around issues that affected women workers, for examples struggles for maternity leave, and struggles against sexual harassment.

In some cases, women workers had the explicit support of men who took up the cause alongside them. For example, in 1984 Andries Raditsela, a CWIU shop steward at Dunlop and chair of FOSATU’s Transvaal Region, took up struggles against sexual harassment and was part of negotiating maternity agreements. He helped to expose a practice in which managers traded jobs for sex with women workers. He wrote the following about a campaign in 1984 against this practice of sexual harassment:

“There is something being done in many factories by personnel and training officers to our sisters, our girlfriends and wives. At Dunlop we realised the training officer sold jobs for sex. We planned to catch him in action. He employed one lady on a Friday and by Tuesday he called this lady to his office. One union member rushed to his door and found it locked and called the manager. The training officer was caught and fired on the spot.”37 Raditsela was murdered in detention in 1985.

Workers Are Parents Too: Maternity and Childcare Struggles

Some of the key struggles that were taken up during this period laid the foundation for some of the basic rights that women enjoy today. SACCAWU, then CCAWUSA took up struggles for maternity rights, coming from the most extreme situations in the workplace where women were literally giving birth on the shop floor because they were not entitled to maternity rights. Employers dismissed pregnant women and some women strapped their stomachs tightly to hide their pregnancies. They gave birth without the knowledge of the employer and returned to work when the baby was just days old. CCAWUSA was in the forefront of these struggles, winning major victories such as the OK Bazaars agreement in 1983, which allowed one year’s unpaid leave with re-employment guaranteed. The union won an agreement at Pick ‘n Pay which secured 11 months parental leave, 9 of which were on 75% pay, and which could be taken at any time until the child was four years old.

The union also spearheaded a struggle for childcare, where workers would target a day on which they would all take their children to work in demonstration against the lack of childcare facilities available to them. Unfortunately, workers today have not made much progress in the demand for childcare facilities.

Women’s oppression in the home

It was during this time that activists in trade unions began to raise awareness around women’s oppression in the home. This was both because of their understanding of the gender relations in the home, and women’s unpaid labour as central to women’s subordination, and also because it manifested itself directly in limiting women’s activism in the workplace and unions. For example, MAWU organiser Mam Lydia Kompe stated that “of all the problems women encounter, marriage is the biggest problem that prevents their involvement in union activity.”38 Women experienced difficulties with partners who were resistant to their activism, attendance of night meetings and long absences from home. In some cases women were beaten by male partners who objected to their activism.

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34 Bonita Loubser was interviewed by NALEDI for Labour Pains (2006:55). Bonita Loubser was a Regional Organiser is SACTWU at the time of the interview. She is currently holding the elected position of Second National Organising Secretary, which is part of the SACTWU National Secretariat. elected at National Congress in September 2010.
37 Shamim Meer, 1998 Women Speak, Speak 4 (1984), page 68
A survey of women workers in Durban in the 1980s found that most women interviewed had to ask their husband’s or boyfriend’s permission before they could leave the house, even if it was to visit a parent. Men had no restrictions on their movements. A woman shop steward involved in an OK Bazaars strike in 1987 said, “If my husband was alive I don’t think it would be possible for me to be involved in the union as I am. My husband didn’t want me to move at all. Not even to work. Only to go to church and to the market.”

However, few commentators note that the majority of OK union members and strikers were women. Husbands beat women workers during the OK Bazaars strike. One shop steward spoke of her anger when her husband forbade her to attend national strike meetings.

“I would not have married him if I had known he was going to be like this. If I say to him ‘We’ve run out of milk’, he’ll say ‘go and ask your union’ or ‘I never asked you to go on strike’. Most of the time I just keep quiet otherwise it will end up in blows.” In some instances, unionists went further than debate and attempted to intervene in instances of gender-based violence, or cases where husbands were restricting the movement of their partners. There was more space to do this where the husbands concerned were union activists themselves. While traditions and practices that kept women in subordinate position remained, this period marked the beginning of intense struggle for the entire labour movement.

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A woman’s place is in the union

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Women’s forums

During the 1970s and 80s women also organised separately as women in women’s forums. These forums were established to empower women and to campaign for women’s rights within trade unions and in the workplace. They were an important space for women to strategise, build solidarity and support, as well as driving campaigns and activism. Women activists had to fight extremely hard for every single victory that they achieved. Each struggle that was won required challenging male authority in unions and society, defying women’s internalised oppression and building solidarity and unity amongst women workers.

Women’s forums during this period played a very significant role in this regard. The space that these forums created for women to come together, to build consciousness, confidence and provide support cannot be overemphasised.

Sexual harassment

It was also during this period of significant activism by women within unions that the issue of sexual harassment was brought to the fore. In a path-breaking resolution on sexual conduct presented to COSATU Congress in 1989 TGWU argued for a code of conduct and “tighter sexual discipline.” The resolution noted that sexual harassment and even ‘consensual’ relationships were based on unequal power relations between women and men in the unions. The resolution noted “many incidents of sexual harassment of women comrades by male comrades. Men became involved with newly recruited women members, these relationships were characterised by an imbalance of power because of the greater political experience and organisational seniority of the male comrade. When the relationship collapsed, the women would often drop out or divisions would develop.” Although it was not positively received amongst some present at the Congress, this discussion started the process that led towards the adoption of a COSATU adoption of a COSATU Code of Conduct against Sexual Harassment.

Thus, while there were a number of struggles advanced during this period, there were major challenges facing women in trade unions. In 1989 COSATU Congress passed a resolution around women’s leadership and representation in the federation, around childcare at meetings and transport home in the evenings and spreading the idea that housework should be shared between women and men. However, it was not implemented, as was the case with many resolutions around gender before and after.

Elizabeth Thabethe (a national office bearer in Chemical Workers Industrial Union in the 1990s) said “to increase women’s participation in unions means changing the relationship between men and women. It means men need to share domestic duties with women.”

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17 Shamim Meer, 1998 Women Speak, Speak 4 (1984), page 68
18 Fatima Meer, 1991, Black - Woman - Worker.
participation in unions means changing the relationship between men and women. It means men need to share domestic duties with women, and we have a long way to go before this happens.”

Maggie Magubane, raised the following incisive criticism of trade unions’ treatment of women and gender issues at the time (which is still completely applicable today):

“...At every trade union congress resolutions are passed saying the union will fight all forms of discrimination and promote the participation and leadership by women. These resolutions are never put into practice. Afterwards we have to listen to male comrades saying there is no way they can be led by women... In meetings women’s views are not taken seriously. Sometimes you find when a woman stands up to talk, the men will make funny remarks or whistle at her before she even opens her mouth... When you look at all the work done by women—in the home and in the workplace you see how much we contribute. The men are seen as heroes, but often it is thanks to women that they get this recognition... Are we in the trade union movement really striving for liberation? If so when are we going to change this tradition business? Customs are only beliefs. We need to create new traditions and customs if we are serious about building a truly new South Africa.”

Drawing lessons from women’s activism in trade unions in the 1970s and 1980s

During the 1970s and 1980s the apartheid regime was at its most brutal, and at this time workers, leaders and trade unionists were amongst those that were detained, banned and even murdered.

Women’s issues and the struggle for gender equality were making themselves heard through trade unions. This took places against a background of high levels of activism and mobilisation of workers and communities whose struggles were.

The 1970s and 80s were a significant period in the history of the women’s movement. This was the period in which the levels of organisation and activism of women were at their peak. The factors that contributed to this vibrancy and dynamism include the fact that the levels of mobilisation of mass organisations generally were high, also that women were organised as women and were actively engaged in the struggles against racism, repression and apartheid capitalism. The fact that women were organised in mass organisations that formed part of the broader front against apartheid was positive in many respects. Firstly, women formed part of the struggle against apartheid and thus shaped the debates and programmes of this struggle. Secondly, women had the space to raise women’s and gender issues, both through separate organisation as women and in the mass democratic movement. So, while women’s activism was integrated within broader mass liberation struggles, there was also a specific focus on women’s struggles and gender issues. Women were organised in women’s organisations under the banner of the mass democratic movement. Thirdly, and perhaps most significantly, the vibrancy of gender struggles in that period can partly be attributed to the fact that women were not merely organised in wings of political parties. The space that this allowed women for open and critical thinking and independent mobilisation was extremely significant.44

The following quotation from one of our interviews clearly illustrates the significance of women organising as women:

“The fact that women thought it necessary to organise as women meant that they recognised that their interests and needs were different from those of men, and that while their objectives were overall for liberation there were clearly very specific aspects of life that they felt that they needed to organise around. The kinds of issues that they focused on were not simply about women’s limited role but more about the fundamental importance of reproduction in society.” (Sheila Meintjes, Interview).

The struggle against women’s oppression and gender inequality is indeed a fundamental one. In taking up this struggle effectively with working class women at the centre, we challenge patriarchy, racism and capitalism. Core to these struggles are the ways in which reproduction and production are organised and in which class and gender interests? This remains central to our struggles today, and we have much inspiration and learning to draw from women’s activism and struggles in our history.

Orr is a Senior Researcher at NALEDI

COSATU and NALEDI are currently initiating a project on Women’s Activism in COSATU’s History. The purpose of the project is to reflect upon women’s activism and to capture the stories of particular experiences of women activists in the history of COSATU up to and including the present. We intend to document these experiences in order to have these untold stories available now and for future generations, as well as to draw lessons and inspire activism amongst women workers in the present.

The objectives of the project include the following:

- To further document the rich history of women’s activism in COSATU
- To highlight common experiences, challenges and strategies faced by women activists (at leadership and workplace level) in trade unions in the past and present
- To develop a clearer understanding of what enabled women in the past to overcome barriers to activism and leadership in order to help to develop new strategies in the present
- To look at what inspired women’s activism in the past and what can inspire women’s activism in the present
- To develop theories and practices around ways of encouraging women’s activism and organisation
- To include a focus on particular challenges and issues around young women’s activism
- To involve women trade unionists in conducting the research and interviews in order to build capacity and enrich the research process

During the project period we also intend to hold public events and seminars to popularise the project and to deepen the educational impact and input whilst the project is in progress. Later this year COSATU will host a public seminar on Women’s activism in COSATU’s history: Inspiring activism today. We will be establishing a project team including COSATU staff, NALEDI and former COSATU activists. For further information, please contact Liesl Orr of NALEDI liesl@naledi.org.za, and Gertrude Mtsweni of COSATU gertrude@cosatu.org.za.

Women must stand firm in fighting for gender equality in the workplace

Writes Nokubongwa Mdlalose

When Joe Slovo talks about the working youth in his paper “role and place of the youth in society, the ANC and the struggle” he asserts that the “working youth forms the most consistent and reliable section of the revolutionary movement and when they join the struggle of the working class, they fight their own cause, and grow and become stronger in the struggle.” Prior democracy, in South Africa, women youth was not part of this militant and reliable working youth that Slovo talks about. Women were confined to the farms and the white madam’s kitchen.

The system deprived young women to work and moreover as the result of the young women’s inability to enter the workplace as her male peers, the result of this is that the young women could not form part of this militant working group that Slovo talks of. The young women were then deprived of a political belonging or rather deprived of her activist right. This not only led to a minimal participation of young women but also led to the creation of a crisis that we still find ourselves in. This crisis is that women still find themselves estranged in the workplace; the workplace remains a terrain which is alienating to us.

The struggles of young women should not be over-emphasized, as they but a section of the exploited laborers as every worker at a workplace is. It would be narrow to see the struggles and subjective experience of young women in the workplace as a carbon copy of the of her male youth peers. We, as young women at work, bear all sorts of chains that bind us, the chains that bind every worker to capital and the chains that are often forgotten throughout the year are remembered in August as it is this month that sees the national women’s day. Memories are then triggered and even we as the young women workers are in delusion and think there is an honest understanding of our struggles, the celebrations of women’s month and awareness are sometimes a shallow political correctness stance. As a young woman at work I not only face frustrations from being exploited by capital but I am also faced with the fact that I work with men who care less about my views and opinions and more about the short skirt that I wear. This is not to say that it is all men who behave in this manner. The argument here is that men’s consciousness in our society is a product of apartheid capitalist conditions that informed them that a woman stays in Emahlathini, ubaba uza Ezimojini, Epaqho lesezubeno. Some young women already have a child or two at the time they enter the labour market. In fact, this reality is also part of the reasons driving women’s strive to access the labour market. Access to the labour market market is not a smooth ride for most women, especially the young and those with childcare responsibilities. This is one of the factors that lead to the commodification of the self whereby young women enter into relationships with much older men i.e. “the sugar-daddy” relations/transactional sex.

A conversation I once shared with a female shopsteward has significant lessons to teach about how far we as women still need to travel before reaching the Promised Land. I met this vibrant shopsteward in a Naledi workshop and she happened to be the only woman present in that gathering. The reason for this, as she explained, are that she is the other women in her local are simply not active. As I probed further, I discovered that this is because many women continue to reel under the pressure of domestic work, childcare and other responsibilities that patriarchy unfortunately bestows on them. This, as I discovered, reinforces women’s inability to fully make a mark in the politics of work. Under these circumstances, it shouldn’t come as a surprise that male dominance and women subordination is still the order of the day in the workplace. It is also easy to become fatalistic when one is faced with such a reality. But, the Nietzsche’s words that “a fighting man is a freeman” (I hope he means human being), are instructive is instructive. This therefore means that our struggles as women who are active and are trying to build an environment at work that sees us perform to our full potential, not having to watch over our backs and not having to be constantly frustrated by the unfair working conditions are already free, we are free from the restricting thoughts, we are free to fully analyze the situation at hand and say we cannot be part of this, this means that a certain chain is already broken. But there are many more other binding chains that still need to be broken.

Our struggles are also struggles of ordinary workers and cannot be looked at in isolation. This is because we all work for cruel capital that alienates all of us against each other, so we all see our struggles as unrelated and overly unique due to this alienation. With that said we as young working women who know that are our struggles don’t end here and that are informed by class consciousness would like to wish all the women in our country an active and good women’s month. August the 9th is an important day for the women of the country, on this day in 1956 about 20 000 women marched to the Union Buildings in Tshwane to present a petition to the oppressor of that era Prime Minister JG Strijdom protesting against the extension of the pass laws to African women.

Women’s month day should be a reminder to women, that the political terrain doesn’t only belong to the men and that the unity of women is crucial to women’s emancipation. Women must never forget the struggles of the women who led the 1956 march, and draw inspiration from their braveness and militancy. Our journey must definitely go beyond the Union Buildings and plant the seeds beyond the Union Buildings and plant the seeds for new society where women acquire full citizenship and equal rights...Allongwe igama lamakhosikazi.

Mdlalose is an Assistant Researcher at NALEDI.
Profiles of some women Communists

This article focuses only on some women comrades who were active in the Party over the years. This is not a representative sample... Comrades in the SACP are encouraged to continue to write the stories of our women comrades so we can continually celebrate them and their lives. In honour of all of these comrades we must reaffirm, as the SACP celebrates its 90th anniversary in 2011, that Socialism is the Future!

Sheila Barsel

Comrade Dora Tamana was born in 1901 in Hlobo, Transkei. Her childhood centred around the many tasks demanded of a young girl growing up in rural South Africa. When she was 20, her father and two uncles were among the 163 people shot dead by the police in Bulhoek massacre. She moved to Queenstown where she tried to make a living collecting thatching in the hills and selling it in the location. She moved to Cape Town in 1930 and lived in the shanty area, Blouvlei, near Retreat. She helped organise a branch of the ANC. During the war she helped build the Women’s Food Committees forcing the authorities to bring food into areas at controlled prices. She joined the Party in 1942, and with other women Party members organized the first ever crèche for African and Coloured children. She helped organise the anti-pass campaign, school feeding schemes for African children and the 1952 Defiance Campaign. When the Rivonia comrades were imprisoned in 1964, Cde Dora organised accommodation for the relatives who were visiting them on the Island. She also organised food parcels for comrades on the Island on their birthdays and at Christmas. In 1978 she helped establish the United Women's Association, a forerunner to the United Women's Organisation. Cde Dora died in 1983.

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Comrade Ray Alexander became active in the Latvian Communist Party at the age of 13. She arrived in South Africa in November 1929 and five days later joined the CPSA at the age of 16. In the same year she lost her first job for taking part in an anti-pass campaign. She was the Secretary of the CPSA in 1934 and 1935 and recruited many women. Although she worked with many different trades she was well-known for her activities in the Food and Canning Workers Union (FCWU) which was founded in 1941 and through Cde Ray’s organising spread throughout the Boland and up the West Coast in the fishing industry. She was exiled in Zambia where she continued the whole spectrum of her political work. She returned in early 1990 and continued with the full spectrum of her political work within the liberation movement. She remains honoured for her contributions to the Communist Party, ANC, FEDSAW, Unions, SWAPO and New Women’s Movement. She received the ANC’s highest honour Isithwalandwe. Cde Ray died in 2004.

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Comrade Sarah Carneson is in her nineties and is still as active as she is able to be in the Fred Carneson branch. Cde Sarah’s parents (Rubin) were founding members of the SACP and she joined the YCL in 1931. She joined the SACP in 1934 and taught workers to read and write at the SACP’s night school. In 1938 she started working at the National Union of Distributive Workers and was secretary of the Tobacco Workers’ Union. She was banned in 1954 and so could not continue...
working in the Union movement. In 1960 she went underground. In 1967 she was imprisoned for a breach of her banning order and went into exile in 1968 where she continued to work in the union movement returning in the early 90’s. On her return she continued activities within the Party being a founder member of the Wynberg (later Fred Carneson Branch).

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Comrade Sonia Bunting joined the Communist Party at 20 and gave up her university studies to work full time for the Party. After the banning of the CPSA she joined the “Guardian” newspaper and became secretary of the Cape Town Peace Council. In 1951 she attended the World Youth Congress as a member of a South African delegation lead by Cde Ahmed Kathrada. She spoke at the Congress of the People in Kliptown. In 1956 she was arrested and charged with high treason. She was held in prison for two weeks and was finally acquitted at Treason Trial with 91 others in October 1958. In 1959 she was banned from attending meetings and had to resign from 26 organisations. After the Sharpeville massacre she was detained for 3½ months at Pretoria Central and in 1962 both she and her husband Brian were placed under house arrest. She continued her work for the SACP in exile, running its office in London for 20 years. Sonia was the organizer of the World Campaign for the Release of South African Political Prisoners. After returning to Cape Town she continued her political work until her death in 2001.

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Comrade Esther Barsel was born in Latvia and came to South Africa as a young woman. Her entry to the CPSA was through the YCL. She also became involved in the establishment of the Congress of Democrats. After its banning, Cde Esther continued to be active in the underground. She was detained in July 1964. Together with others, she was charged with having furthered the aims of the SACP. They were accused of seeking to “establish despotic government based on the dictatorship of the proletariat.” In April 1965 Cde Esther was sentenced to 3 years imprisonment in Barberton Prison for Women. Cde Esther remained active in the Party having been co-opted onto the Central Committee between 2002 and 2007 as a veteran and was particularly supportive of the re-establishment of the YCL. She remained active in the ANC and her commitment to socialism translated into her being active in many community organizations in Yeoville, including the local Community Policing Forum, and to caring for abandoned babies in Nazareth House.

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Comrade Josie Mpama (struggle name Josie Palmer) was born in Potchefstroom in 1903. In the 1920s she joined the CPSA and soon became the branch secretary in Potchefstroom and was active in the 1928 campaign against residential permits. For 20 years she wrote for Umsebenzi. In the 1940s she became a member of the Johannesburg Committee becoming the first black woman to play a significant role in the CPSA. She worked with the National Anti-Pass Council and after working in a number of women’s organizations, became the President of the Transvaal branch of FEDSAW, which was instrumental in organizing the 1956 women’s march. She did not participate in the march as she was served with banning orders just before it. In 1960 Cde Josie was detained under the State of Emergency.

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Comrade Lizzy Abrahams was one of 8 children and was born in Paarl. Lizzy’s mother worked in a fruit factory and her father was first a brickmaker and then worked in a wood factory. When her parents fell ill she was forced to work fulltime in a factory in Paarl and was soon elected to the Food and Canning Workers Union that was organized by comrades such as Ray Alexander. Cde Lizzy started off in the floor committee but was soon on the branch executive and then became treasurer of the union. When the General Secretary of the Union was banned Cde Lizzy became acting General Secretary and was later elected to that position. She was banned in 1955 under the Suppression of Communism Act for 5 years but continued with her work underground. After the banning order she continued to work for the union – half days. She continued to be active in many organizations and women’s handwork coops. After she retired Cde Lizzy continued to help FAWU (the Food and Allied Workers Union) to organise farm workers in the Noorder Paarl and Pniel branches. When the liberation movement was unbanned in 1990 Cde Lizzy, with others, started the ANC branch in Paarl and she was elected as chair. She was also chair of the ANC Women’s League in Paarl, a member of the Communist Party and involved in the civics. Cde Lizzy died in 2008. 

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Comrade Elizabeth Mafikeng (known as Cde Rocky) was born in 1918 in Tarkastad but moved to Paarl in 1927 to seek work. In 1935 she started working in a canning factory where she peeled fruit for 75 cents a week. Elizabeth’s active political life started towards the end of 1941, when she joined the Food and Canning Workers’ union. She became a shop steward committee member. Between 1954 and 1959 she served as president of the African Food and Canning Workers’ Union (AFCWU) and branch secretary in Paarl. She worked there until the Pass Laws were introduced and became politically active to fight the injustice of these laws. She was active in ANC Women’s League and FEDSAW in the 1940s. She was active in SACTU 1957 “Pound a Day” campaign. She served as president of the SA Food and Canning Workers Union and was Paarl Branch Secretary of the Food Workers Union. In 1955, Cde Rocky was chosen by the union to represent them in a Congress organised by the Tobacco Hotel Industries in Sofia. She was treated with brutality by the police on her return. After attempts to deport her to a remote area in the Northern Cape, she went into exile in Lesotho. After the unbanning of political parties like the ANC, Cde Rocky returned to Cape Town in 1991 and the FAWU built a house for her in the Mbekweni township in Paarl. Cde Rocky died in 2009.
Comrade Betty Radford was a little known Party comrade who was arrested in 4 August 1946 together with, among others, Cdes WH Andrews and Moses Kotane. She was the editor of the Guardian newspaper from 1937 – 1948 and solicited and edited or wrote each article, and composed a weekly column. She laid out the newspaper and managed the staff. Cde Betty gave the best years of her life to the newspaper – without her the newspaper might not have survived. Libel action was taken against the newspaper for publishing extracts from the Africa Mineworkers’ Union’s evidence to the Landown Commission. Cde Betty served on the Central Executive Committee of the Union and managed the staff. Cde Betty gave a weekly column. She laid out the newspaper, edited or wrote each article, and composed a weekly column.

The parents of Comrade Ruth First were founder members of the CPSA. Cde Ruth studied at Wits University and her fellow students included Cdes Nelson Mandela, Eduardo Mondlane (first leader of FRE-LIMO), Ismael Meer (first secretary general of the South African Indian Congress). She served as Secretary to the YCL and for a short while was secretary to the Johannesburg branch of the CPSA. She was editor of the Guardian and specialised in exposé reporting and wrote about the 1946 mineworker’s strike, women’s anti-pass campaign, migrant labour, bus boycotts. Cde Ruth was a Marxist with a wide internationalist perspective and travelled to China, the USSR and countries in Africa. She was active in the debates within the Johannesburg Discussion Club which led to the formation of the underground SACP and to closer links between the SACP and the ANC. Cde Ruth helped form the Congress of Democrats (the white wing of the Congress Alliance), and was on the drafting committee of the Freedom Charter, but was unable to attend the Congress of the People due to a banning order. She went to Swaziland during the State of Emergency, following the Sharpeville shooting but returned to edit New Age (successor to the Guardian). She went into exile in the early 1960s. She continued to be a prolific writer and was appointed professor and research director for the Centre for Africa Studies to the Eduardo Mondlane University in Maputo. She was killed by a letter bomb sent by the South African police on 17 August 1982.

Comrade Shantie Naidoo was involved in organising school boycotts. In 1960 she joined the ANC and worked as office manager for the Congress of Democrats. In 1963 when the COD was banned she became office manager for SACTU. She was involved in providing assistance to political detainees. She was banned in 1963 and had to leave SACTU and began working for Vanguard Bookellers. The banning order was renewed in 1968 and 1969. She was detained under the Terrorism Act and kept in solitary confinement for a year. During this time she refused to give evidence against Winnie Mandela and Joyce Sekukane. She was released in 1970, and in 1972, at the end of her second banning order she left the country on an exit permit. In exile she worked for Soviet Weekly.

Comrade Jean Middleton was part of the group in 1964 charged with furthering the aims of the SACP. Many of those charged, including Cde Esther Barsel had been held under the 90-day detention law and were subjected to ill treatment. In April 1965, after the group had been in custody for nearly a year, the fifteen were sentenced to terms of imprisonment ranging from one to five years. Banned on her release, she fled to England, where she became active in the Anti-Apartheid Movement and eventually went to work for Sechaba, the African National Congress’s journal. She returned to South Africa after the unbanning of the movement, but returned to England. Cde Jean edited the African Communist and Umsebenzi after the unbanning of the SACP. Cde Jean died in 2010.

Comrade Eleanor Kassrils joined the Congress of Democrats in 1960 in the aftermath of the Sharpeville massacre. That year she became involved in ANC underground activities. She joined the SACP in 1962. In the early 1960s, guided by Cde Billy Nair, she organised shop workers for Sactu (South African Congress of Trade Unions), and mobilised solidarity support for striking African nurses at King George Hospital. Cde Eleanor became one of the first volunteers in the newly launched people’s army, MK. It included Cdes Bruno Mtololo, Billy Nair and Ronnie Kasrils. She was detained in 1963. She subsequently escaped over the fence into the British Protectorate, where they were granted political asylum. In 1964, Cde Eleanor arrived in London to seek treatment for malaria. She continued to live in London, working as assistant to the ANC president, Oliver Tambo, and also secretly recruited and trained cadres for deployment into the underground. Her specialties were disguise and covert communication. She was also involved in Operation Vula. In 2000, Cde Eleanor received amnesty from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for bombing the Durban security police offices, stealing dynamite, destroying electricity pylons, illegally crossing the Botswana border and escaping from police custody. Cde Eleanor died in 2010.

Comrade Ncumisa Kondlo was a rising star in the leadership of the liberation movement until her untimely death in March 2008. Her passion to liberate the poor was deeply inspired by her upbringing in the rural village of Pedi in the Eastern Cape. She joined the South Africa Youth Congress and was elected to its NEC in 1989. At Fort Hare University she was active in AZASO and later SANSOC. At Rhodes University, she became an activist within the labour, civic and women’s movements. Cde Ncumisa was a member of the NEC and NWC of the ANC, and Chairperson of the ANC Caucus in Parliament. She was elected SACP National Deputy Chairperson at the 2007 Congress. Cde Ncumisa will be remembered for her bravery, courage and forthrightness.

Barsel is SACP’s Politburo member

This article was sourced from Umsebenzi 90th Anniversary Edition - July 2011
Student bodies in South Africa have slammed the recent visit of 27 Israeli students to South Africa. The Israeli students arrived at OR Tambo airport in Johannesburg on 11 August 2011, where South African student bodies were planning to stage a picket to show their disapproval of the visit.

The Israeli student mission is geared towards galvanising support for Israel and to improve its tarnished image in South Africa, especially amongst university academics and students.

The Israeli students’ tour to South Africa comes in the wake of the decision by UJ Senate, with the full support of the Student Representative Council, to cut ties with Ben Gurion University in Israel.

This visit is targeting the University of Johannesburg, Wits University, the University of Pretoria and University of Cape Town. The South African Students’ Congress (SASCO) called on students in universities across the country, particularly the targeted campuses to boycott events organised by the group.

“We declare that all SA campuses must be Apartheid-Israel free zones,” said Mbuyiseni Ndlozi, an anti-apartheid Israel activist from Wits University.

“As South African students, we know that the campaigns by students and activists across the world played an important role in dismantling the South African apartheid regime” said Themba Masondo, Chairperson of SASCO Gauteng. He added that “SASCO rejects the Israeli Apartheid regime and its illegal military occupation of Palestine. We remain highly committed to the protection of human rights of the Palestinian people and reiterate our unwavering solidarity in the struggle for national liberation in Palestine.”

This sentiment is also shared by the national structure of SASCO. Lazola Ndamase, SASCO’s General Secretary added that “Palestinians live in the same if not worse conditions that black South Africans were subjected to under white minority rule. Palestinian children are denied the joys of youth. Generations and generations of Palestinians grow up in refugee camps with limited access to healthcare, education, and under constant threat from Israeli aggression.”

He said that SASCO’s support for the Palestinian struggle derives from the “belief that Israel is an apartheid state that daily tramples on the rights and dignity of Palestinians. Israel is also a United States proxy that enjoys the protection of this imperialist power in exchange for its destructive, oppressive and exploitative role in the Middle East region.”

As a demonstration of their disdain for apartheid Israel, Gauteng branches of SASCO, the Palestine Solidarity Committee and the South African Union of Students organised a picket at the OR Tambo International Airport to send a clear message to the “apartheid agents” who were due for arrival on the 11th August. Police presence at the airport was very high on the day that the picket was scheduled. The students were disappointed when the scheduled flight off loaded with the Israeli students nowhere to be found.

Students strongly believe that as a result of increased mobilisation against apartheid Israel, the South African government might have given some special protection to the group.

SASCO says that the fact that there was so much police presence is also an indicator of the strides the boycott movement has made in South Africa.

The Israeli students’ tour is allegedly funded by the Israeli government and the delegation includes two Israel parliament aides.

Palestinian student and youth formations point out that the tour seemingly found no difficulty fundraising for this tour because “entire political establishment in Israel is attempting similar methods of ‘re-branding’ Israel away from a regime that has done nothing but expand occupation and ethnically cleanse Palestinians for the last 63 years.”

This tour, which is geared towards “creating doubts in their [South Africans] minds,” will also be extended to other countries such as Canada and the United States.
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**LAND REDISTRIBUTION**

Thabo Manyathi makes a case for radical land redistribution and agrarian reform that privileges ecological harmony, poverty eradication, food security and rural infrastructure development. Manyathi concludes that the sanctity of private property is an enemy to fair and redistributive land reform.

### Historical basis for land reform and rural change

The land dispossession from Africans by colonial and later apartheid regimes was accompanied by violence, force and fundamental reorganisation of the rural countryside to meet the accumulation interests of both mining, industrial and later on agrarian white bourgeoisie class.

Land dispossession therefore were used to achieve social, political and economic subjugation of the majority by the few. Later on, the consequences of such dispossession and social engineering were implemented by creation of the rural reserves known as Bantustans. These reserves were to serve as a recruiting ground for cheap migrant labour and more importantly to subsidise the apartheid social wage.

### The Freedom Charter

The 1955 Freedom Charter was a recognition of the extent to which land dispossession had subjugated African people and in the process eradicated and systematically destroyed African agriculture and emerging African peasants. “The land shall be shared amongst those who work it”; “the state shall support farmers with seeds and implements” – says the Freedom Charter. This clause represents an analysis and understanding of the centrality of land for agrarian change. The Charter envisaged the centrality of the state over markets in ensuring redress and agrarian change because dispossession was led by the state on its behalf but also on behalf of key mining and industrial interest.

### Key features of the current land reform programme

South African land reform consist of three main aspects namely, tenure reform which affects those living on commercial farms and those residing on communal and traditional authority areas with no tenure security. Secondly, the land restitution which is mainly about redressing the dispossession which took place as a result of 1913 Land Act and many other acts. Redress includes land restoration or monetary compensation. The third leg which is often neglected is redistribution of land for both farming and residential purposes. While all these three features have limited redistributive aspects within themselves, land redistribution has the capacity to really effect fundamental and radical change.

### Redistribution for agrarian change

In the last quarter-century, profound socio-economic and political changes have been underway in the countryside. These changes happened across Africa, Asia and Latin America under the authority of Structural Adjustment Programmes. These changes have resulted into human catastrophes which have largely affected rural populations in particular the peasantry.

What we have also seen is that these various trajectories have diverged and that capitalism has subordinated agriculture to its logic globally hence the domination of industrial agriculture and the subsequent eradication of the sovereignty of the decolonised state. In this way, the agrarian question is still related to the national question. Closer to home, it is generally accepted that about 70% of the poor live in rural areas and a majority of those are found in former apartheid reserves. Moreover, South African agriculture is dualistic in nature, comprising of large scale commercial sector dominated by whites on privately owned land and existing alongside small scale subsistence agriculture dominated by blacks on communally held land. Missing in the debate about land reform and redistribution is the connection between agriculture, rural development and land reform and how this relationship continues to shape the present space in the countryside. The narrow focus on land reform without looking at the totality of the agrarian structure leads to reformism to say the least. The continued failure to locate land redistribution within the agrarian question will only serve to reproduce the many failures we have seen in the last seventeen years of experimenting with land reform. In dealing with land redistribution, we have to engage the bigger question related to the kinds of production to be promoted, structural changes we want to see in the production, settlement patterns and markets. In the context of ever growing food insecurity, do we pursue large scale commercial agriculture or do we breakdown the system to bring in small producers at the level of family farming fulfilling and ensuring home based food security and also providing for local markets? In the last seventeen years, there has been a bias towards large scale commercial agriculture at the expense of small producers. The current redistribution model has failed because it has sought to impose large scale commercial production models as a panacea for agriculture and rural development. In the process, labour and small producers...
have been displaced from the rural economy. Thousands of farm workers have lost their jobs due to mechanisation and farming units have decreased due to overconcentration of farm ownership. Land redistribution therefore has to deal with the totality of the agrarian question which encompasses land reform, labour, agriculture and rural development. The absence of a strong rural development programme has undercut what would have been the positive impact of land reform, most of the beneficiaries of land redistribution have been dumped in areas where there is no infrastructure like road networks to support their subsistence and small scale farming.

Nationalisation to achieve what ends?

Land nationalisation has been presented as alternative to facilitate land redistribution. Indeed state ownership can lead to decentralised small holder agrarian structure to effect food security and transformation of power relations in the process. However as we all know state is contested by many interests and at the moment, agrarian white capital has captured the state and therefore nationalisation of land could result into concentration of land amongst the elite and could feed into large scale industrial agriculture. So we have to first deal with the nature of the agrarian question we seek to promote and in dealing with that we have to look at the nature of agriculture. Do we want to promote industrial and chemical based agriculture founded on genetically modified organisms which continue to destroy agronomy and ecology through chemical inputs or do we want to promote organic and traditional forms of agriculture which nurtures and respects the soil and is based mainly on family farming or small producers? Although, nationalisation constitutes an act of radicalism, it can result in negative consequences if it is in the interest of agrarian capital to the exclusion of small scale production based on sound agro ecology. Also it is important to note that nationalisation had been used to balance class forces during the Cold War. In its quest to counter the influence of communism in East Asia, the US unleashed a set of agrarian reforms which included massive land redistribution and the destruction of feudal relations but the ultimate result was a neo-colonial effect. In other parts of the world nationalisation has led to destruction of small scale producers and proliferation of large scale oligarchy. Therefore, nationalisation must not be considered outside of these fundamental questions and issues because it can serve different purposes for different classes within society and fundamentally it is based on the nature of state and its bias to certain classes in society. Nationalisation of land should lead to a just and equitable agrarian transformation which will transform power relations in the countryside and ensure food security. Nationalisation of land should be about advancing to a particular agrarian structural change.

Balancing private property and public interest

Private ownership is a fundamental obstacle to fair and redistributive land reform to achieve poverty eradication and ensuring food security. How then do we balance these two competing interests; namely the right to private property and the public interest of ensuring land redistribution?

It was anticipated long ago that entrenching private property could become an obstacle to land redistribution in particular and other measures of advancing equality in our society can be constrained by enshrining private property within the constitution. Judge Didcott observed as far back as 1998 that “What a bill of rights cannot afford to do here is to protect private property with such zeal that it entrenches privilege. A major problem that any future South African government is bound to face will be the burden of poverty, of its alleviation and the need for the country’s wealth to be shared more equitably…..

Should a bill of rights obstruct the government of the day when that direction is taken, should it make the urgent task of social or economic reform impossible or difficult, we shall have on our hands a crisis of the first order endangering the bill of rights as a whole and the survival of constitutional government itself (quoted in Chaskalson 1993:73-74).

However, Section 25 of our constitution and the bill of rights states as follows:

(2) property may be expropriated only in terms of law of general application-

(a) For a public purpose or in the public interest and

(b) Subject to compensation, the amount of which and the time and manner of payment of which have either been agreed to by those affected or decided or approved by court

(3) The amount of the compensation and the time and manner of payment must be just and equitable, reflecting an equitable balance between the public interest and the interests of those affected, having regard to all relevant circumstances, including:

(a) the current use of the property

(b) the history of acquisition and use of property

(c) the market value of property

(4) for the purpose of this section—

(a) the public interest includes the nation’s commitment to land reform, and to reforms to bring about equitable access to all South Africa’s natural resources.

Therefore state can expropriate land if it is in the public interest especially in fulfilling its commitment to land reform and other remedial measures for social and economic development or advancement. The key fundamental political question is why has the ANC government not taken full advantage of this provision? The answer is simple; our government has not fully taken advantage of this provision simply because they are worried about the perception of international investors. This lack of political will has resulted in the slow pace of land reform and rural people being excluded from receiving education, health, water and other basic services because government cannot provide these services on privately owned land although it is in the public interest to do so. The culprit in this scenario is the government and not the landowners. On the issue of compensation, the constitution is clear that it should be based on market rates. Presently, farm owners are abusing the system by demanding exorbitant fees for most of the lands which are often barren and have less productive potential. So the government has become culprits with such farmers by not stamping its authority. As a result land reform has become a rescue programme for failing white farmers. In principle to deal with the question of historical theft, compensation (tokens) based on improvements and investments on the land should be considered.

Manyathi is the rural land citizenship Rights Program Director at the Association for Rural Advancement (AFRA)
COSATU joined forces with the community on a clean up campaign at Makhaza Settlement in the Western Cape. Makhaza is one of post-apartheid South Africa’s festering sores - reflecting neo-liberalism’s incapacity to provide decent housing, sanitation, water and other basic services.
The Creative Workers Union of South Africa (CWUSA) is not like any other COSATU affiliate. It operates in a very vulnerable environment. For instance, workers in the creative arts have no defined workplace in terms of the Labour Relation Act.

Artists perform anywhere in the country; they shoot films or television production across the length and breadth of the country, and even the globe. As a result, artists find themselves exploited by big producers who wield a lot of power in the industry. Workers in the entertainment sector are often faced with arrogant and exploitative industry moguls. Any attempt by workers to voice out their demands often comes at a huge cost. For examples, when our members refuse to sign contracts that discriminate or negatively impact on their economic rights, they are sidelined and “blacklisted” in the industry. Artists find themselves unemployed for many weeks, months and even years. Our members who are active in union activities are always overlooked for jobs. The major struggle for this industry is that too many government leaders and officials still consider the entertainment a hobby and not an element of the economy which can generate thousands of jobs. A good illustration is the Indian film industry which contributes billions of US dollars to the Indian economy and creates thousands of jobs for the local artists. The challenges that face the creative arts industry popularly referred to as entertainment industry are many, but few are worth mentioning.

The first problem is that there is only a small market for the industry. Demonstrating this fact is that the South African entertainment industry is limited to a few broadcasters in the form of the SABC, E-TV, M-Net, and very small Community Televisions – Cape TV and Soweto TV. Secondly, the South African film sector is very small when compared to the USA’s and China’s. It produces less than ten movies per year and most of them end up in film festivals. For instance, this year’s film festival in Durban saw the showcasing of 55 films, many of which will never make it to the big screen and will end up collecting dust somewhere. These movies do not generate income for their investors.

Thirdly, our members do not enjoy the benefits of being permanently employed. Most of them are contract workers or independent contractors and if they challenge their contracts, they get fired easily. The recent dispute between Tony Kgoroge and M-Net’s The Wild series is a case in point. The Department of Labour does not know how to define artists in terms of the Basic Condition of Employment Act. Artists are not classified as employees, yet they work under someone supervision for a specific period. Artists do not benefit from UIF and provident funds. There is no social security for them, yet they are also taxpayers.

Related to this is that the protection of artists’ interests is supposed to be located in the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC), yet other departments are involved. For example, the Copyright Act is enforced by the Department of Trade and Industry. It is the Department of Home Affairs that permits international artists to perform in the country. This creates challenges for artists as there is no direct responsibility by one department. Artists have to negotiate their interests or concerns through many different departments which may have less interest or no mandate or focus in arts. But unfortunately there is no integrated approach to the challenges facing artists in this country. As CWUSA we have proposed that the Minister of Arts and Culture facilitates the establishment of a clustered approach to these pressing issues.
The revival of cinemas in townships can create thousands of jobs and generate sustainable income for the production of local films in our indigenous languages.

To complicate matters further, at a provincial level the entertainment is divided into two. In the first instance, the film section belongs to the Departments of Economy Affairs – hence Gauteng Film Commission, Durban Film Commission, etc. Secondly, theatre, craft, fine arts, dance, etc, belong to the Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture departments. This division creates uneven distribution of resources. The addition of sport at this provincial level disadvantages Arts and Culture since many MECs love soccer and sports in general and thus channel most of their funds to sport at the expense of the arts.

As CWUSA, we propose the following remedies to revive and develop the entertainment industry in the country.

Firstly, we need an inter-ministerial committee that will consist of representatives from all the departments which have interest in the arts. The Committee will accelerate progress in solving all the concerns or problems facing artists.

Secondly, artists should also benefit from the country’s social security net. CWUSA has already established a trust to look at the social security matters for artists. We are now at an advanced stage of discussions with the Department of Arts Culture to consider on this issue.

Thirdly, there must be a revival of township and rural cinema. In the 1970/80s, we used to have cinemas in townships, such as Eyethu, Daveyton Theatre, Dobsonville Cinema, etc. These cinemas were neglected during the 1990s and today most of the premises where these cinemas were located are occupied by churches. The revival of cinemas in the townships can create thousands of jobs and generate sustainable income for the production of local films in our indigenous languages. This will also create a market for local film producers who are often overlooked by Western owned cinema chains like Sterkinekor or Nu Metro.

Finally, there is a need for an urgent Indigenous Languages Indaba for Advancement (ILIFA). This is a summit whereby our African languages are developed and promoted.

CWUSA will not wait for independent producers to create work for artists. We are organizing programmes in partnership with SABC to develop and produce historical dramas such as King Sekhukhune 1, King Dinizulu, King Sandile, King Mosheoshe. A combination of all these initiatives can help transform the creative arts industry into a job creation industry that also allows us as South African to tell our own stories.

Gamede is CWUSA’s Education Manager
The Congress of South African Trade Unions on behalf of its more than 2 million members sends its congratulatory messages and best wishes to the South African Communist Party as it reaches a new milestone today as it celebrates its 90th birthday.

COSATU and the Party of the Working Class are, have always been, and will always remain, staunch allies, fighting together, shoulder-to-shoulder and hand-in-hand in the trenches, to make reality of our shared vision.

Throughout the forty underground years, the SACP forged strong links with the African National Congress and the SA Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), which laid the foundations for the tripartite alliance which remains as strong as ever today, with SACTU’s successor, COSATU.

Anniversaries are always a time for taking stock of the advances we have made and the setbacks we have faced in the struggle against national, gender and class oppression. How far have we travelled on the path that was set 90 years ago, and how much further do we still have to travel?

Despite much progress since 1994, for which SACP leaders like Moses Kotane, Moses Mabhida, Joe Slovo and Chris Hani must be given a lot of credit, 90 years after the establishment of the Communist Party, we are still a long way from achieving all the goals the SACP has set for itself.

The struggle against capitalism and for an equitable and democratic socialist society is as necessary as at any time in those 90 years. We still live in a nation with appalling levels of unemployment and poverty and are the most unequal society in the world.

Despite much progress by successive ANC governments, millions of poor South Africans lack the basic necessities of a civilised society – decent education and healthcare, proper houses, running water and sanitation and affordable public transport.

The Party, as the vanguard of the working class, must lead us in the fight to transform the lives of the workers and the poor and to challenge the narrow and selfish interests of the rich big business elite. As the SACP marches to its centenary, it must give resolute leadership to the struggle for better living conditions in the townships, rural areas and informal settlements and better wages and conditions for the workers. The Party should build on the legacy of the likes of Dora Tamana who led struggles against the threats of resettlement emanating from the apartheid government. The vigour and commitment of comrades like Matthew Goniwe, a communist and a grassroots organiser par excellence, should inspire the Party in leading working class struggles in workplaces, communities and many other areas.

This 90th anniversary must inspire all of us into defending working class gains against a well-orchestrated capitalist offensive. COSATU and the Party must work together, and with our allies the ANC, to intensify the campaign to build a strong developmental state, which will take us ever closer to the socialist South Africa, we want to see.

We will not address all these challenges unless we defeat crime and corruption and the culture of self-enrichment, crass materialism, conspicuous consumption and the abuse of state power for narrow materialistic reasons. The SACP must lead us in the campaign against the new tendency that want to transform our congress movement and public service into a market place for tenders and business opportunities for a few and well connected elites.

We rely on the SACP leading us back to our movement’s core values and principles – selflessness and sacrifice! Together let us end individualism that seeks to place narrow selfish individual interests above the common interests of the many. The source of corruption is the capitalist system itself, which corrupts and tempts public representatives, and encourages the personal accumulation of wealth at the expense of the majority of the people. If we do not unite to eradicate this cancer from our society, corruption will become routine, and far from building socialism we shall be descending into a lawless, immoral world where the pursuit of personal wealth in the only motive force in society.
Community

The lesson that runs through the history of the Party is that the only defence that we have against all forms of bourgeois attacks on the working class is mass power. Only the working class and mass campaigns can defend the party of socialism and its trade union ally from attacks waged on it by the bourgeoisie.

The next ten years must be dedicated to building and reviving mass working class campaigns and waging a relentless struggle against corruption, capitalism and imperialism. COSATU’s recent Central Committee has launched a number of campaigns, which we intend to pursue throughout this year and coming years. Hundreds of thousands of our members are already battling against employers, demanding a living wage and the closure of the apartheid wage gap.

Workers are already marching in the streets demanding a total ban of the labour brokers – those human traffickers who have enslaved millions of workers. Unless an agreement can be reached in Nedlac soon we shall start a mother of all general strikes starting in every province in September and culminating in a general strike on 7 October 2010. The International Day on Decent Work – if the coming COSATU CEC endorses this date or any other dates the CEC will determine.

We are relaunching our campaign against the scourge of corruption and we shall be marching in every street demanding that action be taken against corrupt elements that are hell bent on hijacking our movements for personal gain. We want action taken to ensure that our country has water security and we deal with the threat of rising acid levels in our underground water.

We demand an inquiry on the prices of medicines for personal gain. We want action be taken against corrupt elements that are hell bent on hijacking our movements for personal gain. We want action taken to ensure that our country has water security and we deal with the threat of rising acid levels in our underground water.

We are opposed to the commercialisation of our roads and reject the introduction of tollgates in Gauteng and other elitist projects such as Gautrain or the much talked about fast train between Durban to Johannesburg when many workers take up to an hour travelling between their homes and their workplaces.

Lastly and most importantly we demand decent work for the underemployed and the 7 million army of the unemployed workers. We, together with you our vanguard, must scale up our demand for the restructuring of the economy to end the domination of white monopoly capital and the mining/finance complex, and end its export orientation so that it can be placed on a new developmental path underpinned by an active industrial strategy capable of absorbing the millions who are unemployed.

Let us rally together to protect women and young workers across the economy from being exploited by unscrupulous employers in the retail, hospitality and service industries.

Let us battle together to end the historic super exploitation of farm workers and sea-going workers. Let us organise the migrant workers into our ranks and end their super exploitation. Let us battle together against xenophobia and unite all workers to stand in solidarity with one another irrespective of their narrow differences that are used to divide and rule them. Let us together demand a better deal for the taxi drivers and all other vulnerable workers in the economy.

Let us together campaign to change the ethos of the public sector worker so that they see themselves not just as employees but as revolutionaries who appreciate that they must play a different role if our commitment to build a better life is to be realised.

For we know that it is through winning of all these demands that we can make a gi-
As we mark the 90 years of struggle of the Communist Party in South Africa a question arises: How should communists remember our own history? The answer to that question is, of course, as communists – or, which comes to the same thing, as Marxist-Leninists. But what exactly does that mean? One way (a non-communist way) of remembering our history would be to recount it as a succession of great leaders. As the SACP, we can certainly be proud of our many outstanding leaders, stretching back over nine decades of struggle – from the early pioneers of communism in South Africa (and indeed in Africa) like Comrades David Iven Jones, SP Bunting, TW Thibedi, Eddie Roux, Edwin Mofutsanyana and Josie Mpama, through the years of consolidation and mass building associated with Comrade Moses Kotane and JB Marks, into the more recent decades of armed struggle, organs of popular power and underground work, and finally through to the democratic breakthrough of 1994 and beyond. We should cherish the memory of our many outstanding cadres. But our Party’s history is richer and more complex than a litany of leaders.

We could remember our history as a simple narrative of humble beginnings, then decades of intense persecution, followed by a breakthrough of 1994 and beyond. We should arrive. If we bear all of this in mind, then we will not be in denial about it, but to analyse why we had suffered the defeat and what the party has certainly earned the respect of a wide range of South Africans, especially the workers and the poor, because our cadres have been prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice. And while we have every right to be proud of our martyrs, the fact that we have suffered persecution does not create any entitlements for us in the present. We have to earn our vanguard role on a daily basis in struggle and through the clarity of our analyses and programmatic lines of march. More importantly, the idea that history in general (and our own in particular) is a simple narrative moving from lowly birth, through suffering and hardship, to ultimate victory is a vulgarization of what is absolutely central to Marxist-Leninism.

Remember what the Communist Manifesto says: history is the history of class struggle. The moment you say “class struggle” you are starting to remember that history does not march in a straight line. We are not playing solo. What is especially problematic about thinking of history as a process is that it can become demobilizing. We can start to believe that the outcome of history is foretold – that socialism is guaranteed by the mere passing of the years. This evolutionary manner of thinking about history is very different from a Leninist understanding of the importance of active engagement, of seizing the moment. And “seizing the moment” doesn’t always mean hurtling into an adventurist offensive – seizing the moment might require making a decisive retreat (as Lenin recognized, for instance, in 1918). A decisive retreat can be turned into a longer term victory (that’s the story of the Chinese Communist Party’s Long March). And history doesn’t always move from its most advanced point, which is why Lenin could call for an offensive on the weakest link in the imperialist chain (Russia and not the much more developed Germany). If we approach our own SACP history with these matters in mind, then we will also learn some valuable lessons from that history for the present.

Through its 90 years of struggle, the Communist Party has done great things AND made mistakes. The point, as Lenin puts it, is not to expect never to make mistakes but to LEARN collectively from them and above all, to correct them as quickly as possible. An organization of activism requires engagement, even when not everything is clear-cut, even if victory is not guaranteed. This is the difference between a serious communist party and an ivory tower debate, who occasionally dip their toes into the struggle. An organization that is complacent, that is holier-than-thou, that believes that history is “on its side” is an organization that will also fail to admit to mistakes, and that will fall into denial and immobility when hard times arrive. If we bear all of this in mind, then we will also be better able to appreciate some of the more outstanding contributions our Party has made to the overall struggle in South Africa.

Often those outstanding contributions were when history “failed” to march in a straight line. In the mid-1960s, for instance, our entire movement suffered a serious strategic defeat and the apartheid regime had every reason to believe that it had finally and forever crushed the ANC-led liberation struggle. It was the SACP that played a true vanguard role in helping the entire movement to understand that there had, indeed, been a serious defeat. The point was not to be in denial about it, but to analyse why we had suffered the defeat and what the way forward was.

Again, with the collapse of the Soviet bloc in the late 1980s and early 90s, many in our movement who had believed that world history was neatly on our side went into denial. Some pretended they had never been communists or admirers of the Soviet system. They fell into opportunism – “socialism is dead, so let’s embrace capitalism”. Once again, it was the SACP that played a vanguard role in helping the entire movement to understand that there had, indeed, been a serious defeat.

Jeremy Cronin

Cronin is the SACP Deputy General Secretary. This is an extract from Cronin’s talk at the SACP’s 90th Anniversary Commemoration in Manguang on 16 July.
Organised Labour Prepares for Climate Change Conference in South Africa, Durban

Aisha Bahadur

The United Nations Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is to hold its 17th Conference of the Parties (COP17) in Durban, South Africa from 28 November to 9 December 2011. This is a government negotiations space where there is limited room for engagement by civil society. However, civil society and organised labour is working hard to raise awareness on climate change issues and ensure that their voices are heard not only at COP 17 but at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012.

The 2012 conference is known as Rio+20, as it is to take place 20 years after the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio where the concept of sustainable development was adopted by governments for the first time and which launched key political processes on sustainable development like the COP climate negotiations.

The Madrid Climate Dialogue, an international union leaders meeting with the UN Panel on Sustainability in April this year, called for decisive and ambitious climate action in the lead-up to the Durban climate summit at the end of this year, and the “RIO+20” meeting in 2012. “The current economic model is heading us towards more crises, unemployment and environmental degradation,” said Zwelizima Vavi, General Secretary of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), “If we are serious about addressing the vulnerability of poor workers and communities, RIO+20 needs to shift from piecemeal commitments and deliver a universal social protection floor which will ensure dignified livelihoods for all. The climate negotiations in Durban must support this effort through the protection of the poorest from a climate perspective: with ambition in terms of emission reductions and climate finance.”

One of the main issues concerning labour is that changes towards sustainable consumption and production patterns can bring opportunities for decent and green jobs and better livelihoods but there also exists a real threat to jobs in sectors that would need to be transformed to lower their carbon footprint.

In addressing climate change, the International Metalworkers Federation (IMF) has stood with other global federations and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) to advocate, among other things, a “just transition” seeking protection for workers in sectors that would be negatively affected. Workers and communities affected need adequate social protection and access to new opportunities. In addition, “just transition” will require active labour market policies, income protection, retraining, awareness and capacity building for employers and trade unions, and investments at the local level in order to diversify the economy and create alternative income opportunities. At last year’s climate change negotiations, COP 16 held in Cancun Mexico, organised labour successfully lobbied for the inclusion of the concept of “just transition” setting an important precedent that has already had positive impact for the inclusion of worker related issues in subsequent negotiations, policy papers and programme development.

Earlier this year the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) produced a report “Towards a Green Economy: Pathways to Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication” which defines global challenges on climate change and promotes decision making that will bring about a greener future. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) collaborated in the development of the report to strengthen the analysis of the implications on the labour market of setting and achieving environmental goals.

In a background note on the report, the ILO states “The structural transformation brings along changes in employment patterns and skills requirements, along with new business opportunities and the need for responsible management practices. It may also cause the contraction of sectors and enterprises which are incompatible with long term sustainable development. The management of this change needs to be fair and must ensure sufficient protection and access to alternative for those negatively affected.” The ILO states the need for a “just transition” framework to ensure decent work remains central in the construction of a fairer, greener and more sustainable globalisation.

Organised labour is working hard to incorporate worker issues in global efforts on sustainable development. At the end of March 2011, a trade union delegation met with South African President Jacob Zuma. Included in the delegation were ITUC General Secretary, Sharan Burrow and President Sudumo Dlamini and General Secretary Zwelinzima Vavi of COSATU. In the meeting, labour representatives requested President Zuma to use South Africa’s position in COP 17, UN High-Level Panel on Global Sustainability and the G20 to ensure that issues affecting workers are part of the agenda in the three forums. Issues of concern that were discussed included job creation, social protection, unemployment, health insurance, education, green jobs, green economy, sanitation as well as housing.
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South Africa
SACTWU – Clothing and Textile Blasts Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan

The South African Clothing and Textile Workers’ Union (SACTWU) took a swipe at Minister of Finance for suggestion that labour market flexibility is a requisite for job creation. Gordhan reportedly used the current situation in Newcastle as an example, saying a balance needs to be found to retain jobs at clothing factories in Newcastle, while still allowing workers to earn a reasonable wage and keeping the factories open.

SACTWU says that this suggestion is out of sync with the reality in many sectors of the economy. “The Minister seems not to have taken into account the extensive wage and employment flexibility that already exists in the clothing sector.”

As evidence of this, Andre Kriel (SACTWU General Secretary) pointed out that “SACTWU has agreed to a flexible wage structure for the (clothing and textile) sector, where the minimum wage for some workers is significantly lower than that in other parts of the country. In fact, there are at least 13 different legally prescribed starting rates for machinists, based on geographic differences. The lowest legally prescribed wage is in areas like Newcastle. There is no ‘one size fits all.’ In some areas like New Castle, minimum wages range between R150 to R280 per week. Kriel urged Gordhan to rather focus on what Sactwu considers one of the main problems causing job losses in the clothing sector – customs fraud. The SA Revenue Services (SARS), which falls under the Minister’s department, can do much, much more to combat under-invoicing, transhipment, smuggling and other types of fraud. For a few years now, SARS has tried to deal with this problem but we are yet to see the fruits of its labour. We urge Minister Gordhan to make decisive interventions to deal with this matter. If he does this, it would be one of the most useful interventions to stabilise and grow employment in the clothing sector,” said Kriel.

NEHAWU condemns the intimidation of the working class in Malawi

The National Education Health and Allied Workers’ Union expressed concern about the repression of the working class in Malawi. Malawi has seen protests against government corruption, increasing prices of fuel and food and the general deterioration of living standards.

The Malaiwan government has responded to these protests with the might of force and is allegedly using allegedly Zimbabwean mercenaries to crush the public uprising. Some of the ways that the working class in Malawi has expressed its discontent is through protests and demonstrations as well as various means of defiance such as stay-aways go-slow, walking to work, wearing red clothing. NEHAWU has called on the South African working class and all progressive internationalists to offer support and solidarity to the working class of Malawi and put pressure on the government of that country to implement meaningful changes. “Malawians, like all citizens of the world have a right to freedom of assembly and of expression without fearing for their lives and those of their families.”
The South African Transport & Allied Workers Union (SATAWU) and six other unions embarked on a strike on the 8th August 2011. The strike was a result of the employers failing to accede to the workers’ modest demands for a basic salary to R4 200, a 13th cheque equivalent to a month’s salary and 40 hours of work per week amongst other things.

The conditions of workers in the cleaning sector are amongst the most pathetic. Workers are not allowed any financial benefits, except for an annual stipend equivalent to one week’s pay. The sector is also characterised by physical and verbal abuse. There are other occupational hazards caused by working with strong cleaning chemicals, which may result in medical conditions like asthma.

“This is a slave-wage industry,” says SATAWU, “and our members are justified in calling for an improved offer from the employers. If we are serious about bridging the apartheid wage gap.

The South African Municipal Workers’ Union (SAMWU) embarks on a strike from the 15 August 2011. The strike came as a result of the union rejecting the paltry 6% offer made to workers by the employer body, SALGA. SAMWU’s wage demand was 18% of R2000.

In the water sector, the employer association, SAAWU, indicated that it is not in a position to improve its earlier offer of 4,6% and cannot respond to the union’s demands on housing, overtime, tool allowance, 6 months maternity leave and the phasing out of a total-cost-to-company remuneration structure in the industry.

In support of the strike action, COSATU urged all its affiliates and the South African public to support the union. It stated that although workers at local government are responsible for providing South Africans with essential services, they still suffer terrible working conditions and earn meagre wages.

COSATU added that “South Africa is plagued with issues of old inter-racial inequalities, and new intra-racial and gender inequalities. A living wage is one of the instruments which can facilitate and control income redistribution and reduce income inequality.”
The National Union of Metal Workers of South Africa has welcomed the release of the National Health Insurance (NHI) scheme Green Paper by the Minister of Health Dr Aaron Motsoaledi on behalf of Cabinet.

NUMSA said that the release of the NHI Green Paper is a reflection that the Zuma led administration is implementing the ANC's policies as adopted by its watershed 2007 National Conference held in Polokwane. The union added that this is a welcome break with the past, wherein unelected bureaucrats and Harvard scholars had a stranglehold and monopoly over the crafting of ANC policies, often to the detriment of the ANC's alliance partners (SACP and COSATU) and the working class in general.

According to NUMSA, the NHI is a significant commitment to move away from the untransformed and unequal health-care system inherited from the old apartheid system, and which is driven by greedy, market embedded profiteers. “This Green Paper provides a unique opportunity for the people of South Africa, particularly the workers and the poor to engage decisively on the kind of health-care we need as a country, as envisaged by the Freedom Charter. The Freedom Charter ambiguously says "a preventive health scheme shall be run by the state; and free medical care and hospitalisation shall be provided for all, with special care for mothers and young children." The Green Paper takes us to the realisation of this clause of the Freedom Charter as adopted by the real Congress of the People" says NUMSA.

The union pointed out that despite its praise for the NHI, there are certain areas that require tweaking. This includes the proposed introduction of a “multi-payer” system, under which private medical health schemes will be allowed to charge the government for a proportion of the treatment they deliver to their "clients". COSATU was the first to take exception to this principle and many other organisations have since followed suit. The “smuggling” of the “multi-payer” system into the Green Paper, “threatens to undermine the whole basis of the NHI and allow the discredited private medical schemes to continue to rip off their South Africans and parasitically benefit from the tax subsidisation from South Africans.

Communication Workers’ Union has welcomed the reports by the South African Post Office (Sapo) which make a commitment to investigate the entity’s top executive management. The union considers this a step in the right direction in combating corruption within the entity. CWU raised concerns that the SAPO Board Chairperson, Ms Vuyo Mahlati, may seek to defend some within the executive management. The Communication Workers Union (CWU) welcomes the reports by to probe top executive management. We view this as a step towards the right direction taken by the SAPO board Chairperson, Ms Vuyo Mahlati in dealing with corruption in the company. However, we are not happy in the manner that Sapo board Chairperson want to defend some within the top executive managers. Amongst those under investigation are the entity’s CEO Motswanesi Lefoka and Chief Operating Officer (COO), John Wentzel. The CWU has raised the corruption issue with the entity’s top management and the Public Protector on numerous occasions, including in its 2009 strike memorandum against brokers. According to the union, corruption within the entity is ‘evident through poor quality and sustainable jobs that they are exposed to in general, obscene salary increases, outsourcing and the utilisation of labour brokers.”
SACTWU PAYS TRIBUTE TO WOMEN

NATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Produced by SACTWU; 330 Victoria Road, Salt River, Cape Town / Artwork: Sulaiman Jacobs
IN INTERNATIONAL

SWAZILAND BAILOUT

The decision by the South African government to grant the Kingdom of Swaziland a loan of R2.4-billion without stringent conditions deserves criticism argues Khaye Nkwanyana.

In fact, it is a lost opportunity by South Africa to act as saviours and rescue Swazis from the only remaining absolute monarch in Africa.

One of the causes of the economic collapse in Swaziland is the political suppression that the monarch inherited from his father, and continues, through the Tinkundla decree of 1973.

The volatility of the political terrain in Swaziland - as displayed through mass demonstrations led by banned political parties and trade unions; massive detentions of freedom fighters and state-sponsored assassinations - requires a country like South Africa to facilitate political change. If we let things unfold for themselves, as in Zimbabwe, we will bear the brunt of a Swazi influx into South Africa at huge cost. Our minister of finance cites as factors of the fiscal crisis in Swaziland the decline by 60% of revenue from the Southern African Custom Union, the delay in adjusting spending to the new environment, and the lack of fiscal and broader public-sector reforms. But these factors point to the absence of effective political leadership and governance. It is this that our government shies away from for fear of political meddling.

If there is any advice to give now it would be to review the terms under which the loan has been granted. The conditions are too vague and will effect no structural change in that country, thereby surrendering, as we have always done, the people of Swaziland to the brutal hands of a dictator who finances his lifestyle through the national fiscus.

The conditions should include:

- A road map towards the unbanning of political parties;
- A timeframe for democratic elections, starting with the drafting of a constitution for a new democratic state;
- A technical team to study the institutional governance required for service delivery and management of the country;
- Redefinition of the role of the king as a ceremonial leader outside of government; and
- Details of the terms of repayment of the loan.

Without these conditions we are complicit in Mswati’s sordid actions against his people.
A Revolution of Great Achievements: Cuba and the July 26 Movement

Zwelinzima Vavi takes stock of the achievements of the Cuban revolution, Cuba’s contribution to the struggle against colonialism and apartheid in the continent and calls for the release of the Cuban Five imprisoned in US jails.

The Cuban revolution has inspired generations and different eras of revolutions across the globe. Our own struggle against apartheid has the name Cuba written all over it. Our own victory against the mighty apartheid regime can be traced to the 1987/8 battle of Cuito Cuanavale. The Cuban people struggled and toiled with us, side by side. Through their example and experience, we have learnt the true meaning of internationalism and humanism.

The history of Cuba is the history of a proud people, of resistance, profound socio-economic achievements and outstanding internationalism, driven by the desire to change the world in the interests of all humanity. In the Cuban people, the oppressed, anywhere in the world, have a trustworthy friend and ally, that seek no glory, no narrow material gain, but a total commitment to liberate the human race from oppression.

This was well captured by former South African Ambassador to Cuba, currently Ambassador to Italy, Comrade Thenjiwe Mntintso, in December 2005 when she said: “Today, South Africa has many newly found friends. Yesterday these friends referred to our leaders and our combatants as terrorists and hounded us from their countries while supporting apartheid... these very friends today want us to denounce and isolate Cuba. Our answer is very simple: It is the blood of Cuban martyrs... and not of these friends... that run deep in the African soil and nurture the tree of freedom in our country”.

The 26th July movement earned its name from the attack by the revolutionary forces of Cuba on the Moncada army barracks in Santiago de Cuba on 26th July 1953. The movement was re-organised in Mexico in 1955 by exiled revolutionaries, including Fidel and his brother Raul Castro and that very special son of the world and internationalist par excellence who was born in the Argentina, Ernesto Che Guevara.

They constituted it as a very disciplined guerrilla force to overthrow the oppressive and surrogate of US imperialism in the form of the Batista regime. On 2nd December 1956 a group of 82 men landed in Cuba, in the Granma, from Veracruz, ready to lead the revolution. They suffered heavy casualties. Of the 82 on Granma, only 12 eventually regrouped in the Sierra Maestra Mountains, where they again faced the Batista army. This was the beginning of the Cuban revolution, which continued for the next two years, until January 1959 when Batista fled Cuba on New Year’s Eve as the revolutionary forces marched into Havana.

The 26th July movement became the nucleus of the present Communist Party of Cuba, after several reconfigurations. At one stage it became the United Party of the Cuban Socialist Revolution, until it became the Communist Party of Cuba in 1965. It was then that the US moved in to attack the revolution directly. The flag of the 26th July movement is still on the shoulder of the Cuban military uniform, and continues to be a symbol of the Cuban revolution.

The Cuban revolution followed in the great footprints of a rich tradition of anti-imperialist resistance which has bequeathed a lasting legacy. In the words of Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa Delgado on 8th January 2009 at the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the entry of Fidel Castro into Havana, “This marvellous people, the Cuban people, a heroic people, has taught the world that revolution has a destiny!”
The history of Cuba offers such inspirational examples that we could count them for the whole day, explaining how a tiny, not naturally well endowed island, surrounded by a giant of global imperialism, the US, could make such giant strides. It still contributes massively to the liberation and improvement of the lives of millions the world over, through practical acts of solidarity, training of doctors from poor countries and all the possible material and human support they can offer.

When the Moncada garrison was assaulted, the life expectancy rate was only 59 years and today it is 78 years. South Africa's is estimated to be 48 or none of them is Cuban’.

The case of the Cuban Five exposes US imperialism’s desperate attempts to destroy the Cuban revolution. Gerardo Hernandez, Antonio Guerrero, Ramon Labanino, Fernando Gonzalez and Rene Gonzalez were convicted in Miami of conspiracy to commit espionage and other acts in the US. They were in the US to observe and infiltrate counter-revolutionary Cuban-American groups.

The five comrades appealed their convictions, backed by international criticism of lack of fairness in their trial. A three-judge panel of the 11th US circuit court of Appeals in Atlanta overturned their convictions in 2005, citing the pre-

Why is it that, even our own media here in South Africa, does not expose our people to the great achievements of the Cuban revolution and other such experiences that demonstrate the availability of alternatives to capitalism and the tyranny of the market?

52 years (depending on the report one reads) and Swaziland’s 33 years.

On 1st January 1961 Cuba launched the Literacy Campaign and on 22nd December the same year, Cuba was declared an illiteracy-free country. Cuba has increased by more than eleven-fold the number of doctors, from 6, 286 in 1958 to 72, 416 in 2007, one for every 155 inhabitants. In South Africa we have one doctor for every 2000 inhabitants on average, but in the public sector one doctor serves up to 6000 patients because 70% of doctors are working for the private sector.

Cuba has the highest number of doctors per capita in the world, which has benefited the whole of Latin America and the developing world in general. Cuba has also proudly proclaimed that ‘of the millions of children in the world who die annually from malnutrition, judices of Miami’s anti-Castro Cubans, but the full bench later reversed the bid for a new trial and reinstated the original convictions. In 2009 the US Supreme court refused to review the case. Successive US administrations have worked consistently to overthrow the mighty Cuban revolution, desperately spreading misinformation about the revolution and its achievements in an attempt to restore the rule of capital. Research institutions, that seek to provide a rationale for invading and undermining the Cuban people’s revolution, are spread all over the world, concentrated in the US, the epicentre of anti-Cuban destabilisation.

On 2nd January 1961, the USA unilaterally broke off diplomatic relations with Cuba, citing the proclamation of the socialist nature of the revolution as the reason. This laid the basis for the constant aggression that has characterised the US’s relationship with Cuba.

In 1961 John F. Kennedy launched the Bay of Pigs invasion into Cuba, which began with the bombardments of 15th April 1961. According to Gramma International, “the Bay of Pigs invasion involved a young and promising CIA Official, who took care of recruiting the majority of the mercenaries enlisted in Florida and subsequently transferred to Central America for training and their subsequent departure for Cuba. That young official, who later became the Director of the CIA and later still, was President of the US - George W. Bush.”

Fidel’s outstanding foresight was to be proven when he ordered that the invasion was to be liquidated in 72 hours, because if that were not to be done, the beachhead of counter-revolution would be consolidated, creating favourable possibilities for the puppet government, already formed and headed by Miro Cardona, waiting in a US military base in Florida.

Failure to defeat the revolution led to the US influencing the puppet Organisation of American States to expel Cuba, in January, 1962. All Latin American countries, with the exception of Mexico, broke off diplomatic ties. The Organisation of American States said that Cuba’s system is “incompatible with its democratic system”. At that time however most of the regimes were run by corrupt despots who were mere puppets of Washington.

Another massive invasion was planned for 1962, but it could not take place thanks to the Soviet nuclear rockets in Cuba. This was confirmed by declassified US secret documents.

This was just one of many efforts to destabilise the Cuban revolution. Luis Posada was a US-sponsored terrorist whom the US government refused to hand over to Cuba and Venezuela for his crimes in bombing airplanes and killing innocent people on behalf of the US.

The tendency of the US to establish well resourced stations to focus on particular countries resulted in one CIA centre in Florida directing activities against Cuba, starting with Bay of Pigs and then Operation Mongoose. It grew to have about 179 armed counter-revolutionary
bands of different sizes operating all over Cuba. One by one the Cuban leadership dealt with them until they were all defeated. Amongst the most cynical examples of the US’s desperation to destroy the revolution was its formation of the Coordination of United Revolutionary Organisations, managed by the CIA to unify all the terrorist groups funded by the US to sabotage the Cuban economy and its people.

It also committed serious acts of aggression, including the sabotage of a Cuban civilian aircraft resulting in the deaths of 73 innocent people by Luis Posada Carriles. On 10th October 1959 a twin-engine aircraft machine-gunned the streets of Havana, causing massive deaths and injuries, while on the 22nd, a passenger train in Las Vegas province was attacked by another plane.

According to Jean-Guy Allard, “as early as December, 1959 Colonel J.C. King, then CIA Chief of hemispheric affairs, in a secret memo to the agency’s director, Allen Dulles, specifically recommended the elimination of Fidel Castro.”

Addressing the youth at the University of Havana on 17th November 2005, Fidel Castro said: “this country can destroy itself; this revolution can destroy itself; those that cannot destroy it are the enemies; it is us who can destroy it, and that would be our fault”.

Building the global campaign to free the Cuban Five is of utmost importance for all revolutionaries.

Cuba stands out as a beacon of hope for humanity in a world of growing inequalities, savagery and capitalist crisis. Its health system in the midst of economic difficulties still afford its people the most decent health care and services compared to countries with far bigger GDPs.

Its achievements are deliberately kept out of the media, so as to hide from millions of working people the world over, these great successes of a revolution which has inspired millions into action against injustice, inequality and the destruction of our environment for narrow profit interests.

It has kept alive, during the most difficult days, the hope of an alternative to the rule of capital. As we struggle, we face daily the overwhelming propaganda of the bourgeoisie that says there is no hope. We know however that hidden somewhere far from the big cameras of commercial media are the great achievements humanity has made in Cuba’s struggle for equality, justice and dignity for all. Why is it that, even our own media here in South Africa, does not expose our people to the great achievements of the Cuban revolution and other such experiences that demonstrate the availability of alternatives to capitalism and the tyranny of the market?

We call on every one of us to do more to expose the facts about Cuba and the jailed heroes in the US. These are our comrades and they have refused to sacrifice their country’s interests for their immediate personal comforts. They are exemplary revolutionaries. Some are not even allowed to see their wives and families, further pointing to the inhumane system of the US security establishment.

Our message to the people of South Africa and the globe about Cuba must ring clear:
- The Cuban Five cadres must be released now, or at least be granted fair hearing
- The right of Cuba to defend itself must be sacrosanct
- The US embargo against Cuba and on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Cuba must cease immediately
- The people of Cuba and any other country must be free to choose their own path of development, free from neo-liberalism and the savagery of the market
- All media must expose the people to the great achievements of the Cuban and other successful revolutions all over the world

We hope that the legendary victories of the 26th July movement will continue to inspire millions in the world who seek a new world governed by peace, friendship and equality.
The whole world watches with a great sense of sorrow and empathy at the stark scenes of Somalia’s people dying every day, and the children bearing the brunt of dehydration and death. Mothers stampede over others to the food aid provided by the South African Gift of the Givers. This is social misery that invites tears from a distant view in a country that is down to its knees.

Whereas we continue to loudly mobilize for humanitarian assistance in warding off this famine gripping the country, it is important that the African Union, neighbouring states such as Ethiopia and Kenya and the Regional bloc begin to attend to the issue of this near collapsed state and weak government running the country. The current famine (which is commonplace in that country since the advent of civil war) will continue to pay visit, periodically, so long as deeper political problems are left to their devices.

The history of Somalia is an unfortunate one; it is like a country cursed before its very birth. Located in the horn of Africa and neighboured by Ethiopia, Djibouti and Kenya, Somalia is a classic example of how imperialist powers came to usurp Africa and African states for their own ends even using it as a terrain of testing their military strength against each other, at a great cost to the inhabitants and the country’s fabric. Before World War II, Somalia had been a protectorate of both Britain and Italy with the North belonging to the English and the South to Italians. Battles of total control between imperialist powers were the order of the day in Somalia. With the geo-political considerations during the World War Mussolini [Italian President] became less concerned about his stranglehold in Somalia than strengthening his Italian position in the war. The British Empire won the full control of Somalia during this time but did not drive out Italians.

The first indigenous political party was formed in 1945, the Somali Youth League [SYL]. The politics of national question and independence started from this time. In 1948 the Victorious Allied Nations took a decision to grant Ogaden [one key Region] to Ethiopia. It is this decision that set the two countries on a collision course that was to define the political relations between the two countries for decades to come.

In 1960 Somalia got independence. The unification of the country had to be achieved through attempts to overcome the colonial pedigree that had defined the texture of that society. For instance, both the North and South were historically and respectively Britain and Italian controlled regions, both had their own currency. Colonialists had artificially and arbitrarily partitioned the country into regions according to serve their own interests.

The first President, Muhammad Egal, was assassinated by the Police and this sparked a political crisis resulting in the Military taking power. The bloodless coup led by Commander of the Army, Mohamed Siad Barre, opened a new chapter of a military Junta under his leadership as President. As a result of Ethiopia and Kenya being backed by the West, Somali looked east; it was close to the Russia and China and Siad Barre sought to infuse Marxism and the Qur’an as a special socialist ideology of Somalia. Of course the Soviet Union could not countenance this cacophony confluence of socialism with religion but Barre saw fit for Somalia. Under Barre’s leadership autocracy and personality cult took root (he was address as a “Siad Barre Guuwhaaade” [the victorious leader]; clan based dominance of government especially the Marehan, Ogaden, Dulbahante clans began to cause anxiety. The over dominance of these tribes [despite open official condemnation of tribalism and regionalism] pitted them against other

**Somalia:**

A Confluence of Colonial Pedigree, Tribal Politics and Civil War

Khaye Nkwanyana outlines Somalia’s history of civil strife and how it has influenced the current situation in this famine and poverty stricken nation.
clans such as the Isaaq, Doarood, Rahaweyn, Majeerleen, Hawiye and Digil clans. They felt isolated. 1976 marked the end of Military junta government as Somalia was pressured by USSR to form a Communist Party to run government as opposed to the military military.

With the fall of Haile Sellasie in Ethiopia, Somalia declared war against Ethiopia targeting the Ogaden Ethiopian garrison and took control militarily of the Ogaden territory. Russia, after analysing prison and took control militarily of the Ogaden territory. Russia, after analysing the geo-political situation and the desire for more influence in the region, switched loyalty to Ethiopia. Soviet Union committed to support Ethiopia against Somalia on condition that they denounce the US and West as their ally. Ethiopia claimed back Ogaden region with Russia and her allies Cuba, North Korea and Peoples Republic of Yemen supporting Ethiopia. Somalia conceded defeat, Siad Barre and Mengistu Haile Mariam [Ethiopian President] in 1988 entered into agreement to withdraw troops against each other in the contested territory of Ogaden. The war had devastating effects in terms of poverty and famine on both countries.

[USC]. These anti government rebellious initiatives ascended to the crescendo of social upheavals. In 1988 all these measures against a government that was, in return, fighting back and quelling dissatisfaction became a full scale civil war that took until 1991 to resolve, when the regime was toppled. Mohamed Siad Berre himself retreated to his clan the Marehan and mobilized them as a clan in the civil war and became one of its warlords. About fifteen warring sectional groups were in war against each other.

Under such circumstances, again, famine was unavoidable as crops got destroyed in the process of war. After this phase many Regions declared secession to Somali, the first being north Western Region which declared its independence. It is dominated by Isaaq Clan. In 1998, North Eastern region went for secession naming herself Puntland. In the same year Jubaland declared her independence and in 1999, which had to be legally confirmed in 2002. South West Somali led by Rohaweyn Resistance Army [RRA] also went for secession.

The UN Security Council resolution 794 in December 1992 authorized peacekeeping mission led by US and to expedite humanitarian efforts [known as UNOSOM II] to the debilitating famine particularly in the Southern Somali. Somalis have been very hostile then to any foreign presence. The reports are that, the pulling out of US in 1995 as a head of UN mission has been through the loss of many soldiers killed by Somalis; Pakistan alone lost about 24 soldiers who were peacekeepers. Many Somali militaries have evolved into being security agencies for hire as mercenaries and related activities.

There are attempts to unify the country to its back self. A transitional federal parliament [TFP] and transitional federal government [TFG] are in place. In 2004, the transitional federal parliament elected Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed [the former President of Puntland] as a transitional federal government President. This is an internationally recognised government but domestically its support has always been undermined by a group called Islamic Courts Union [ICU] which opposes the unification. Ethiopia backed by US intervened militarily to drive out this group centred in Mogadishu and this to a greater degree, solidified legitimacy of the federal government to the populace. But this relative peace was not to last. The ICU splintered and formed various groups under new names; the main and the most radical of these groups is Al Shabaab which has continued with unleashing insurgent activities against the federal government and rejects any presence of Ethiopians. Since 2007/8, Al Shabaab has been on the war path fighting and claiming important towns and ports in central Somalia. They have driven Ethiopian peace keeping forces out of Somalia, leaving the ill-equipped African Union peace keepers. The other group is Hizbul Islam which can best be described as a group having a side-show battle with Al Shabaab for control of the country.

Because of these material realities that are both historical and conjunctural, the current transitional government in Somalia has neither resources to advance peace and national unity on the basis of federal imperatives nor does it have the political strength to rein over the terrorist insurgents such as Al Shabaab that command resources and making serious headways in claiming important areas of the country. The famine as it is in Somalia will not be surmounted without concerted effort from the African Union and United Nations playing a greater role. The current roadmap to national unity anchored on the foundations of the federal democracy is a step in the right direction. There is also a need to annihilate the Al Shabaab which is a cause for destabilisation insurgent acts against innocent civilians and government. UN is better placed to even trace and fight groups that are sources of its funding from Islamic terrorist groups that are said to be the benefactors to this savaging group.

If there is one lesson to learn from Somalia it is the extent to which the politics of tribalism, regionalism, clanism can bring turmoil and havoc in people’s lives. If the leadership of the day has jaundice eyes to these factors, the consequences will be dire. Clearly the legacy of colonialism lives on in the continent. Colonial boundaries are still a source of attrition and strained relations amongst Africans.

Since her independence, Somalia has had little social and economic prosperity. The massive secessions can also be attributed to these regional economic interests whose genesis are former colonial masters. These regions are dominated by solid definitive clans and the failure to clamp down on tribalism by the government or its promotion has meant that over decades, it has been so institutionalized such that it became a prism through which national imperatives are viewed.

Our responsibility is to build an African Union that will be better resourced, with political teeth and balanced legs to stand firm and give bold leadership to the continent by resolving inter and intra state conflict. Somalia is a fallen state in our continent and indeed we have done little to extricate her from the abyss of civil strife.

Khaye Nkwanyana is the Former Deputy National Secretary of the Young Communist League and is a Regional Secretary of NEHAWU in Harry Gwala.
**The Truth About the London Riots**

**Why People Are Rioting**

The riots that swept large parts of London, Birmingham, Liverpool and Bristol are an explosion of bitterness and rage. This is what happens in a society of deep and growing inequality, where there are great pools of unemployment and poverty, where there is systematic police harassment and racism, and where many young people feel they have no future.

Just as with the student protests last year, it is the “lost generation” created by the Tories who are at the centre of these struggles—although many older people were also involved.

The factors that made them rebel affect millions. The riots are not about “criminality” or “mindless violence.” Political slogans such as “Whose streets, our streets?”, demands for “Justice” and denunciations of the police have featured in all the protests.

The backdrop is the deepening of the capitalist crisis. The anxiety of the market is far more devastating than the supposed anxiety on the streets. The bankers and businessmen, who continue to grab bonuses even as wages are hammered, have enriched themselves more effectively than any looter.

**Police Racism and Brutality**

In Tottenham the flashpoint was the police killing of Mark Duggan—and the lies and callous treatment of his family and friends which followed. This is just the latest episode in a history of racism and police brutality in the area. No police officer has been found guilty of a death in custody in the past 40 years, despite deaths averaging one a week. Earlier this year, thousands marched in south London over the death of reggae artist Smiley Culture, who police accused of stabbing himself while they were in his home. These incidents are the sharp end of police racism. But the harassment of young black and Asian people is a daily feature of life in Britain. Black people are 26 times more likely to be stopped and searched by police than white people.

Already, during these riots, hundreds of people have been arrested. There will be a further clamour from the press and politicians for revenge, and to hand the police even greater powers. We utterly oppose such measures. Far too many rights have been stripped from us already. The scandals in the Murdoch press highlighted the corruption of the Metropolitan Police. Their brutality and racism are clear to millions. The last thing we need is to strengthen their hand.

**The Tory Attacks**

Equally the riots would not have happened without the attacks being launched by the Tory-led government. In Haringey, the London borough that contains Tottenham, 54 people chase every job vacancy. Eight of the 13 youth centres are due to be closed because of the government’s cuts. Last year the government took Education Maintenance Allowance from 630,000 young people and tripled university fees, putting up a great “No entry to education” sign to most. Britain is already less equal than at any time since the 1930s. While many of those who left school last month face a future without hope, the combined fortunes of the 1,000 richest people in Britain rose by £60 billion in 2011 to nearly £400 billion. The £81 billion of cuts decreed by David Cameron’s government will mean hundreds of thousands of job losses, devastated communities and services destroyed.

At some point people pushed to the wall will turn and fight back. That is what is happening now, just as it did during Margaret Thatcher’s reign in the 1980s, the great slump of the 1930s and the great depression of the 1880s—all periods which saw riots in Britain. The riots are also a judgment on the utter failure of Ed Miliband’s Labour Party to offer an alternative to the Tories. All the political parties offer essentially the same recipe, just as now they have no solutions except water cannon, prison sentences and the army on the streets.

**Resistance is the Answer**

Riots are an expression of anger, as Martin Luther King said, they are “the language of the unheard.” But to stop the Tories, more is needed. We need more protests like the huge demonstration on 26 March and the strike by 750,000 workers on 30 June. Such struggles can unite desperate young people and workers who face job cuts, attacks on pensions, huge wage reductions and worse conditions. We call for the TUC, trade unions, and campaign groups to hurl themselves into the fight against the cuts, poverty and racism. We call for building events such as the demonstration against the English Defence League in east London on 3 September, the protest at the Tory conference in Manchester on 2 October, and the coordinated strike by more than a million workers planned for November.

A real solution to the despair that creates riots will need a different sort of society, where the needs of the vast majority, rather than tiny elite, come first.
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Johannesburg, 2000
South Africa
The SABC is 75 years old this year. It has been in the news recently for good and bad reasons. It is South Africa’s most well known brand and has always been hugely influential. But where did it all start? In November 1894, an Indian physicist, Jagadish Chandra Bose, demonstrated radio waves in Calcutta, but he was not interested in patenting his work. In 1893, Nicola Tesla demonstrated radio transmission using spark gap transmission at his lectures. In 1943, the US Supreme Court granted him the patent for radio, overturning Marconi’s radio patent of 1896. In 1899, South African Edward Jennings achieved a record transmission distance of 13km near Port Elizabeth. In the same year a request to the Cape Parliament for research funds was rejected. Minister John Merriman states ‘Life is troublesome enough with ordinary telegrams. With wireless telegraphy it will be unbearable!’ However, in 1902, the world’s first radio legislation was introduced by the Cape Parliament. In 1920, Radio is demonstrated to the public in Cape Town and Johannesburg. Reuters undertakes to provide a bulletin of SA news to be broadcast to ships. On 18 December 1923, SA Railways broadcasted the first South African music concert in Johannesburg. On 1 July 1925, “Station JB” started regular radio broadcasts from the Stutterfords Building, Johannesburg, and 2 months later the Cape Broadcasting Association starts a radio service under studio manager Rene Caprara - later Director-General of the SABC. In 1927, the Government granted sole broadcasting rights to the Schlesinger Organisation which formed the African Broadcasting Corporation, funded by radio licenses and commercials. Financial difficulties resulted in government takeover and formation of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) in 1936, through an Act of Parliament. SABC had strong competition from LM Radio (Mozambique), which started in 1935, and remained the only independent radio station in South Africa, critical of the regime, until it was bought by the SABC in 1970 (following pressure from Portuguese Government), and renamed Radio 5, adding to the then only commercial station, Springbok Radio. The SABC started with English and Afrikaans, and Zulu, Xhosa, Sesotho and Tswana followed later. The SABC granted advertising agencies a commission of 16.5% in 1952. The Advertising Agents Association declined to input on a commercial coding procedure, believing that too few commercials will be broadcast. But by 1965 Springbok Radio had over 10,000 different radio commercials for broadcast. The SABC’s choice of popular music reflected the National Party government’s initial conservatism, with Rock and Roll and other protest music banned from the airwaves, in favour of ‘middle of the road’.

The SABC was a monopoly for many years, tightly controlled by its small core of senior management, mainly members of the Broederbond. It was also officially known as “Suid-Afrikaanse Uitsaai Korporasie (SAUK). In 1966 the SABC established an external service, known as Radio RSA, which broadcast in English, Swahili, French, Portuguese, Dutch and German. It later became Channel Africa. In 1969, the Apartheid Government appointed a Commission of Inquiry into television, announcing that when television is introduced it will be state controlled. Emphasis will be on cultural information and commercial spots will be strictly controlled. On 5 May 1974, Test television broadcasts started and television sets were on sale. On 5 January 1976, SABC started official broadcasts - a mix of American, British and European programmes for 37.5 hours per week, half in English and the other half in Afrikaans, with an investment of R106 million. In 1977, The British actors union, Equity, banned the sale of British television programme material to the SABC. The ban was lifted in 1990. In 1978, TV1 broadcasted its first commercial - for Big T Burgers with the proceeds - R10,000 - going to the Advertising Benevolent Fund (ABF). One of the most popular Radio Stations, Radio Zulu, had a newscaster that prefaced each propaganda item on the news with “Bathi ngithi (they say I must say this)” The SABC operated broadcasting services in Namibia until it was transferred to the South West African Broadcasting Corporation (SWABC) in 1979. This, in turn, became the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) after the country’s independence in 1990. In 1982, TV2 for Nguni speakers (Zulu and Xhosa) and TV3 for Sotho and Tswana speakers was launched by the SABC, operating from the SABC’s old studios in Commissioner street. After three years, the channels were moved to Auckland Park, for reasons the then management and staff still differ on. 1991 saw the introduction of CNN on SABC channels, showing many South Africans a startlingly different perspective on the evils of apartheid for the first time.

Good Morning South Africa relayed CNN’s live coverage of the Gulf War crisis. In 1992, mainly black MWASA members embarked on a prolonged and courageous strike for pay parity, which was granted after protracted negotiations. The SABC played a major role in the transition period to inform first time voters of their rights. In 1996, the SABC and its services were restructured in order to better serve and reflect the fresh democratic society in post-1994 South Africa. The SABC has since been accused of favouring the ruling ANC political party, mostly in the area of news broadcasting. However, it remains the dominant player in the country’s broadcast media. Criticism towards the public broadcaster intensified around 2003-2005, when it was accused of a wide range of shortcomings including self-censorship, lack of objectivity and selective news coverage. Several Board changes and pressure from Civil Society to transform the SABC into a genuine public broadcaster with no possibility of influence from political parties, sees it to its 75th year.
Let’s honour Madiba by being servant leaders

Johannes Motshekga

The 18th of July 2011 marks the birthday celebration of Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, aptly recognized locally and internationally as the father of South African democracy; and one of the foremost icons and legends in the liberation struggle against colonialism and apartheid-induced racial oppression. In honour of this remarkably courageous and visionary leader, the United Nations Organization has boldly accorded this date an international status in universal recognition of Mandela’s distinguished contribution to the struggle for the total attainment and enjoyment of human rights. For the first time in the United Nations’ history, this day will be remembered every year as a day for service to humanity.

Accordingly, every member of the human race is asked, and expected, to voluntarily dedicate some of his/her time on this day towards a good course. This kind of sacrifice is in tandem with the kind of altruism with which Mandela (affectionately known as “Madiba” and “Tata”) – and other illustrious leaders – selflessly sacrificed the best years of his life in prison, such that his eventual release ushered-in an era of hope for all oppressed peoples around the world. This sacrifice of our time on this day should be focused on engendering hope, and uplifting the quality of life of our fellow men (and women and children). On this day, all of us are challenged to reflect on the question: “What has distinguished illustrious leaders from others throughout the world?”

Perhaps the not-so-obvious response to the above question lies in the fact that people of Madiba’s ilk and calibre are Servant Leaders. Guided by unquestionable selflessness and a repertoire of high moral values, such leaders have demonstrated integrity and a superlatively distinguished regard for the purpose of human existence. Even beyond his tenure as the first president of a democratic South Africa, Tata has continued to enjoy deep respect throughout the world, and is a well-regarded political and father figure too many former and current world leaders. The mere mention of his name evokes admiration from people across all walks of life – unconstrained by the psycho-social limitations of race, colour creed, class, or even age!

Contrary to what Mandela has so valiantly and tirelessly fought for, we are now confronted by the haunting spectre of a cadre of leadership – derogatively labelled “tenderpreneurs” or “predatory elite” – that catapults itself into leadership positions, and is driven by greed. This new and unprecedented social phenomenon is mostly fraught with a questionable code of moral conduct. Rather than rising to the occasion and restoring our self-worth and national pride, as well as elevating the lives of the masses to a higher and better level, these pseudo-leaders (and “tenderpreneurs”), especially in our country, have sought their blissful solace in the unrepentant accumulation of wealth for themselves, their partners, friends and relatives. They think the most important things in life are things (such as media attracting extravagance and consumption), rather than ideas and values worth dying for.

I have absolutely nothing against leaders who accumulate wealth through their toil and sweat, but I have everything against accumulation of wealth through corrupt means. In the latter instance, we daily witness endless accounts of scandal-ridden leaders and their manipulation of the organs of state to advance their newly-found sense of political brotherhood and the freedom to loot state resources! Service to the people has become a camouflage and veiled means to ascend the throne of personal and material aggrandizement.

As we celebrate uTata’s distinguished birth day, let us do so with thorough circumspect and dedication, in order that we prepare a desirable legacy of true knowledge, wealth and indelible experiences for our youth and scions of this country. How can each of us ascend the highest podium of humanity, and reach the world stage and ensure that we are counted among the Servant Leaders? Is it too late for the “rainbow nation” to encapsulate and re-enact the unforgettable momentum of the 2010 FIFA World Cup, and make an indelible humanitarian contribution to the post-modern development of society throughout the world? Let us make the first Mandela Day an avant garde victory for all Servant Leaders who are imbued with the highest calling of human service. In the same vein, let us make this day become a reminder to self-centred leaders that history has proved (through Mandela and others) that the masses cannot be hoodwinked forever.

Let us not extinguish Tata’s legacy with excessive consumption. Let us make him and his generation proud, and also show the youth of 1976 that they too fought for a noble cause. Let us embark on an uncompro mising mission to rescue our country from the throes of a moral decay and unbridled materialism. That would be Madiba’s and our country’s best birthday gift to the rest of humanity.

Motshekga National Education and Bargaining Coordinator for DENOSA
Newcastle remains an area of contention in the local clothing industry and indeed in the national consciousness too.

The story of some Newcastle employers’ continued non-compliance with legally prescribed wage rates is being narrated as the actions of brave heroes in a last stand against a brutal trade union and a vicious bargaining council. These “white knights” are, reportedly, taking a noble stance to protect factories and the jobs of their workers and positioning themselves as a vanguard in the fight for employment and against injustice.

This is an appealing tale for some, but in reality this story is an excuse for crude exploitation.

We at the Southern African Clothing and Textile Workers’ Union (Sactwu) recognise the challenges faced by local clothing manufacturers. For this reason, we have repeatedly led, proposed and agreed to solutions to assist them.

For instance, we have agreed to a flexible wage structure for the sector, where the minimum wage for some workers is significantly lower than that in other parts of the country. In fact, there are at least 13 different legally prescribed starting rates for machinists, based on geographic differences. The lowest prescribed wage is in an area such as Newcastle, where a machinist’s starting rate is R416.50 a week. There is no “one size fits all”. Although wage rates in the clothing industry are bitterly low, Sactwu has allowed a concession that employers can pay 70% of these rates as part of a phase-in programme towards full compliance. A few years ago we even agreed to a wage reduction of about 10% for general workers in non-metro areas such as Newcastle to help with job retention. Also we have agreed to wage measures to incentivise productivity and even led pilot projects to increase it. We have campaigned to bring government assistance and incentives to the sector.

These efforts are paying off but, despite this, some Newcastle employers are insisting that workers should be paid a minimum rate of R280 a week. They call this a living wage. Many pay even less. A clothing industry bargaining council survey conducted early last year showed that 41 out of 58 Newcastle clothing companies were paying machinists between R150 and R280 a week.

There are many companies in non-metro areas that comply with wage regulations. There are also many in metro areas, where wages are even higher. These manufacturers show that compliance is both possible and viable. In contrast, there were also many companies where we agreed to wage cuts but that subsequently closed down.

Some Newcastle employers expect us to decrease wages and compete in the world as a low-wage country. This is a short-term and impractical view. If we drop our wages, other countries will respond by dropping theirs further – a vicious downward spiral. Getting trapped in a race to the bottom is not a sustainable option.

The other option, which we support, does not focus only on wages but also includes a long-term, sustainable and human rights-based solution. It requires compliance with our laws, decent work, a focus on improving productivity, modernising work organisation, up-skilling workers, improving quality, diversifying product range and ensuring reliable delivery times. This is already under way but is undermined by the opposition of some Newcastle employers.

They must legally register their organisation and join the negotiating forum that determines which wage rates apply and what industry development measures should be pursued. It does not help to scream from the sidelines.

Andre Kriel is the general secretary of Sactwu. This article appeared in the Mail & Guardian, 12 August 2011.

Andre Kriel contests the entire notion of “rigidity” of the South African labour market. Using evidence gathered from the clothing and textile sector, he argues that our labour market is in fact too elastic.
The substitution of programmes and working-class struggles with the obsession with being a party of leadership deployments and patronage is a suicidal route.

Some SACP members are making a mistake in their quest to defend General Secretary Blade Nzimande’s quenching of his government thirst, as he is now a minister. The defence put forward, so narrowly, is that the SACP had adopted the Medium Term Vision and this vision had articulated the need for the party to occupy all centres of power.

During Thabo Mbeki’s presidency, Nzimande was not tantalised by government deployment, nor was he pushing for himself as a communist to be included in government as a realisation of this vision. Communists who have been in Nelson Mandela and Mbeki’s governments have been there on their own right, as leaders in the ANC, not as SACP leaders.

Nzimande, during the 11th Congress of the SACP, in 2002, purged all Central Committee members who had been ministers on the guise they had been too close to government views.

Good communists, such as Jeff Radebe, Essop Pahad and others, had suffered untold humiliation, which had been mobilised by comrade Nzimande.

The Medium Term Vision does not over-emphasise government over other centres of power, such as civil society structures, institutions of knowledge production, the economy, the workplace and many more.

Nor does it say deploy communists to power, including the general secretary. We are in a dilemma of a party that is weak, thriving on gossip and rumour-mongering and caught up in self-righteousness, which is not connected to the working class.

The substitution of programmes and working-class struggles with the obsession with being a party of leadership deployments and patronage is a suicidal route.

The trade union federation Cosatu is today viewed with a sense of hatred because it has dared to portray Nzimande as the untouchable.

The future will tell us who was right.

**HAVE YOUR SAY!**

Write to us and tell us which features, stories, poems or issues you liked most in this edition. You can also send your comments, letters or suggestions to the Editor:

phindi@cosatu.org.za or write to us

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Has black consciousness literature reached its demise?
The question of whether or not we still have Black Consciousness literature with radical and clear content in the democratic dispensation is an important one that begs for thorough and critical analysis. The question must be viewed in both its historical and present context.

However, to dissect this question we must first understand what Black Consciousness is. The main objective of Black Consciousness Movement was to conscientise the oppressed people through a policy of challenging the dialectic of apartheid South Africa. It sought to liberate the minds of Black people from systematic oppression by radically challenging the prevailing antagonisms between the Black race and the settler White minority. BCM was instrumental in the role of mobilising and organising Black people, particularly the youth, into a coherent and relentless campaign that directly opposed the system. It found guidance in the revolutionary philosophical theory of Black Consciousness and the ideology of African Socialism. During the era of social and political unrest in South Africa, beginning in the 1950s where the struggle against apartheid took a radical turn, mass consciousness was at its zenith. The literature that emerged was a direct reflection of the prevailing material conditions of the period. In the 1970s, Staffrider magazine was the most vital forum for the publica- tion of Black Conscious literature, publishing short stories and poetry written by those whom the system was ostracising. Writers that emerged during this time include Mbulelo Nzamane, Miriam Tlali and Mothobi Mutloatse, to name but a few. They captured the nature of the nervous conditions of natives, becoming the voices of the voiceless millions. Poetry also played an instrumental role in capturing these realities, using metaphorical yet relevant language to tell the stories of what French philosopher and revolutionary Frantz Fanon called “The Wretched of the Earth.” Poets such as Sipho Siphamla, Mongane Wally Serote, Mafika Gwala, Onkgopotse Tiro andingoapele Madingoane to name but a few, became the forerunners that inspired a myriad of followers. To date, their poetry remains relevant, with Madingoane’s “Africa My Beginning, Africa My Ending” being the yardstick by which conscious
poetry is measured.
Since the era of these literary grandmasters, the socio-political landscape of South Africa has changed. The second decade of the so-called democratic dispensation has created a paradigm shift in the way societal construct are analysed and defined. Racial integration has replaced racial segregation and “democracy” has replaced systematic White domination. Yet despite these changes, many characteristics of the past regime remain untransformed. White monopoly still controls the economy. The antagonisms between Blacks and Whites are not completely annihilated. This informs us that Black Conscious literature is still as relevant today as it was during the age of Steve Biko’s generation. The question is: Do we still have Black Conscious literature in the 21st century?

The answer is yes. As an aspirant and emerging Pan Africanist literary activist, I have had numerous engagements with writers and poets who subscribe to the philosophy of Black Consciousness and pan Africanism. These are people who, like me, are not satisfied with the current system and who believe that contrary to popular belief, White supremacy is still a living tiger. The issue then is not whether we have Black Conscious literary minds, but rather, whether they are being acknowledged. In my view, the system which is an expression of capitalist relations that can only survive through the exploitation and oppression of Black people (who constitute a majority in the working-class), is deliberately suppressing the voices of Black Conscious writers. It refuses to engage with minds that oppose those who benefit from its management of apartheid laws and policies, mainly White capitalists. Publishers are more interested in literature that will bring in money rather than in literature that will conscientise the oppressed.

Books no longer tell stories of substance. Writers no longer express critical reflections of the perilous conditions of indigenous people of this country. Instead, this literary tool has become commercialised, with incoherent books finding their way to bestseller lists. We have entered an age where writers want to be bestsellers rather than best tellers. This hypothesis is vividly illustrated in the unfortunate case of renowned writer Kopano Matlwa, the award winning author of deplorably incoherent novel titled COCONUT. The names Lesego Rampolokeng, Zwelethemba Twalo, Mputlane wa Bofelo, Serame Icebound Mokhele, Bakang Molekwa and Thabo Leholongwa to name but a few, are not as popularly read nor as critically studied as some dismal writers in our midst. Some of these people have serious trouble finding publishers and so their stories remain untold to the many who MUST hear them. Their poetry sessions remain unknown to those who MUST attend them. Their voices are minimally heard.

Black conscious literary minds will not cease to be targets of marginalisation and neutralisation by the system which seeks to reproduce and entrench the subjugation of our people. Therefore, the responsibility of teaching an African child his own history and defining his own struggles, remains in the hands of those who are advocates of an emancipated South Africa.

**Malaika wa Azania is a non-partisan Pan Africanist Socialist from the concentration camp that is Soweto. Her views are unsponsored.**
How to Buy a House for Half Price

Author: Charles Rukuni
Reviewed by Phindile Kunene

Housing is a topical issue in South Africa. Post apartheid South African has seen an array of struggles revolving around access to housing and land. From farm workers’ resistance against evictions from white owned farm lands; the struggles waged by shack-dwellers against government’s attempt at forced removals; inner city residents’ resistance against draconian evictions waged (often unlawfully) by landlords in co-opts with private security firms; the struggles against evictions from bank financed homes to those fighting against the manipulation of low cost housing lists – the housing question occupies the epicentre of South Africa’s post liberation narrative.

Charles Rukuni captures the moment by bringing you a book that is a brief guide to navigating the housing crisis in South Africa. How to buy a House for Half Price brings you practical information about the housing “market” in the country and basic dos and don’ts in terms of buying, renting or building your own house. The book kicks off with some handy tips on useful information about the different benefits attached to renting a house/flat, buying it or building one’s own. This 128 page pocket sized book that literally fits into a shirt pocket contains information such as

- How much bond one qualifies for, that is the maximum amount a bank can give you based on your income and how you can calculate this for yourself
- How to get out of debt and what the debt situation is like in South Africa
- How to save for your first house, the important point being that savings has nothing to do with how much you earn but how you use what you earn
- Buying your first house, what is required, payments you have to make besides the deposit for the house such as transfer fees and bond registration
- Buying a flat which you have to do on what is called sectional title and what this entails
- Buying land to build your own house, the advantages and disadvantages one of which is that normally it is more expensive to build your own house than to buy an existing one
- How to save thousands on your bond by making simple incremental payments on your bond. An extra R100 a month on a R300 000 bond for example will cut your 20-year bond by 22 months - yes, one year and 10 months.
- Saving millions - how lump sum payments will cut your repayment period even further. If you decide to pay your annual bonus of R9 000 on a R300 000 bond and continue to make your usual monthly payments, you will pay off your house in 11 and a half years instead of 20.

How to Buy a House for Half Price is a must read for all South Africans, especially those who fall outside the state low cost housing subsidy net. It is an important and timely book given the demand for housing amongst young black South Africans who either resort to buying homes through finance capital or to renting town house complexes in the country’s suburbs. It is particularly relevant when considering how banks muzzle and rob thousands of South Africans of their right to decent housing by evicting defaulters and repossession hundreds of homes yearly. This book is an empowering tool for those currently facing the might of finance capital. It can teach you how to play the game to your benefit; how to beat the banks at their own game and how to maximise the gains out of a situation that is not designed to favour you. This alone makes the book a great read.

Despite these great traits, if you are looking for ideological debates around the housing crisis in South Africa, then its best to look elsewhere. The book hardly touches on the courageous struggles we have seen over the years around the housing crisis in the country. The multitude of struggles waged by shack-dwellers against forced removal by the new government pursuing a neoliberal path to development; the struggles waged by bond-holders in the townships – fighting the banks that are hell-bent on evicting them from the homes they have been paying their last cents towards in the past 15 years or struggles waged by beneficiaries of RDP housing which altogether highlight neoliberalism’s incapacity to satisfy the human need for decent and modern shelter. The book interrogates the debate about whether to build or buy your own house without factoring in the land question – which remains a festering sore for many dispossessed black people in this country. The debate about the contradiction between neoliberalism and social justice evades the book and this is a great injustice. To be fair, any book must be judged according to its own commitments and intentions. If Rukuni’s intention with the book was to provide a comprehensive information package on how one can get the best deal out of the housing “market” in South Africa, then he has achieved this with distinction. This book is a must read for all those currently struggling with the banks over home loans, facing evictions or simply at that point where you feel the need to acquire your own house.
When the revolutionary movement ceases to lead
When social distance becomes a norm
When interaction with the workers and the people becomes a visit
When the dream of majority is slowly vanishing
Leadership not feeling the people’s sufferings at first hand

When your own people are not a lively inspiration
When deployment is equal to outsourcing of leaders
When the movement outsource itself from its own people
When liberation is about the leaders themselves
Our people are not the revolutionary liberators anymore

When so-called celebrity status and high office is equated to power
When electioneering, not service delivery becomes central
When electioneering becomes the life blood of the movement
When liberators share platforms with unknown parties
Parties without revolutionary credentials

When workers start to lose hope in their own movement
When the masses needs are continuous promises
When the mandate of the movement is not from the owners
When party accountability is seen to be at a distance away
Democratic centralism should not be an end but a process from below
When insults are being tossed around our enemies and ourselves equally
When corruption is tossed against us by our detractors
When our silence on corruption is louder than the opposition
When revolutionary morality walks out of the window
Our today’s walk is in tangent from the footprints of our forebears

When the liberation movement ceases to lead
When hegemonic political alliance is challenged internally
When the struggle is equated to wealth accumulation
When high walls and electric fence a sense of security, not the people,
The people shall govern and the people shall share is forsaken

When perceptions create confusion among communities
When the glory of the movement becomes sentimental history
When the nexus of the struggle and the actual liberation is dull
When the connection of progressive policies and implementation is in vain

The economic development not led by the toilers.
When the liberation movement ceases!
When the revolutionary movement ceases to lead, ceases to lead!

In recognition of our struggle for freedom and challenges in 2011
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<td>Southern Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other countries</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Surface mail</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All countries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Payment options

- [ ] Cheque Enclosed, payable to COSATU
- [ ] Direct transfer:
  - Name of Account: COSATU CEC
  - Bank: Nedbank
  - Branch code: 187505
  - Account number: 1979274215
  - Branch Name: 100 Main street
  - Account type: Current
  - Please put in reference: SSJ & Your name

Name of credit card
- [ ] Visa
- [ ] Mastercard

Card Number

CVC (Last 3 digits on the reverse side)

Expiry date /

Signature

Please post, fax or email proof of payment to
COSATU House, 1 Leyds Street, Braamfontein
P.O. Box 1019, Johannesburg, 2000 or
Fax to +27 (0) 11 339 5080/6940
OR Email nthabiseng@cosatu.org.za

For Subscriptions and Distribution please contact
nthabiseng@cosatu.org.za or Tel: +27 (0) 11 339 4911