

# *A Journal of Southern African Revolutionary Anarchism* **ZABALAZA**



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***"Workers need... to use struggles for reforms, such as winning higher wages, to build towards seizing the land, mines, factories and other workplaces themselves so that they can run them through worker self-management for the benefit of everyone in society."***



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# Zabalaza #13

## Editorial

*Red and black greetings, comrades!*

It's been well over a year since the last issue of *Zabalaza* and much international attention has focused on the socio-economic problems facing the European Union. Despite the ravages of capitalism, and its neo-liberal form, the European ruling classes have responded, generally, with more of the same: increased attacks on the working class through propagating greater austerity measures, and less money spent on social welfare on the one hand, and bail-outs and more tax breaks for the rich on the other. As is to be expected, however, the European working class has not taken this lying down; resistance to austerity imposed from above has been widespread. In recent months we have witnessed, in Greece, a one-day general strike on October 18 and a 48-hour general strike on November 6 and 7. Promisingly, and for the first time in the wake of the global economic crisis of 2008 – we have also witnessed a common European response in the form of a general strike on November 14 that affected Greece, Italy, Spain and Portugal, with solidarity actions occurring across much of the continent.

These global conditions have unleashed greater waves of opposition to socio-economic and political domination. Yet, as with protests and uprisings elsewhere over the last few years, most have resulted in technical alterations at most, and not in the fundamental dismantling of systems of exploitation and domination. The sooner the working class realises that elections can never bring about freedom from social and economic oppression, the sooner we can march towards a free and equal, or anarchist society.

Inspired by the Arab Spring, the year 2011 was – in the West at least – characterised by the emergence of a number of “Occupy” movements modelled on the Occupy Wall Street movement. Not surprisingly, however (and with the notable exception of Occupy Sandy, which played a significant role in providing popular self-managed emergency response and relief to victims of Hurricane Sandy in the United States) – a lot of these have by now faded away without being very successful either in winning improvements for the popular classes or building sustainable movements in struggle. This, again, highlights the centrality of ideas in the class struggle and the necessity for strategic perspectives of building a revolutionary working class counter-power and counter-culture.

Similarly, 2012 was marked by massive student struggles in Quebec, Canada, that also saw workers and communities coming out in a general strike alongside students. Unfortunately, due to space limitations, we do not publish anything on the Quebec students' strikes in this edition of *Zabalaza*. However, we intend to publish an analysis thereof by a

comrade from the ZACF's sister organisation in Montreal, Union Communiste Libertaire (UCL), in *Zabalaza* #14.

Locally, the South African ruling class has continued its assault on the rural and urban working class (the organised, unorganised and unemployed). A range of measures have been proposed or implemented in an effort to alter labour and community laws – won through bitter struggle – that offer workers a semblance of protection from the bosses and communities a bit of say in their locales. One example is a Constitutional Court ruling holding unions liable for property damage during strikes and protests. Ideologically the working class finds itself unable to buttress these challenges. Its leaders and spokespeople continue to offer tried and failed ideas and strategies to counter economic deprivation and political weakness. Inevitably they promote nationalism and other such reactionary ideologies, seek to promote reliance on the state.

Climate change and environmental degradation were on the agenda for a range of activists at the end of 2011 as South Africa hosted the COP-17 conference. We look at working class priorities and their relation to fights for ecological conservation and improvement, and conclude that these must be intrinsically linked to secure a better future – one of safe and healthy work and leisure.

More recently, the police massacre of 34 striking mine-workers at Lonmin's Marikana mine in Rustenburg unleashed a wave of condemnation, but confusion still abounds. In this issue we address the role of the state as the defender of property and privilege in capitalist society. Since Marikana, wildcat strikes and sit-ins have spread across the platinum belt and into other mining sectors. In the Western Cape province farmworkers – who, together with mine-workers, perhaps suffer the harshest consequences of the legacy of apartheid – have also gone out on strike in pursuit of improved living and working conditions and higher minimum wages. As with Marikana and the strikes in the mining sector, their just struggle has been met with harsh repression at the hands of the state and farm bosses. Unfortunately at this stage we cannot offer a South African anarchist analysis of the strike wave that predated and followed the Marikana massacre – for a variety of reasons. Partly we feel that the significance of this period in our history and for future warrants a far deeper and closer look than was possible. Conflicting reports and analyses continue to be released almost daily, many of which are not drawn from honest reflection and study. However, we hope to look more closely at the strike wave in more detail in the next edition, after the dust has

settled. These are times of oppression and uncertainty for the working class. They have also further revealed the confusion and disorientation within the ranks of the authoritarian left. We are offered fertile ground for anarchist agitation and education. We need to seize it! Anarchism has always stressed the necessity of directly democratic organised, coordinated struggle and commitment. As such it was with great enthusiasm that the ZACF sent a delegate to the 10th anniversary of the Brazilian Forum of Organised Anarchism (FAO) and the First Congress of the Brazilian Anarchist Coordination (CONCAB) in Rio de Janeiro this past June. At this auspicious event, the FAO was reconstituted as the Brazilian Anarchist Coordination (CAB). The CAB brings together nine especificista anarchist political organisations in what is the next step in the process of building a national anarchist organisation in that country.

In August we also had the opportunity to send two delegates to Switzerland to the 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the St. Imier International Anarchist Congress. Here we participated in an international meeting of the Anarkismo network – which brings together over 30 organisations from 18 different countries – in an attempt to charter a course of united global anarchist action.

Comrades, the road ahead is hard, but the path is clear: the world ripens again for the ideas of anarchism. We, the popular classes (the working class and peasantry), scream out for a way forward: a movement beyond endless suffrage and revolutionary betrayal. Let us arm ourselves with the correct tools in which to defeat domination in all its forms: capitalism and the state, racism and sexism, and many others. This, the ZACF contends, must involve continuing to return to our roots in the Bakuninist wing of the First International: a strategic orientation towards serious, critical theoretical understanding which then informs organisation, strategy and tactics.

In memory of this history of struggle, we begin in this edition a series of articles on “Black Stars of Anarchism”: anarchists and syndicalists of black African descent around the world who, rejecting nationalism and the narrow politics of identity, have united the struggle against racism and imperialism with the class war against capital and state. In this edition we tell the story of the great South African syndicalist

militant T.W. Thibedi, whose efforts nearly a century ago to organise black workers around class politics still deserve to be remembered as a revolutionary alternative to nationalism and class collaboration.

Such an understanding and strategic orientation, based on critiquing both the past and present, is surely the ammunition we need to beat back the devastation of economic oppression (capitalism in all its forms, whether state or free market-orientated) and political domination (the state and other relations of authority between and within classes).

It is with regret that we heard of the death on 28 January of our friend and comrade Alan Lipman, age 88, who with his wife Beata were among the drafters of the 1955 Freedom Charter. Alan and Beata resigned from the Communist Party in 1956 in disgust at the Soviet invasion of Hungary. He and some African Resistance Movement guerrillas firebombed the offices where the apartheid state was collecting data on black women to put them on the dompas, so the couple fled into exile in the UK where he got involved with the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. Returning to SA in the democratic era, the couple got involved with their local ANC branch, but were soon very disillusioned with the ruling party's venality. Although he maintained a life-long friendship with Walter & Albertina Sisulu, he became a confirmed anarchist and addressed a ZACF/Anti-Privatisation Forum meeting at the Orange Farm squatter camp in 2006 on what he called “the Anti-Liberation Movements” (ANC/SACP). His autobiography, “On the Outside Looking In: Colliding with Apartheid and Other Authorities” (2009) was first published by zabalaza.net. We shall miss his quiet wit, gregarious spirit and sharp mind. *Hamba Kahle, Comrade Alan!*

As we close this editorial and prepare for publication, bombs and white phosphorous continue to rain death and destruction on the men, women and children of Gaza, Palestine. We also publish here an article by an Egyptian comrade written on the eve of the Egyptian presidential elections. Whether the outcomes of these elections will retain the pro-US and pro-Israeli policies of the Mubarak regime, or support the overwhelmingly pro-Palestinian aspirations of the Egyptian popular classes – hundreds of whom have crossed the Rafah border, some illegally, to support their Palestinian brothers and sisters – remains, however, to be seen.

## **The Struggle Continues!**

### **Forward to International Popular Class Unity!**

### **Forward to Anarchism and to the free Socialist Society!**

Zabalaza Anarchist Communist Front  
November 2012

# Whose State is it; and What is its Role?

by Shawn Hattingh (ZACF)



**T**he South African state's oppression of the ongoing wildcat strikes, including at Marikana, is clearly deepening. Over the last few weeks troops were deployed in the platinum belt in what was a barefaced bid by the state to stop the protests by striking workers, and essentially force them back to work. As part of this, residents at the informal settlement at Marikana, and those surrounding Amplats, have been subjected to a renewed assault by the police. Many residents in the process were shot with rubber bullets; their homes were raided; they were threatened; and tear gas, at times, lay over these settlements like a chemical fog. In practice, a curfew has also been put in place and anyone gathering in a group on the streets has been pounced upon by the men in blue. Threats have also emerged from the Cabinet that a crackdown on any 'trouble-makers', that are supposedly inciting workers to continue to strike, is going to happen. New arrests have also taken place at Marikana and even workers who are witnesses in the state's Commission of Inquiry into the events at Lonmin have been arrested and harassed. A number of strikers at Amplats too have been killed or injured by the police.

Many left groups, amongst them the Democratic Left Front (DLF), have rightfully condemned this violence and the accompanying threats that have been made by the state. They have highlighted how the state is protecting investors in the platinum belt, and they have lamented how the ANC government is acting in a similar way to the apartheid government. While we should be disgusted by the actions of the state, it would, however, be a mistake to be surprised by them.

The reality is that no state is truly democratic, including the one headed by the ANC. Even in a parliamentary system, most high ranking state officials, including generals, director-generals, police commissioners, state legal advisors, judges and magistrates, are never elected by the people. Most of their decisions, policies and actions will never be known by the vast majority of people – the top down structure of the state ensures this. Linked to this, parliamentarians make and pass laws; not the mass of people. In fact, parliamentarians are in no way truly accountable to voters (except for 5 minutes every 5 years).

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They are not mandated nor are they recallable. They – along with permanent state bureaucrats - have power; not the people. As such, no state, including the ANC headed one, is participatory; but rather designed to ensure and carry out minority rule. Likewise, the state's main function is not to protect workers, but to ensure rule over them. While the anarchist Mikhail Bakunin rightfully pointed out that it is better to live under a parliamentary system than a pure dictatorship, because it allows for some rights, he also pointed out that all states are inherently oppressive towards the working class (workers and the unemployed).

The outright and ongoing violence of the state in the platinum sector, on other mines and at Marikana, therefore, lays bare the true nature of the state; and the role it plays in protecting the ruling class (made up of capitalists and high ranking state officials). It is not a regrettable accident that the state has been protecting the mines of huge corporations, like Lonmin and Amplats, and that it has been willing to use such violence to do so. The state's, including the ANC headed one, main function is to further and protect the interests of the elite and their continued class rule. For capitalism to function, and for class rule to be maintained, a state is vital. It is central to protecting and maintaining the very material basis on which the power of the elite rests and is derived. Without a state, which claims a monopoly on violence within a given territory, an elite could not rule nor could it claim or hold onto the ownership of wealth and the means of production. In fact, the state as an entity is the defender of the class system and a centralised body that necessarily concentrates power in the hands of the ruling classes; in both respects, it is the means through which a minority rules a majority. Through its executive, legislative, judiciary, military and policing arms the state always protects the minority ownership of property (whether private or state-owned property), and tries to undermine, crush or co-opt any threat posed to the continuing exploitation and oppression of the working class. As the wildcat strikes on the mines show that includes shooting rubber bullets, tear gassing people, raiding houses, arresting people, threatening people, humiliating people, torturing people, and even killing those that the state and capital deem as posing a threat.

The post-apartheid state in South Africa too has played an instrumental role in maintaining the situation whereby poorly paid black workers remain the basis of the massive profits of the mining companies, including

Lonmin and Amplats. In South Africa, black workers have historically been subjected to national oppression; and this has meant that they were systematically turned into a source of extremely cheap labour and subjected to institutionalised racism. The history of very cheap black labour enabled white capitalists – traditionally centred around the mining houses – to make huge profits, and it is on this basis that they became very wealthy. The post-apartheid state has continued to protect and entrench this situation; it has maintained an entire legal and policing system that is aimed at protecting the wealth and property of companies, like Lonmin, and prevent the working class – and specifically the majority of black people who make up the bulk of the working class – from their rightful access to this wealth and property in South Africa.

State managers, who comprise a section of the ruling class, based on their control of the means of coercion, administration and sometimes production, also have their own reasons for wanting to protect the minority ownership of property: because their own privileged positions rest on exploitation and oppression. This is why the post-apartheid state in South Africa has been so willing to protect companies like Lonmin: the pay checks of high ranking state officials, mostly tied to the ANC, depend on it. The lifestyles of people like Jacob Zuma, Tokyo Sexwale, Pravin Gordhan, Trevor Manuel and rest of their cohorts in the Cabinet, therefore, is based on the continued exploitation of the working class, and the black section in particular. These state officials are consequently parasites that live off the back of workers - workers who have created all wealth in society!

Since 1994 the entire working class has fallen deeper into poverty, including sections of the white working class, as inequality has grown between the ruling class and working class as a whole. It has, however, been the black working class that has been worst affected. This is because the state has implemented extreme policies, in the form of neo-liberalism, to help capitalists increase their profits even further. While it is clear that the black working class remains nationally oppressed, the situation for the small black elite, nevertheless, is very different. Some, through their high positions in the state have joined the old white capitalists in the ruling class. Others, have also joined the ruling class, but through the route of Black Economic Empowerment. This can be seen in the fact that all of the top ANC linked black families – the Mandelas, Sisulus, Thambos, Ramaposas, Zumas, Moosas etc. – have

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shares in or sit on the boards of the largest companies in South Africa, including mining companies. In fact, Ramaphosa not only owns shares in, and is on the board of, Lonmin; but a number of functions at Marikana and other platinum are outsourced to various companies he has interests in. Patrice Motsepe too has shares in the largest platinum mine in the world, Modikwa, through African Rainbow Minerals. The wealth and power of this black section of the ruling class in South Africa too rests on the exploitation of the working class as a whole, but mostly and specifically on the exploitation and continued national oppression of the black working class. Hence, this is the reason why the black section of the ruling class, and the state its members are part of, has been so willing to take action – whether during platinum strikes, Marikana, or other strikes in general – against the black working class.

Bakunin foresaw the possibility of such a situation arising in cases where supposed national liberation was based on capturing state power. Bakunin said that the “statist path” was “entirely ruinous for the great masses of the people” because it did not abolish class power but simply changed the make-up and faces of the ruling class. Due to the centralised nature of states, only a few can rule: a majority of people can never be involved in decision making under a state system. Consequently, he stated that if the national liberation struggle was carried out with “ambitious intent to set up a powerful state”, or if “it is carried out without the people and must therefore depend for success on a privileged class” it would become a “retrogressive, disastrous, counter-revolutionary movement”. He also noted that when former liberation fighters or activists enter into the state, because of its top down structure, they become rulers and get used to the privileges their new positions entail, and they come to “no longer represent the people but themselves and their own pretensions to govern the people”. History has proven his insights to be accurate, former liberation activists in South

Africa rule in their own interests and that of their class: they have joined white capitalists in the ruling class; they enjoy the opulent lifestyles their positions carry; they flaunt their wealth; and they exploit and oppress the vast majority of the people in the country, including in the mining sector.

The state we must also, nevertheless, realise can’t simply rule by force alone – force is in the end the central pillar upon which its



power rests – but for its own stability and that of capital, it also tries to rule through consent and co-option. To do so, it pretends to be a benefactor of all; while in reality facilitating, entrenching and perpetrating exploitation and oppression. Certainly, most states today do have laws protecting basic rights, and some provide welfare – including the South African state. Such laws and welfare, however, have been won through massive struggles by the oppressed and exploited, and that should never be forgotten; states simply did not grant

these rights without a fight. But even where such laws exist, and sometimes they exist only paper, the state tries to make propaganda out of them. It is this duplicity that led the anarchist Errico Malatesta to argue that the state: “cannot maintain itself for long without hiding its true nature behind a pretence of general usefulness; it cannot impose respect for the lives of the privileged people if it does not appear to demand respect for human life, it cannot impose acceptance of the privileges of the few if it does not pretend to be the guardian of the rights of all”. As struggles go forward, including in the mining sector, it is important that the working class is not duped by the duplicity.

Certainly we must raise demands from the parasitic state and bosses. The state and bosses have stolen from the working class, and it is high time the working class got some of this back. A fight must be taken to the state and corporations, and the working class must mobilise to have its demands met. As part of this, we must, however, have no illusions about what the state is; who it is controlled by; who it protects; and what its function is.

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As such, the working class must mobilise outside of and against the state and force it to give back what has been stolen, but it should not have illusions in doing so that the state protects workers or the unemployed.

It is vital for the future of working class struggles that mineworkers in South Africa win their demands. If they do, it could re-invigorate workers struggles across the country, which have been on a relative decline since the late 1980s. In fact, workers need to win better wages and safer working conditions; and they – as the DLF pointed out – need to protect the right to strike. In the long run though, and if inequality and injustice are to be ended, the working class needs to take power and run society through its own structures. This means confronting the state, which is not theirs. This too means abandoning faith in the state to nationalise companies, which would mean ownership and control by a state bureaucracy; not the working class. Indeed, calling for nationalisation builds illusions in a higher power: the state; and it does not show faith in, or build the power of, the working class itself. The state is not a lesser evil to capitalists; rather they are part and parcel of the same system. Workers need, and Marikana highlights this, to use struggles for reforms, such as winning higher wages, to build towards seizing the land,

mines, factories and other workplaces themselves so that they can run them through worker self-management for the benefit of everyone in society. Only when the working class has done this, and runs society through its own structures and not a state, will the power of the ruling class, the power of its violent state, and inequality be broken, smashed and ended.

Central to this too has to be the ending of the national oppression, and accompanying racism, that the black working class is subjected to. Until this is ended, true freedom and equality for both the black and white working class will not be achieved. As has long been pointed out by anarchist-communists, however, if a just, free and equal society is to be achieved the means and the ends in struggle have to be as similar as possible. Hence, if we want a future that is genuinely equal and non-racist, our struggle to end the national oppression of the black working class, and the accompanying capitalism and racism in South Africa, must be based firmly on the ideals of non-racialism. Only once racism, injustice and inequality – along with the state and capitalist system that generate and feed into these evils - have ended will the Marikana massacres and other killings in the name of profit and cheap labour be part of history.

# Who Rules South Africa?

## An Anarchist/Syndicalist Analysis of the ANC, the Post-Apartheid Elite Pact and the Political Implications

by Lucien van der Walt

**2**012 is the centenary of the African National Congress (ANC). The party that started out as a small coterie of black businessmen, lawyers and chiefs is today the dominant political formation in South Africa. It was founded by the black elite who were marginalised by the united South Africa formed in 1910, and who appeared at its Bloemfontein inauguration "formally dressed in suits, frock coats, top hats and carrying umbrellas".[1] Today it is allied via the Tripartite Alliance to the SA Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu).

Can the ANC be a vehicle for fundamental, progressive, social change in the interests of the black, Coloured and Indian working classes

(proletariat), still mired in the legacy of apartheid and racial domination? This is what Cosatu (and the SACP) suggest.

But to understand this issue, we need to understand how the ANC fits into the current South African social order and its class character. This paper addresses these issues using an anarchist/syndicalist, red-and-black framework and considers some of the political possibilities that arise.

### ANC AS BOURGEOIS-BUREAUCRATIC-NATIONALIST

This paper argues that the ANC is a *bourgeois-bureaucratic black nationalist party*; that

1. P. Walshe, 1970, *The Rise of African Nationalism in South Africa: the ANC 1912-1952*, C. Hurst Company/ University of California Press, pp. 33-4



is, that it represents primarily the interests of both the emergent black capitalists and of the (largely black) state managerial elite: top officials and politicians, judges and military leaders.

The term “bourgeois-bureaucratic” is to be preferred to the term “bourgeois nationalist”, as the latter ignores the state elite’s specific class nature. Its black nationalism entails, first, the ideological myth that all blacks, regardless of class, have a common interest; second, a practical stress on the primary interests of the *black elite*, through a concrete programme of elite empowerment.

As the anarchist Mikhail Bakunin recognised, this sort of postcolonial elite is simply a “*new bureaucratic aristocracy*”, drawn from the former heroes of national liberation: the “iron logic” of their position makes them “enemies of the people” [2].

Despite the myth of common black interests, the black elite is anti-working class, as shown by the ANC’s embrace of neo-liberalism, its support for elitist “Black Economic Empowerment” (BEE) deals for black capitalists and the racism of more than a few ANC leaders.

The elite interests represented by the ANC, which are centred on the state, are largely convergent with those of the private corporate elite, centred on the big private conglomerates. This balance was created in the multi-party Convention for a Democratic South Africa (Codesa) negotiations of the early 1990s – yet Codesa was in other respects a “massive advance” for the masses.

### STATE + CAPITAL = RULING CLASS

At the heart of the New South Africa is a balance between two ruling class sectors based on *mutual dependence*: the (largely black) state elite and the (largely white) private corporate elite, allied against the (largely black) working class (as well the Coloured, Indian and white working class). The state elite needs capital accumulation to fund and arm itself; the private elite needs the state’s power to maintain capital accumulation. For classic anarchist theory, the ruling class has two wings: private capitalists centred on means of production in corporations, and state managers, centred on means of administration and coercion in the state. The two are bound by common interests, but neither the mere tool of the other.

Each wields highly centralised resources, via the state bureaucracy, including state companies on the one hand and large private

conglomerates on the other. In South Africa, by 1981, the state and eight private companies held 70% of the total assets of the top 138 companies; today, 10 companies control 50% of Johannesburg Securities Exchange (JSE) capitalisation [3], matching state monopolies in electricity, rail and so on.

Both ruling class sectors benefit from neo-liberalism, although promoting it for slightly different reasons: for the state elite, it funds the project of state sovereignty and territorial domination in the competitive interstate system [4]; for the private corporate elite, it enables accumulation and exploitation in conditions of capitalist crisis and globalisation. Thus, state and capital are “inseparable concepts ... bound together”, as anarchist Pyotr Kropotkin stressed [5].

So “inseparable” are they that the corporate elite uses its private wealth to access state power, and the state elite uses its state power to access private wealth. Both ruling class wings share lives of privilege and power: for example, the top 15 earners in South African state companies got R103 million annually (2010), in a country where 50% of the people get 8% of national income [6].

It is simply incorrect to argue, like the SACP, that “We Need a Massive ANC Victory, so that the People, not Big Business, can direct the Economy!” [7].

Firstly, the ANC government is *allied* to big business, and secondly, the state elite does not represent “the people”, but its own class interests. The ANC *is part of the problem* because it is enmeshed in the state and private elites; *it is not the whole problem*, since any party in government will end in the same situation.

### 1994 – A “MASSIVE ADVANCE”

Yet the social order created in the Codesa transition was also a “massive advance”: exploitation and oppression still exists, obviously, but legally entrenched white racist rule and a highly authoritarian political system (in which even anarchist texts were banned) has been replaced by legal equality and criminalisation of racial discrimination [8]. Thus, for Bakunin, an “imperfect republic” is a thousand times better than an authoritarian regime, as it means less repression [9].

Only the most abstract, misleading posturing can present the current system as “white supremacy” [10].

In addition to these crucial changes, there is also a powerful, wealthy black elite centred on the state, wielding an Africanised army and

*“The elite interests represented by the ANC, which are centred on the state, are largely convergent with those of the private corporate elite, centred on the big private conglomerates.”*

2. M. Bakunin, [1873] 1971, “Statism and Anarchy,” S. Dolgoff (ed.), *Bakunin on Anarchy*, George Allen & Unwin, p. 343

3. R. Southall, 13 February 2012, “South Africa’s Fractured Power Elite,” WISER seminar, University of Witwatersrand, pp. 10-11

4. Bakunin, “Statism and Anarchy” p. 343

5. P. Kropotkin, [1912] 1970, “Modern Science and Anarchism,” R. N. Baldwin (ed.), *Kropotkin’s Revolutionary Pamphlets*, Dover Publications, p. 181

6. Southall, “South Africa’s Fractured,” pp. 12-13

7. Cover, *African Communist*, 2009, no. 177

8. WSF, 1995, “1994 Elections: A massive advance for the struggle in South Africa,” *Workers Solidarity: voice of anarcho-syndicalism*, no. 1, p. 1

9. Bakunin, [1871] 1971, “Federalism, Socialism, Anti-Theologism,” *Bakunin on Anarchy*, p. 144

10. By e.g. *Quest for a True Humanity: Selected Speeches & Writings - Mosibudi Mangena*, 1996, Bayakha Books, pp. 47, 56, 65-66, 69, 93-95

police; and the state bureaucracy, perhaps 30% of the economy through the state, which owns banks, Eskom, harbours, rail, transport, mass media, the weapons industry and South African Airways, plus 25% of all land (including 55% in the provinces of Gauteng and the Western Cape).[11]

### BLACK (AND WHITE) POWER (FOR SOME)

The black elite also has a growing corporate presence.

For despite (white) corporate hesitancy on BEE, around a quarter of JSE-listed company directorships are held by people of colour [12], with the proportion of senior managers in the private sector at 32.5% (2008) [13]. The top 20 richest in South Africa (using disclosed share data) include old white money, like the Oppenheimers, and new black money, like billionaires Tokyo Sexwale, Cyril Ramaphosa, Patrice Motsepe and Lazarus Zim [14].

Combined with the 25%+ of the economy under state control, it is clear the black elite is far from economically powerless, and it is a myth that the “means of production” are all in white hands, or that the ruling class is mainly white [15].

The ruling class is more than just the capitalists, and not all capitalists are white.

However, as the JSE figures show, the private sector remains dominated by white capitalists, just like the state sector remains dominated by black state managers. This is the basic division in the ruling class, generating secondary contradictions (see below).

### CLASS + RACE

Not every black is poor; not every white rich. Class is the fundamental mediator. Cost-recovery is enforced in basic services in poor black areas (see *“Municipalities, Service Delivery and Protest”*, p. 36). Services and housing here are of very low quality, yet very expensive; grants are small, and their expansion reflects not ANC generosity, but an escalating unemployment crisis affecting 50% of blacks [16], 25% of Coloureds, 18% of Indians and 7% of whites.

Obviously all whites – including the white working class – benefited from apartheid, and this has had long-term effects. But white South Africa was (and is) deeply divided by class, often violently: consider the strikes of 1913, 1922, 1942, 1979 ... Meanwhile, under apartheid there was a powerful, if subordinate, black elite with state power, notably through the

homelands: consider Lucas Mangope of Bophuthatswana and Bantu Holomisa of Transkei.

Today, hundreds of thousands of poor whites live in squatter and trailer camps [17], while state-led BEE means that a small black elite trades on its race “as a means of justifying entitlement” [18]. Unless we take class seriously, it is impossible to explain simple events, such as large-scale white worker participation in the state sector strikes of 2007 and 2010.

No country, not even South Africa, has ever featured universal white privilege and universal black oppression [19].

### INCOMPLETE NATIONAL LIBERATION

The ANC state, despite its talk of national liberation, is an obstacle to the full emancipation of the working class.

Why? Because, first, the state/corporate elite can only exist through the domination/exploitation of the *working class in general*, through perpetuating poverty, subordination and authoritarianism.

And because, second, the conditions of the *black, Coloured and Indian working class* are deeply marked by an apartheid/colonial legacy in education,

housing, health, transport and land that cannot be removed within capitalism or the state system, but only through a new order based on self-managed, participatory, planned production and distribution for needs, not profit and power, and the abolition of social and economic inequality.

*That is, the black elite have achieved their national liberation with the capture of state power; it is now an obstacle to the complete national liberation of the black, Coloured and Indian working class – and of the full freedom of the white working class too.*

This is the complicated terrain upon which class struggles operate: the gap between classes in black South Africa opened by the 1990-1994 transition. It must be formulated as *incomplete national liberation, with a class character*.

### NATIONAL LIBERTION STRUGGLE VERSUS NATIONALISM

Black nationalism, the official ANC ideology, speaks of a single black interest; it covers the reactionary black elite in the flags of suffering and of struggle. It is mistaken to keep reverting to the easy (but always flawed) black nationalist politics of the 1980s to try and understand the 2000s. Black (like white) nationalism was always flawed, was always an obstacle to



11. M. Mohamed, 29 Feb 2012, “Blacks Own more Than 13% of Land”, *The Citizen*

12. 951 out of 3450 posts: M. Sibanyoni, 10 Oct 2010, “Black Directors Arrive on JSE,” *City Press*

13. R. Southall, 2010, “Introduction: South Africa 2010 - Development or Decline?” *New South African Review* 1, 2010, Wits University Press, p. 11

14. Southall, “South Africa’s Fractured”, p. 12

15. Cf. Malema quote, 2009 congress of the SA Students’ Congress: B. Naidu & S. Pliso, 21 Feb 2010, “How Malema made his Millions,” *Sunday Times*

16. Source: NUMSA, Aug 2011, Central Committee Meeting 15 - 19 August 2011, D 1.1

17. *Beeld*, 6 July 2010, “Wêreld sien Wit Armoede

18. S. Zibi, July 22-28 2011, “Non-racialism and the Untouchables,” *Mail & Guardian*

19. For a general critique of this fashionable American theory: L. van der Walt & M. Schmidt, 2009, *Black Flame: the revolutionary class politics of anarchism and syndicalism*, AK Press, pp. 303-305.

completing the national liberation struggle of the black, Coloured and Indian *working class*.

Two periods of association with nationalist struggle must be distinguished, according to the Chinese anarchist Ba Jin (Li Pei Kan).

Ba argued that in the period of struggle against a nationally oppressive state apparatus, the anarchists are *with* the nationalists against the regime, but *against* the nationalists' programme: they know it cannot deliver complete emancipation, because it maintains class, and so, they "simply want to go even further".

Then, when the nationalists are in office, the anarchists are *against* their so-called "good government", and *with* the "revolutionary torrent" of the popular classes, as struggles based on unsatisfied demands and needs go beyond the aims the nationalists permit [20].

### RACISM AND THE ANC

To apply this: if the ANC before 1994 was basically progressive, from 1994 it has become a force for reaction, as has been shown above. To continue to use nationalist politics is disempowering, confusing and positively harmful. It ignores class, creates illusions in the ANC and disguises the true nature of the black elite.

And most dangerously, it easily translates itself into direct racism against the minorities – Coloureds, Indians, whites and immigrant blacks – who make up at least 25% of the population [21], especially when it is used to deflect blame or promote factional agendas. Endless xenophobic statements by officials, like Julius Malema's insulting of whites (see *"Get Rich or Lie Trying"*, p. 28), and former government spokesperson and Black Management Forum head Jimmy Manyi's anti-Coloured racism, are all examples of a deadly tendency (They contradict official ANC policy, that "South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white", but show a racist current exists in the ANC).

BEE, being based on a crude racial preference system, continually fosters a climate of racial rivalry.

### VICTIM THEORY

Let us tackle here another problematic approach. While Cosatu and the SACP think that the ANC can somehow serve the people, not big business, some Trotskyists claim the opposite:

the ANC government is the tool of big business, either by being bribed (the "sold out its principles" theory), or by having no choice (the "victim" theory).

The "sold out" theory's flaw is that the ANC has never been anti-capitalist, nor for radical change; it has betrayed nothing. Made illegal in 1960, it turned to armed struggle – but a liberal with guns is only an "armed liberal" [22]. Its aim was only the end of apartheid, not socialism; it wanted "the development of a prosperous non-European bourgeois class" [23], waging a "basically national" struggle with a vague notion of "economic emancipation" [24].

Reality is the test, and the ANC in power has shown that "economic emancipation" depends on your class: the "prosperous non-European bourgeois class" forges ahead through BEE and state power, but the black working class lives in slums and clashes with the ANC government's police in the endless series of "service delivery" protests and strikes.

### AUTONOMOUS POWER

The victim theory's flaw is that the ANC state wields enormous power through its control of the armed forces and state bureaucracy. It is precisely *because* of its autonomous power base that it enacts measures (violation punishable by law) like affirmative action/

tendering and other BEE measures, and defies private corporate opinion on a host of issues such as foreign policy.

Ongoing criticism of ANC policy in the private media *reflects* precisely the fact of autonomy – that it is a means to effect change *indirectly*.

But when the ANC makes concessions, it does so on its own terms. On core issues, like BEE, it will not budge, because it is committed to using state power to grow the prosperous non-European bourgeois class. The ANC often blames "globalisation" for unpopular choices when speaking to the unions, but let us not conflate useful alibis with the facts. States, not anonymous "markets", enable globalisation through policy reform: the ANC state is no different (see below).

Besides, these conflicts are *secondary contradictions*, for despite disagreements on BEE's scale and pace, Zimbabwe sanctions and so on, the mutual interests of the two ruling class sectors are profound. They are concretely expressed

*"Reality is the test, and the ANC in power has shown that "economic emancipation" depends on your class: the "prosperous non-European bourgeois class" forges ahead through BEE and state power, but the black working class lives in slums and clashes with the ANC government's police in the endless series of "service delivery" protests and strikes."*

20. Ba Jin/ Li Pei Kan, [1927] 2005, "Anarchism and the Question of Practice," R. Graham (ed.), *Anarchism: a documentary history*, vol. 1, Black Rose, pp. 362-366

21. At least 20% excluding immigrant blacks, up to 30% depending on estimate of latter.

22. S. Christie & A. Meltzer, 2010, *The Floodgates of Anarchy*, PM Press, second edn., p. 92

23. N. Mandela, in A. Callinicos, 1988, *South Africa: between reform and revolution*, Bookmarks, pp. 64-65

24. Morogoro statement, 1969, at <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=149>



## PHOTO

Julius Malema

Photo: SAPA

in a shared programme of South African expansionism, working class containment and neo-liberalism, exemplifying the *primary contradictions* between the ruling class and the working class.

## NEO-LIBERAL AUTONOMY

Every single ANC economic policy in office (not election manifestoes, which are always empty promises) has been fundamentally neo-liberal, including the *RDP White Paper* (1994), the Growth, Employment and Redistribution strategy (GEAR, 1996), the Accelerated Growth Initiative - SA (Asgisa, 2006) and the New Growth Path (NGP, 2011). (see *"All Geared Up for a New Growth Path, p. 13.*)

Again, these show the autonomous power of the state elite – and its proud, active embrace of neo-liberalism.

In 1993, the ANC brokered the country's first deal with the IMF in a decade [25] and adopted World Bank prescriptions in its 1994 election manifesto [26]; note that the country then had no debt crisis (due to its economic strength), *nor* even IMF/World Bank loans (due to sanctions). The ANC signed the 1994 General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (Gatt) on free trade, and then cut tariffs on auto components, clothing, telecommunications and textiles *far below the level required* [27]. It was the ANC, not the old National Party, that removed the key capital controls, enabling local conglomerates like Anglo-American and Sanlam to *become* truly multinational. By 1999, the ANC also removed 75% of exchange controls [28].

## NEO-LIBERAL BEE

At one level, BEE contradicts neo-liberalism by imposing racial regulations in the supposedly open market, and it is resisted by local (mainly white) conglomerates. Yet, this contradiction is *partially resolved* by the fact that many neo-liberal measures can be used for BEE: the most obvious is privatisation, especially through Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), with awards of massively inflated tenders to the well connected (the "tenderpreneurs"). This also takes some pressure off private corporations.

Such compromises work. There has not been any serious attempt by the corporate sector to sponsor a rival party.

Cosatu suggests that the ANC is the party with a "working class bias" and the opposition Democratic Alliance (DA) a party of "big capital", but the ANC openly backs "big capital" and its leaders include billionaires like Ramaphosa

and Sexwale, and multi-millionaires like Malema and Jacob Zuma. Moreover, "big capital" contributes heavily to the ANC coffers because, as Zuma admits, "*investing in the ANC ... is good value for your money*" [29]. The DA is really a coalition of minority voters, small business and white conservatives, with no serious buy-in by "big capital" outside the Western Cape.

## MALEMA AND ELITE FACTIONS

The ANC itself is undeniably full of factions, as illustrated by the recent crushing of the noisy but weak Malema faction by the entrenched Zuma faction; an earlier Zuma-Mbeki clash is another case.

But these conflicts have nothing to do with real political divisions or principles; they arise from vicious elite competition for access to the wealth and power provided by high state office itself, like access to tenders. Given the powerful hold of (largely white-run) conglomerates in the private sector, naturally the emergent black elite must rely primarily on state office for enrichment and accumulation. But the state has only so much space – thus the viciousness of the conflicts, paralleling the viciousness of corporate clashes. The ANC is key to getting office, so this translates into a struggle within the ANC.

Marginalised from this "gravy train", the Malema faction used radical rhetoric and crude racist African nationalism to recruit desperately poor African youth to its side, so as to build a significant base in the ANC. His faction also rewarded rich allies with tenders and bribes. But Malema has now been crushingly defeated, and by the ANC, not whites. (see *"Get Rich or Lie Trying"*, p. 28.)

The real tragedy is that Malema was able to use the terrible suffering of African working class youth, the direct *victims* of ANC policies (not least Malema's family's shoddy housing and hospital contracts) [30], to rally support *for the ANC and for an ANC faction*; that is, for their oppressors. Meanwhile Malema supported crackdowns on the poor: the ANCYL "does not approve of violence and destruction of infrastructure" and is "inspired" by Zuma's responses [31].

## ILLUSIONS OF POLOKWANE

The ANC is not, then, a space that can be contested *from within* to change state policy in a pro-working class direction, as Cosatu keeps insisting, but is an elite formation manipulating working class movements for elite purposes and



25. H. Marais, 2001, *South Africa: Limits to change*, Zed/ UCT Press, revised ed., pp. 109, 133-134

26. Notably, the Bank's Rural Restructuring Programme: S. Kariuki & L. van der Walt, 2000, "Land Reform in South Africa," *Southern Africa Report*, vol. 15, no. 3, p. 20

27. H. Marais, 1998, *South Africa: Limits to change*. Zed/ UCT Press, 1st ed., pp. 114-115

28. Marais, 1998, p. 116

29. SAPA, 19 Sept 2010, "Zuma: ANC donations pay off," *Fin24.com*

30. Naidu & Pliso, 21 February 2010, "How Malema made his Millions"

31. ANCYL, 6 Aug 2009, "National Working Committee Media Statement," <http://www.politicsweb.co.za/politicsweb/view/politicsweb/en/page71654?oid=138824&sn=Detail>

factional agendas. We can speculate whether the ANC could have been captured by a radical left in the past, such as the syndicalists like TW Thibedi in the late 1910s. (*s ee* “*Black Stars of Anarchism*”, p. 45.) But that time has passed: the ANC today is not a mass liberation movement, but an integral part of the state machinery, run from above by ruling class cabals.

This is illustrated perfectly by Zuma’s 2005-2007 rise. Cosatu supported Zuma against incumbent president Thabo Mbeki, who it blamed for the ANC’s neo-liberal “1996 class project”. But in office, Zuma acted exactly like Mbeki on policy, in terms of squashing corruption charges, self-enrichment, suppression of community protests and so on. And he stated: “We are proud of the fiscal discipline, sound macroeconomic management and general manner in which the economy has been managed. That calls for continuity.” [32]

The system generates the ANC factions, and the factions are no threat to the system: these are tertiary contradictions, equivalent to boardroom fights in private companies. And because the ANC is a top-down party, run by small cabals of the rich and powerful with enormous state and corporate resources, the prospect of Cosatu calling them to account is less than zero.

### ANC ALLIANCE VERSUS CLASS UNITY

Rather than Cosatu using the ANC to extend working class control over the state, the ANC uses Cosatu (and the SACP) to extend the power of a hostile state against the working class itself. Measures to undermine the working class include the direct co-optation of leaders into top ANC government positions, institutions that systematically bureaucratise the unions like the corporatist National Economic Development and Labour Council (Nedlac) and political manipulation through a pseudo-revolutionary rhetoric that presents the ANC as a movement of the black poor.

Two examples suffice: former Cosatu general secretary Sam Shilowa rocketed through the ANC to become a wine-collecting multi-millionaire [33]; SACP general secretary Blade Nzimande was rewarded for his Zuma support with a ministerial job, immediately buying a R1.2 million German luxury car.

Direct consequences of Cosatu’s alliance include a culture among many activists of aspiring to emulate Shilowa and Nzimande, Cosatu’s painful absence from almost every single township struggle against neo-liberal, shoddy state services over the last 15 years and massive working class disorientation.

Recently, the ANC proposed a Media Affairs

Tribunal (MAT) and Protection of Information Bill, basically to shield the BEE tenderpreneurs from press leaks by disgruntled rivals and to limit public spats with the conglomerates. Cosatu has officially criticised the MAT and the bill, but the SACP leadership (which has a huge role in Cosatu) has been co-opted to claim the private media is the “greatest threat to democracy” [34].

### “WORKING CLASS BIAS”?

The ANC has *no* “working class bias”, as Cosatu insists to justify the Alliance, but as a party of the ruling class, has nothing but a “class bias” *against* the working class.

Yet the ANC retains a mass working class base; let us have no illusions, nor engage in the fantasy that widespread township protests over the last 10 years are a “general urban uprising” against the government [35].

These myths generate severe misreadings of the social terrain.

True, total, audited ANC membership is

only 700 000 [36], compared to five million in unions, and true, only 25% of the eligible voting age population votes ANC [37].

However, the ANC faces no serious political rivals. Low votes are mainly due to people not voting in ANC township strongholds, not widespread political opposition. Where leftwing movements run candidates, like Operation Khanyisa Movement (OKM), these are regularly defeated: merely one out of 109 Johannesburg Metro councillors (2006, 2011) is OKM, despite vast efforts.

### IDEAS MATTER

So long as the political subordination of the working class to the ANC, and therefore to the ruling class, continues, the working class is trapped. The working class struggle, *including the struggle for the national liberation of the proletariat*, cannot be waged through the ANC.

Notions of an imminent rupture in the Alliance are dangerous delusions. Many people are suffering, and many even fight against ANC policies and councillors, but they do not reject the ANC as such – usually only corrupt councillors, long housing waiting lists and etcetera.

A real break requires an *ideological* break with ANC symbols and myths. Without the widespread influence of alternative ideas, like anarchism/syndicalism, the situation *cannot* change.

It is necessary to reject the notion that spontaneous and militant actions are inherently radical, or that a revolution can happen spontaneously. This is not true.

*“So long as the political subordination of the working class to the ANC, and therefore to the ruling class, continues, the working class is trapped.”*

32. L. Chilwane, 27 Nov 2008, “Economic Policies to Remain, Zuma Tells US Business,” *Business Day*

33. e.g. interview: J.T. van Zyl, Nov 2008, “Mbhazima Shilowa,” *Wine: a taste of good living*

34. S. Grootes, 18 Oct 2010, “Blade Nzimande’s Ever-increasing Loneliness,” *Daily Maverick*

35. e.g. P. Bond, 2010, “South Africa’s Bubble Meets Boiling Urban Social Protest”, *Monthly Review* vol. 62 no. 2, pp. 17-28

36. P. Naidoo, 23 Sept 2010, “Cosatu in Numbers: membership dwarfs ANC”, *Financial Mail*

37. J. Saul, forthcoming, “A Poisoned Chalice: liberation, ANC-style,” *Amandla* magazine

38. Quoted in "Land and Freedom", *Scottish Anarchist*, number 3, 1997

39. Bakunin, "The Programme of the Alliance," *Bakunin on Anarchy*, pp. 249, 250-251; P. Kropotkin, [1909] 1986, *The Great French Revolution, 1789-1973*, Elephant Eds., vol. 1, pp. 22-23

40. van der Walt & Schmidt, 2009, *Black Flame*, chapter 10, section on "Imperialism and National Liberation," looks at this position and the rival "liquidationist" and "purist" approaches

41. *The International*, 22 February 1918, "Industrial Unionism in South Africa"

42. Bakunin, [1871] 1971, "The Paris Commune and the Idea of the State," *Bakunin on Anarchy*, p. 270

As Nestor Makhno noted, unless the masses have a revolutionary vision, they will simply "repeat the errors of the past years, the error of putting our fate into the hands of new masters" [38]. That is precisely why Malema could use the poor's frustration to promote an elite agenda, precisely why Zuma could ride Cosatu frustration to the presidency.

No revolutionary ideas, no revolution [39].

### "PROLETARIAN NATIONAL LIBERATION"

However, any application of anarchism/syndicalism to South African conditions must be deeply rooted in recognition of the absolute centrality of the national question. That is:

1. The profound racial divisions in this society (including within the working class); and
2. The persistence of the national oppression of the African, Coloured and Indian working class through the apartheid legacy.

This is a legacy that cannot be eradicated under capitalism and the state in present conditions.

The SACP and Cosatu hope that the ANC can solve the problem through a "national democratic revolution" based on an ANC-state-led reform of capitalism, and a "patriotic" alliance between the working class and the progressive

elite, as a stage towards socialism. Evidently, this does not work.

Historically, an alternative approach was developed by the most sophisticated wing of the anarchists/syndicalists, in China, Cuba, Ireland, Korea, Mexico, South Africa and elsewhere [40]. It may be summarised as the programme of *proletarian national liberation*, which fuses the struggle against capitalism and the state with the national liberation struggle of the popular classes.

### BLACK WORKING CLASS PRIDE

This includes: non-racialism and class struggle for the abolition of national oppression, and replacement of hierarchical and colonial elements of cultures with libertarian, humanistic ones. It includes engaging the *libertarian* elements of African (and Coloured and Indian) cultures (for instance, ideas of communal ownership) and meeting the psychological impact of apartheid and colonialism with an affirmation of black working class pride. Such is part of the project of constructing self-management, equality and freedom, a participatory planned economy, and a South African working class republic [41], as part of a "great universal and international federation" of humanity [42].

# All GEARed Up for a New Growth Path – on the Road to Nowhere

by Shawn Hattingh (ZACF)

1. [www.treasury.gov.za/documents/national%20budget/.../chapter%203.pdf](http://www.treasury.gov.za/documents/national%20budget/.../chapter%203.pdf)

2. [www.info.gov.za/view/DownloadFileAction?id=135748](http://www.info.gov.za/view/DownloadFileAction?id=135748)

3. Bond, P. South African development goals will not be met. <http://www.zcommunications.org/south-african-development-goals-will-not-be-met-by-patrick-bond> 29th September 2010

4. [www.info.gov.za/view/DownloadFileAction?id=135748](http://www.info.gov.za/view/DownloadFileAction?id=135748)

It has become common knowledge that South Africa is the most unequal country in the world. Only 41% of people of working age are employed, while half of the people employed earn less than R 2 500 a month [1]. Worse still, inequality is growing with wages as a share of the national income dropping from 50% in 1994 to 45% in 2009; while profit as a share of national income has soared from 40% to 45% [2]. In real terms this means that while a minority live well – and have luxurious houses, swimming pools, businesses, investments, and cushy positions in the state - the majority of people live in shacks or tiny breezeblock dwellings, are surrounded by squalor, and struggle on a daily basis to acquire the basics of life like food and water. Likewise, while bosses, state managers, and politicians – both black and white – get to strut around in fancy suits barking orders; the

majority of people are expected to bow down, do as told, and swallow their pride.

Despite being expected to be subservient, however, protests in working class areas are spreading. People have become fed up with being unemployed, having substandard housing, suffering humiliation, and having their water and electricity cut off. In fact, per person South Africa has the highest rate of protests in the world [3]. It is in this context of growing community direct action, even if still largely un-coordinated, that the state has felt it necessary, at least on a rhetorical level, to declare its intentions to lead a fight against unemployment and reduce inequality. To supposedly do so it unveiled a new economic framework, *The New Growth Path* (NGP), late in 2010 with the declared aim of creating 5 million jobs by 2020 [4].

Amongst certain state officials and politicians,



including amongst the ANC alliance partner – the South African Communist Party (SACP) – the NGP has been presented as a monumental paradigm shift. In fact, it has been presented as the state’s trump card that will set the country on the road to greater equality and full employment in the long run [5]. Even the SACP’s Deputy General Secretary has hailed the NGP as a break from neo-liberalism and “market fundamentalism” [6], a decisive shift from the *Growth, Employment and Redistribution Policy* (GEAR). Unfortunately, as will be argued in the first half of the paper from an anarchist perspective, all of these claims are either wishful thinking or outright distortions. Neo-liberalism – in the form of a class war from above – is alive and well in South Africa. As such, it will be argued that the NGP builds on past ANC-led state policies that have attacked workers and the poor; while furthering the interests of the ruling class and promoting the growth of a black elite within it.

The anarchist critique which is offered in this paper, however, is not the first critique of the NGP. Various other left individuals and organisations, using a mixture of Marx and Keynes, have over the past few months also critiqued the NGP (what makes this paper different though is its anarchist framework, which leads to different conclusions). Due to their theoretical framework, the suggestions that have come out of these past critiques have called for a greater role for the state in the economy. For example, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) has called for the state to nationalise key industries and align itself firmly with the working class in order to address inequalities and unemployment. In the second half of this paper, it will be argued that such suggested alternatives are flawed from a class perspective. This is due to the reality that despite calling for what amounts to a ‘mixed’ economy, the alternatives suggested by COSATU ultimately fail to fully address the root causes of unemployment and inequality: class rule, the capitalist and *state* systems.

### DOES THE NGP REPRESENT ANYTHING NEW?

While the NGP may claim that its central aim is to reduce unemployment and fight inequality, in terms of policies, it is clearly mostly a continuation of neo-liberalism. Certainly, while the ANC-led state has become adept at avoiding much of the language overtly associated with

neo-liberalism – like privatisation – the neo-liberal framework of the NGP at a macroeconomic level is explicit. Consequently, the NGP stipulates that the state will be guided by “a more restrictive fiscal policy backed by macroeconomic measures to contain inflationary pressures and enhance competitiveness” [7]. This, far from representing a break, replicates the main elements of GEAR at a macro-economic level. This, therefore, translates into a situation where in real terms, and for the foreseeable future, the spending of the state will be reduced. While economic growth is envisioned as being 4% per annum in the NGP, and inflation slightly higher, government spending will be increased by only 2% a

year [8]. By its own admission, therefore, all the state is aiming to do is to use its resources more effectively and target its spending towards investments that would bring economic growth – and according to its rhetoric, the accompanying new jobs. Far from rolling services out to the poor, therefore, the NGP’s main aim is to allow for a more efficient capitalist economy and it calls for hard choices to be made in order to do so [9]. Thus, in terms of macroeco-

nomics the NGP is hardly a new path or a fundamental break from GEAR.

It is not only at the level of restrictive fiscal policy that the NGP fails to break with the central tenets of GEAR. Like its predecessors – GEAR and the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (ASGISA) – the NGP views an export orientated economy, increased competitiveness, foreign direct investment, increased productivity, wage restraints, cutting of costs for businesses and economic growth as being central to supposedly creating jobs [10]. This is largely a carbon copy of the main elements of GEAR. In fact, the NGP promotes the idea that wages should be capped and productivity agreements widely implemented. Of course, productivity agreements make wage increases conditional on increased productivity; they decrease the ability of workers to control the pace of work; and lead to the greater exploitation of workers [11]. The NGP, therefore, contains classic neo-liberal elements and anti-working class measures. It outlines eloquently in its introduction how workers and the poor in South Africa have suffered, but it then calls for greater exploitation of the workers and the poor as a measure to paradoxically overcome this suffering.

While the NGP crows loudly about its

*“The NGP... contains ... anti-working class measures. It outlines ... how workers and the poor in South Africa have suffered, but it then calls for greater exploitation of the workers and the poor as a measure to paradoxically overcome this suffering.”*

5. Mantashe, G. “The New Growth Path is the answer for jobs”. *ANC NEC Bulletin* January 2011.

6. Cronin, J. “Lets consolidate support for a new growth path”. *Umsebenzi Online*. Vol. No. 2 <http://www.sacp.org.za/main.php?include=pubs/umsebenzi/2011/vol110-02.html> 19th January 2011.

7. South African Treasury. 2010. *New Growth Path*, [www.info.gov.za/view/DownloadFileAction?id=135748](http://www.info.gov.za/view/DownloadFileAction?id=135748) pg. 16\

8. South African Treasury. 2010. *New Growth Path*, [www.info.gov.za/view/DownloadFileAction?id=135748](http://www.info.gov.za/view/DownloadFileAction?id=135748) pg. 16

9. South African Treasury. 2010. *New Growth Path*, [www.info.gov.za/view/DownloadFileAction?id=135748](http://www.info.gov.za/view/DownloadFileAction?id=135748),

10. South African Treasury. 2010. *New Growth Path*, [www.info.gov.za/view/DownloadFileAction?id=135748](http://www.info.gov.za/view/DownloadFileAction?id=135748)

11. [www.docencia.izt.uam.mx/egt/publicaciones/capituloslibros/ingl.pdf](http://www.docencia.izt.uam.mx/egt/publicaciones/capituloslibros/ingl.pdf)

declared intentions to create jobs and reduce inequality, the omissions of NGP document are, in many ways, more telling. The neo-liberal framework in South Africa is not a new phenomenon; it has been systematically put in place over a period of three decades. Aspects of neo-liberalism were first violently imposed by the P.W. Botha regime in the 1980s. It was in the 1980s that the drive to commercialise and privatise services and state-owned entities first began – at the time the main beneficiaries were a white elite associated with the apartheid state. Likewise, it was also during this period that a neo-liberal township housing policy was initially implemented and municipal taverns and community halls privatised. This was done in the context of massive black working class militancy and was aimed at promoting an allegiance to the notion of private property amongst black township residents to counter this militancy. Coupled with this, the aim of furthering the growth of a black entrepreneurial class – via privatising municipal taverns in townships and encouraging the private taxi industry was pursued. The state hoped that if it could encourage the growth of a black entrepreneurial stratum, it would align itself with the regime and capitalism and blunt calls for socialism [12].

When the ANC came into state power in 1994, they continued and deepened neo-liberalism. Naturally, top ANC officials did this for their own interests (more of which will be discussed below). Under ANC rule, therefore, trade tariffs were cut; financial liberalisation cemented; labour flexibility promoted, privatisation extended, and the corporatisation of state-owned entities accelerated and expanded. During the first months of ANC rule, the neo-liberal housing policy of PW Botha was also revived by the new housing minister and SACP heavy weight, Joe Slovo [13]. Indeed, the ANC used its ‘liberation’ credentials to push through neo-liberal measures that the apartheid state, due to popular resistance, never could.

For almost two decades, the ANC led state has built on these policies, meaning the economy and social life has been fundamentally altered by neo-liberalism. The consequences of these policies have been devastating for workers and the poor. Since 1994, 10 million people have had their water or electricity cut; 5 million people have been evicted from their homes; millions of people have lost their jobs due to the impact of

either privatisation or greater labour flexibility; and the housing backlog has grown to mammoth proportions [14]. This means that although people had high hopes for a post-apartheid society, and envisioned a more egalitarian society, the continued entrenchment of neo-liberalism has led to worse material conditions for the black working class (who due to apartheid already had very little), while the coloured, Indian, and white working classes have also sunk into poverty. Likewise, the gendered nature of neo-liberalism has also proved evident, with women disproportionately bearing the brunt of restructuring and privatization [15]. So while a black elite, via the state, have joined the white elite in the ruling class with the fall of apartheid, little has changed for the majority of people: the black working class may have won the vote, but beyond that little has altered and people within the working class have generally sank deeper into poverty. The fact is that the NGP fails to effectively address this nor does it link deepening

poverty to neo-liberalism. The NGP is, therefore, not a break with neo-liberalism, as claimed by the SACP, but it rather takes the neo-liberal restructuring of the South African economy and society as a given.

#### WHY DOES THE SACP THEN VIEW THE NGP AS A BREAK WITH NEO-LIBERALISM?

Perhaps the fundamental mistake the SACP makes, when viewing the NGP as a break with GEAR, is that they have come to

see any sort of state intervention in the economy as a shift from neo-liberalism. Consequently, the SACP views the NGP as a break from neo-liberalism partly because the state has made its intentions clear to continue its investments in infrastructure, and use state-owned corporations to try and stimulate growth, as first outlined in ASGISA [16]. However, the bulk of the infrastructure that the state intends to invest in is aimed at promoting the efficiency of the capitalist economy. This mainly revolves around improving infrastructure related to freight transport and expanding the energy supply by investing in green technologies and nuclear power [17]. The main beneficiaries of this will, of course, be corporations. As pointed out by South African anarchists such state intervention, and the expansion and maintenance of vital infrastructure, in itself does not represent

*“The consequences of these policies have been devastating for workers and the poor. Since 1994, 10 million people have had their water or electricity cut; 5 million people have been evicted from their homes; millions of people have lost their jobs due to the impact of either privatisation or greater labour flexibility”*

12. Schmidt, M. “The Dictatorial Roots of Neo-liberal Democracy in South Africa and Chile” [www.ainfos.ca/en/ainfos23104.htm](http://www.ainfos.ca/en/ainfos23104.htm) 13th September 2009

13. Bikisha Media Collective. 2001. *Fighting Privatisation in South Africa: Lessons from the Struggle Against Neo-liberalism at Wits University – an Anarchist Pamphlet*. Bikisha Media Collective: South Africa.

14. Van der Walt, L. 2007. “After ten years of GEAR: COSATU, the Zuma trial and the dead end alliance politics”. *Zabalaza: A Journal of Southern African Revolutionary Anarchism*, No 7. <http://zabalaza.net/2006/12/07/zabalaza-7-december-2006/>

15. ILRIG. 1999. *An Alternative View of Gender and Globalisation*. ILRIG: South Africa.

16. [www.sacp.org.za/main.php?include=docs/pr/2010/pr1128.html](http://www.sacp.org.za/main.php?include=docs/pr/2010/pr1128.html) 28th November 2010

17. South African Treasury. 2010. *New Growth Path*, [www.info.gov.za/view/DownloadFileAction?id=135748](http://www.info.gov.za/view/DownloadFileAction?id=135748)

a break from neo-liberalism [18].

The flawed logic of the SACP, however, is merely representative of a general trend amongst many within the left. There is often a mistaken assumption that neo-liberalism equates to a reduction in the power of the state, and that under neo-liberalism the state withdraws from the economy. Nothing could be further from the truth. Neo-liberalism arose as a response by states to the downturn in the global economy – including in South Africa – that first erupted in the 1970s [19]. In terms of this, neo-liberalism represents a class war from above to restore growth rates and increase profits to pre-1970 levels. Neo-liberalism, therefore, involves the state actively moving against workers and the poor through promoting privatisation, labour flexibility, wage restraints and the cutting of services to the working class. While this is done to workers and the poor, as part of neo-liberalism the state also intervenes for the benefit of the ruling class through amongst other things bailouts, tax reductions for the rich, opening up new investment opportunities to corporations, outsourcing, providing cheap finance and even subsidising certain key industries. Furthermore, neoliberalism promotes a *strong* state that can maintain a “level playing field” for



the private sector and actively and effectively enforce private property rights. Thus under neo-liberalism states have also expanded their oppressive functions, such as policing and intelligence gathering, to try blunt the protests that often accompany the attack on workers and the poor [20]. The aim of all these measures, therefore, is not to decrease the power of the state, but rather to use state power to increase the ruling classes' profits and wealth, while also securing its own sustainability by cutting the costs of providing services to the poor [21]. Indeed, state officials, in order to secure their own position in the ruling class, desire a strong economy – and in the current context they push neo-liberalism to try and ensure this. In this, their interests converge with the other part of the ruling class, the capitalists.

In South Africa, therefore, while attacking workers and the poor, the neo-liberal South African state has continuously tried to assist corporations in restoring and maximising growth. This has even involved the state using its resources to provide services to corporations at below cost and, when needed, it has also bailed out companies [22]. Therefore, states –

whether in South Africa or internationally – continue to play a key role in the economy (in South Africa state expenditure still accounts for over 30% of the GDP [23]). Although some states (but certainly not all) may cap their spending, what they do spend is also increasingly directed towards benefiting the ruling class. As such, neo-liberalism, both in South Africa and internationally, has involved the state using its vast power and resources to shift the balances of forces continuously towards the ruling class. Given that neo-liberalism is a class war from above, the fact that the South African state intends to spend money on projects that will stimulate growth and ultimately benefit the ruling class is, therefore, not a break with neo-liberalism; it is rather a central part of it.

The SACP has also lauded the fact that the NGP proposes that the state should intervene to

broaden black economic empowerment (BEE). In reality, however, this is simply a continuation of past state policies and offers very little indeed for the black working class. The NGP makes it clear that the interventions proposed are aimed at benefiting black-owned businesses. To promote BEE, therefore, the NGP proposes that the state increase its procurement, in terms of products and services (which would involve outsourcing),

from black entrepreneurs [24]. Added to this, it makes proposals for the establishment of a single funding agency to assist medium and small enterprises gain easier access to credit [25]. Again this is not anything new. ASGISA strongly promoted BEE, and it tied it to – amongst other things – the promotion of medium and small businesses [26]. Likewise, when the ANC took state power, in the context where neo-liberalism was hegemonic internationally, it sought to use neo-liberalism to promote the emergence of a black elite. This was done through privatisation and outsourcing. Although BEE in and of itself does not represent a neo-liberal policy; neo-liberalism therefore was used as a tool to promote BEE. The ANC has also directly used the state to further the development of a black elite via well-paid state jobs for top party members and making state loans to businesses conditional on them being BEE compliant. In fact, the ANC's nationalist agenda has always been to try to promote the development of black elite and black 'middle class' strata. For most of its history, the ANC leadership envisioned doing so through the nationalisation of key industries under a

18. Van der Walt, L. 2008. "ASGISA: a working class critique". *Zabalaza: A Journal of Southern African Revolutionary Anarchism*, No 8. <http://zabalaza.net/2008/02/08/zabalaza-8-february-2008/>

19. Hattingh, S. "The global economic crisis and the Fourth World War". [www.zcommunications.org/the-global-economic-crisis-and-the-fourth-world-war-by-shawn-hattingh](http://www.zcommunications.org/the-global-economic-crisis-and-the-fourth-world-war-by-shawn-hattingh) 15th April 2009

20. Price, W. 2001. "Capitalist globalisation and the national state". [www.utopianmag.com/files/in/100000048/globalization.pdf](http://www.utopianmag.com/files/in/100000048/globalization.pdf)

21. Hattingh, S. "The global economic crisis and the Fourth World War". [www.zcommunications.org/the-global-economic-crisis-and-the-fourth-world-war-by-shawn-hattingh](http://www.zcommunications.org/the-global-economic-crisis-and-the-fourth-world-war-by-shawn-hattingh) 15th April 2009

22. Hattingh, S. "Subsidies for the rich, cut-offs for the poor". [www.zcommunications.org/subsidies-for-the-rich-cut-offs-for-the-poor-by-shawn-hattingh](http://www.zcommunications.org/subsidies-for-the-rich-cut-offs-for-the-poor-by-shawn-hattingh) 30th April 2010

23. [www.iol.co.za/.../highlights-of-sa-2011-12-budget-speech-1.1031293?](http://www.iol.co.za/.../highlights-of-sa-2011-12-budget-speech-1.1031293?)

24. South African Treasury. 2010. *New Growth Path*, [www.info.gov.za/view/DownloadFileAction?id=135748](http://www.info.gov.za/view/DownloadFileAction?id=135748), pg. 17

25. South African Treasury. 2010. *New Growth Path*, [www.info.gov.za/view/DownloadFileAction?id=135748](http://www.info.gov.za/view/DownloadFileAction?id=135748), pg. 21

26. Van der Walt, L. 2008. "ASGISA: a working class critique". *Zabalaza: A Journal of Southern African Revolutionary Anarchism*, No 8. <http://zabalaza.net/2008/02/08/zabalaza-8-february-2008/>



capitalist framework [27]; by the 1990s, however, privatisation, equity schemes, state finance and outsourcing was viewed as key [28]. Nonetheless, as part of its commitment to foster the growth of a black elite, the possibility of the ANC-centred state officials (who form a distinct part of the ruling class) nationalising key industries in the future to further bolster this elite should also not be completely ruled out, despite the ANC's current commitment to neo-liberalism.

To foster the growth of this black elite, workers and the poor, the majority of whom are black, however, have been and will continue to be ruthlessly exploited and oppressed. Indeed, the wealth of the elite in South Africa – white and black – rests on the exploitation of the working class and the continued oppression of black workers. As such, the proposal of the NGP to further the growth of a black elite and entrepreneurial strata, from a class perspective, offers very little indeed to black workers and the poor, and the working class of all races in general. The SACP, due to its commitment to a two-stage theory of revolution, fails to grapple with this - let alone openly recognise it. Thus, with regards to the NGP's promotion of BEE, very little is new including the rhetoric that it should be 'broad based'.

It is also in this context of striving to expand the black elite and 'middle class' strata that the NGP's proposal to create a state-owned mining company, and possibly bank, should be viewed. These proposals too have been lauded by the SACP, who views them ultimately as being a possible foundation on which socialism could be built once the National Democratic phase of the 'revolution' is supposedly completed [29]. When the state-owned mining company, discussed in the NGP and so praised by the SACP, was 'launched' in May 2011 it, however, entailed expanding and further commercialising an existing state-owned entity, the African Exploration Mining and Finance Corporation (AEMFC). The central aim of the AEMFC is to mine minerals that are seen as strategic for the growth of the South African economy. In fact, the AEMFC will be heavily involved in coal mining to supply the state-owned energy producer ESKOM (which provides electricity at below cost to the biggest companies in South Africa) with coal. As part of expanding the AEMFC, private companies with BEE credentials will be receiving the contracts for the construction of coalmines [30]. As such, the expansion of the state's mining company fits in nicely with the state's commitment to BEE

and its goal of ensuring capitalist growth. It is also clear that the state-owned mining company itself will be run on capitalist lines and perhaps it is no accident the largest mineworkers' union was deliberately snubbed at the launch of AEMFC's newest coal mine [31].

By claiming that its aims are to end inequality and unemployment, however, the NGP attempts to hide its true intentions and to hide the real nature of the state. When under pressure, or to maintain the status quo, states will regularly claim to be the servants of the poor and workers; while in reality facilitating their exploitation and oppression. It is this that led the revolutionary anarchist Errico Malatesta to argue that the state: "cannot maintain itself for long without hiding its true nature behind a pre-

*"To foster the growth of this black elite, workers and the poor, the majority of whom are black, however, have been and will continue to be ruthlessly exploited and oppressed."*

tence of general usefulness; it cannot impose respect for the lives of the privileged people if it does not appear to demand respect for human life, it cannot impose acceptance of the privileges of the few if it does not pretend to be the guardian of the rights of all" [32]. Via the NGP, and other documents, therefore the South African state is attacking workers and the

poor whilst claiming to be their defender. As such, one of its central goals is to stop people identifying the South African state for what it is: an instrument of exploitation and oppression. In terms of this hypocrisy the South African state is no different to any other state and, as such, it is well-versed in the art of politics: lying and deceiving.

## **A SOLUTION FROM MARX? OR IS THAT KEYNES?**

Although the SACP has rained down praise on the NGP; other left organisations have been more critical. Despite being in an alliance with the ANC and 'deploying' officials into the state, the largest union federation in the country, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), has also rightly described the NGP as neo-liberal. To counter this neo-liberalism it has suggested that the state should play a greater role in the economy and align firmly with workers and the poor. Amongst other things it has argued that a new growth path should, therefore, be based on the state expanding its direct employment of people, the state rolling out social services, the state undertaking land redistribution, the state ensuring fair trade and the state nationalising key industries. It believes that through this, and by becoming bias towards the working class, the state could play a key role in addressing and reversing the class,

27. Zabalaza Anarchist Communist Front (ZACF). "BEE-llionaires in Mbekistan: BEE debate shows nature of post-apartheid SA, and limits of 'left' critique". *Zabalaza: A Journal of Southern African Revolutionary Anarchism*, No. 6. <http://zabalaza.net/2005/04/06/zabalaza-6-april-2005/>

28. McKinley, D. "The real history and contemporary character of Black Economic Empowerment (Part 2)". [www.sacsis.org.za/site/article/617.1](http://www.sacsis.org.za/site/article/617.1) 9th February 2011

29. Programme of the South African Communist Party. 1962. *The Road to South African Freedom*. Farleigh Press Ltd: United Kingdom

30. <http://www.businesslive.co.za/incoming/2011/02/26/zuma-launches-new-state-owned-mine> 26th February 2011

31. <http://www.businesslive.co.za/incoming/2011/02/26/zuma-launches-new-state-owned-mine> 26th February 2011

32. Malatesta, E. 1974. *Anarchy*. Freedom Press: Britain, pg. 10.

race and gender inequalities in South Africa. As such, it argues that the state should intervene to alleviate the worst effects of capitalism [33].

Although its critique of the NGP is by and large sound, in terms of its suggested alternatives, COSATU falls into a number of traps. Although COSATU has a genuine desire to see the lives of workers and the poor improved, it does not call for a complete break with capitalism. As such, COSATU in essence demands a mixed economy and ultimately its suggested alternatives amount to a call for a Keynesian type welfare state. In this, however, COSATU fails to fully address the reality that even under Keynesian capitalism, where the state has ownership of certain key industries and roles out greater welfare, unemployment, inequality and exploitation of the working class still continues [34]. Under all forms of capitalism, whether neoliberalism or the type demanded by COSATU, it is the working class that produces all the wealth, and it is the ruling class that seizes most of it through the wage system and taxes. Worse still, because under all forms of capitalism goods are produced for profit, and not need, the fewer workers that are employed the better for the capitalists: it increases their profits [35]. Hence inequalities and unemployment are part and parcel of all forms of capitalism. COSATU's suggested alternatives don't fully address this, and their alternatives – if implemented – would amount to a situation whereby there would be a continuous papering over of cracks; and the root cause of inequality and unemployment, capitalism, would remain unaddressed. Certainly, it may be better to live under Keynesian capitalism than a neo-liberal variety, but under Keynesianism workers are still robbed by the ruling class and inequality still exists.

Perhaps the biggest problem with COSATU's suggested alternative, from an anarchist perspective, is its faith that states could deliver greater equality, meet the needs of the working class, and side with the working class. All states, of whatever variety, are inherently oppressive and violent. Thus, beneath all of the rhetoric about being instruments of the people, states are centralising and hierarchical institutions which exist to enforce a situation whereby a minority rules over a majority [36]. The hierarchical structure of all states also inevitably concentrates power in the hands of the directing elite. States and the existence of an elite are,

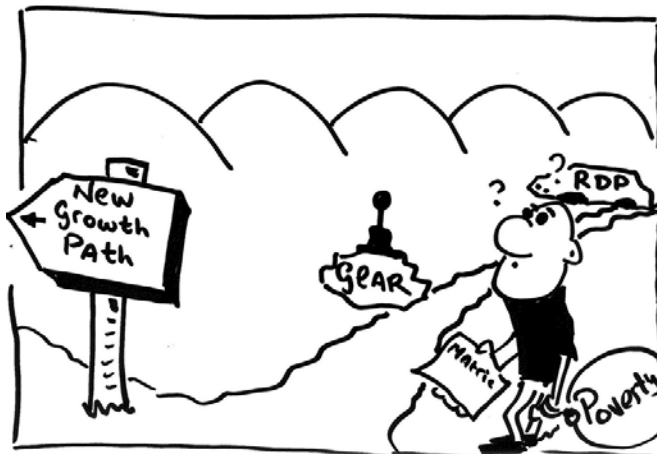
therefore, synonymous. Thus, the state serves dominant minorities and by definition it has to be centralised, since a minority can only rule when power is concentrated in their hands and when decisions made by them flow down a chain of command. It is specifically this that allows minorities who seek to rule people (high ranking state officials) and exploit people (capitalists) to achieve their aims [37]. Therefore, states, including the South African state, ultimately can never serve the interests of the working class, or have a bias towards the working class (as COSATU hopes), but are rather central instruments of ruling class power. As Bakunin stressed, the state is “the flagrant, the most cynical and the most complete negation of humanity...it shatters the universal solidarity of all men and women on the earth, and brings some of them into association only for the purpose of destroying, conquering and enslaving all the rest” [38].

The oppression and exploitation of the majority of people will, and does, happen even under a parliamentary system. This is because even in a parliamentary system a handful of people get

to make decisions, instruct others what to do, and enforce these instructions through the state. Bakunin noted that it may be better to live under a parliamentary system than a pure dictatorship, but he also pointed out that a parliamentary system was “the surest way to consolidate under

the mantle of liberalism and justice the permanent domination of the people by the owning classes, to the detriment of popular liberty” [39]. As a consequence, even under a parliamentary system, when people don't obey the top-down instructions of the state or disagree with them, the power of the state is used to coerce and/or punish them. Thus, the state as a centralised mechanism of ruling class power also claims a monopoly of legitimate force within ‘its’ territory; and will use that force when it deems necessary – including against protestors raising issues like a lack of jobs, a lack of housing, poor wages and a lack of basic services. States are, therefore, the antithesis of freedom.

The Soviet Union was a prime example of this. It was the Soviet state, under the dictatorship of the Bolshevik Party, which violently destroyed the drive by workers, peasants and the poor for freedom and socialism in Russia. This happened shortly after the October Revolution when the interests of the working class and



33. Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). 2011. “Government’s New Growth Path Framework: One Step Forward, Two Steps Backward”. [www.cosatu.org.za/docs/subs/2011/ngp\\_response.html](http://www.cosatu.org.za/docs/subs/2011/ngp_response.html)

34. Van der Walt, L. 2010. “COSATU’s response to the crisis: An anarcho-syndicalist perspective”. *Zabalaza: A Journal of Southern African Revolutionary Anarchism*, No 11.

35. Berkman, A. 1989. *What is Communist Anarchism?*. Phoenix Press: Britain

36. Bakunin, M. *The Immorality of the State*. <http://libcom.org/library/immorality-of-the-state-mikhail-bakunin>

37. Van der Walt, L. & Schmidt, M. 2009. *Black Flame: The Revolutionary Class Politics of Anarchism and Syndicalism*. AK Press: United States.\

38. Bakunin, M. *Rousseau’s Theory of the State*. [www.libcom.org/library/rousseau-theory-of-state-mikhail-bakunin](http://www.libcom.org/library/rousseau-theory-of-state-mikhail-bakunin)

39. Dolgoff, S (ed.). 2002. *Bakunin on Anarchism*. Black Rose Books: United States, pg. 224

peasantry began to openly clash with those of the elite within the Bolshevik Party. Beginning in 1917, once the Bolsheviks had solidified their grasp on state power, they used the state to undermine the hope of direct democracy within the soviets; they created a new secret police to crush anarchists, workers and peasants who wanted stateless socialism; they re-instated hierarchies within the military; and they ended freedom of speech [40]. By 1921 those who resisted Bolshevik and state power were even sent off to concentration camps. Likewise, and under Lenin, the state also killed any hope of worker control over the economy. Within months of the Bolsheviks first seizing state power, worker-self-management was ended, strikes were effectively outlawed, labour was militarised, one-man management was imposed, Taylorism was embraced, and the relations of production that define capitalism were celebrated and entrenched [41]. The fact that the Soviet state had nationalised most of the factories, which had originally been seized by workers from the capitalists, contributed to this – it gave the Soviet state immense power which it wielded against the workers. In fact, the Soviet state accepted no independent initiative from workers in factories and state rule proved itself incompatible with workers self-management, direct democracy and genuine socialism [42]. Indeed, state ownership never translated into the socialisation of property and wealth, it never led to an end to capitalism, it did not overturn capitalist relations of production, and it smothered workers' control. Therefore, the very logic of all states has proven to be centralist, authoritarian and elitist. It is this that needs to be reflected upon and considered before placing faith in states, or believing that they could deliver justice and freedom for the oppressed.

### CONCLUSION

The NGP needs to be seen for what it is: an attempt by the state to improve the economy's efficiency, to maintain economic growth and to nurture the continued growth of a black elite. To do so, workers and the poor in South Africa have to be ruthlessly exploited. The NGP itself makes this clear with its calls for wage restraints and productivity agreements. At a rhetorical level the NGP may claim that it wants to promote employment and fight inequality, but due to its cap-

italist and statist orientation it cannot do this and is rather an instrument developed by the ruling class to serve the interests of the ruling class. In fact, the ruling class – in the form of capitalists and high-ranking state officials – will never deliver employment for all and equality. Their positions at the top of society are based solely on the exploitation and oppression of workers and the poor. Hence, workers and the poor can't rely on ruling classes or their documents like the NGP, or states – which due to their centralised and hierarchical nature serve and generate rulers – to bring about an end to unemployment, inequality, oppression and exploitation.

While the working class needs to engage in struggles to fight for jobs, end privatisation, stop labour flexibility, raise wages and improve working conditions today, there also, therefore, needs to be a realisation that the state and capitalism are the root causes of these evils. As such, we

*“...only when workers... have direct control of the economy, when all wealth has been socialised, and when the state has been replaced with structures of direct democracy, self-management and self-governance – like federated community and worker assemblies / councils – will unemployment and inequality be permanently ended.”*

need to begin to work towards galvanising the existing struggles in South Africa into a movement that could become a counter-power to the state and capitalism, and in doing so we need to gradually transform struggles from defensive in nature to offensive. We, therefore, need to use the fight for reforms today to begin to build towards a social revolution. Social revolution, however, does not mean the state simply nationalising industries, as COSATU, other left forces and some nationalists have called for in South Africa. It rather means doing away with

the state and capitalism completely – only when these oppressive and exploiting systems are gone can workers and the poor achieve freedom. As such, only when workers and the poor have direct control of the economy, when all wealth has been socialised, and when the state has been replaced with structures of direct democracy, self-management and self-governance – like federated community and worker assemblies/councils – will unemployment and inequality be permanently ended. Claiming that the NGP breaks with neo-liberalism or placing hope in the state, however, is not bringing us any closer to such a society or struggle; it rather distracts us from it, offers nothing and leads down a road to nowhere.

40. Chattopadhyay, P. “Did the Bolshevik seizure of power inaugurate a socialist Revolution? A Marxian inquiry”. <http://libcom.org/library/did-bolshevik-seizure-power-inaugurate-socialist-revolution-marxian-inquiry-paresh-chatt>

41. Brown, T. 1995. *Lenin and Workers' Control*. AK Press: United States

42. Brinton, M. 1970. *The Bolsheviks and Workers' Control*. Black Rose Books: Canada



# Alternative Needed to Nationalisation and Privatisation: State Industries like South Africa's ESKOM show Working Class deserves better

by Tina Sizovuka and Lucien van der Walt

*"To assure the labourers that they will be able to establish socialism ... [through] government machinery, changing only the persons who manage it... is... a colossal historical blunder which borders upon crime..."*

**Pyotr Kropotkin,**  
"Modern Science and Anarchism"

## INTRODUCTION

Privatisation – the transfer of functions and industry to the private sector – is widely and correctly rejected on the left and in the working class. Privatisation leads only to higher prices, less and worse jobs, and worse services. Given this, some view nationalisation – the transfer of economic resources (e.g. mines, banks, and factories) to state ownership and control – as a rallying cry for a socialist alternative. As the supposedly pro-working class alternative, this cry has resounded in sections of the SA Communist Party (SACP), in the Congress of SA Trade Unions (Cosatu), in the African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL) membership, and on the independent Trotskyite and social democratic left.

This article argues that nationalisation has never removed capitalism, nor led to socialism, and it certainly does not have a demonstrable record of consistently improving wages, jobs, rights and safety. Nationalisation, rather than promote "workers' control" or companies' accountability to the public, has routinely meant top-down management, union-bashing, bad services and bad conditions.

This article appeals to progressive working class forces to look instead to another way: *collectivisation* from below, where industry is placed under direct workers' self-management, subject to worker-community participatory

democratic planning and control to meet human needs and end oppression, in a universal human community.

It is necessary to *tactically* oppose the privatisation of existing state companies *because* this is demonstrably *used* to launch further attacks on the working class – but this is quite different to a *strategy of promoting* state industry as a *solution* to the problems of the working class. This is because state industry is *itself* a weapon used by the ruling class against the working class. Neither privatisation nor nationalisation is a solution.

State companies play a central role in oppressing the working class in every single country. In the South African case, they actively perpetuate the economic exploitation, social domination and national oppression of the majority. The notion that nationalisation is somehow inherently left-wing is untrue: it has been used by governments

as reactionary as the *apartheid* regime, Portuguese colonialism, and Nazi Germany. Its existence in the old Soviet Union and other so-called "communist" regimes does not change this: these Marxist regimes were state-capitalist dictatorships based on terror and repression, regardless of their rhetoric about socialism, workers' power etc. (see below).

Privatisation and nationalisation have failed the working class: the collectivisation alternative has a demonstrable and inspiring history of direct "workers' control" and accountability, of



*"It is necessary to tactically oppose... privatisation of existing state companies because this is demonstrably used to launch further attacks on the working class – but this is quite different to a strategy of promoting state industry... because state industry is itself a weapon used by the ruling class against the working class. Neither privatisation nor nationalisation is a solution."*

1. See M. Amsden, 1978, "Industrial Collectivisation Under Workers' Control: Catalonia, 1937 - 1939", *Antipode: A Radical Journal of Geography*, Vol 10. No 3.
2. ANCYL, 2010, *Towards the Transfer of Mineral Wealth to the Ownership of the People as a Whole: a perspective on nationalisation of the mines*. Available at [http://us-cdn.creamermedia.co.za/assets/articles/attachments/25571\\_nationalisation\\_of\\_mines\\_document-feb\\_2010.pdf](http://us-cdn.creamermedia.co.za/assets/articles/attachments/25571_nationalisation_of_mines_document-feb_2010.pdf)
3. ANCYL, 2010, *Towards the Transfer of Mineral Wealth to the Ownership of the People as a Whole: a perspective on nationalisation of the mines*. Available at [http://us-cdn.creamermedia.co.za/assets/articles/attachments/25571\\_nationalisation\\_of\\_mines\\_document-feb\\_2010.pdf](http://us-cdn.creamermedia.co.za/assets/articles/attachments/25571_nationalisation_of_mines_document-feb_2010.pdf)
4. B. Naidu & S. Pliso, 21 Feb 2010, "How Malema made his Millions", *Sunday Times*
5. SAPA, 12 Feb 2012, "Malema Cronies Looted Limpopo: report", *TimesLive*, at <http://www.timeslive.co.za/local/2012/02/12/malema-cronies-looted-limpopo-report>
6. E.g. Cosatu/ SACP, 1999, *Building Socialism Now: Preparing for the New Millennium* (Johannesburg: Cosatu), pp. 65, 70; SA Communist Party, 1999. For a fuller discussion and assessment of the Cosatu programme: L. van der Walt, 2010, "COSATU's Response to the Crisis: an anarcho-syndicalist assessment and alternative", *Zabalaza: a journal of southern African revolutionary anarchism*, no. 11
7. N. Bauer, 5 August 2011, "A foregone conclusion, says Cosatu", *Mail and Guardian*

dramatically improved working conditions, and of enormous contributions to jobs and communities.[1]

It is also being revived internationally, at a time that privatisation and nationalisation are discredited. The Argentinean occupation movement of the 2000s and other recent examples are the latest in a tradition that has achieved incredible successes. A highpoint is the anarchist/syndicalist Spanish Revolution of the 1930s, perhaps the most impressive worker/peasant revolution of all time.

So, it is urgent and important that anarchists/syndicalists explain why nationalisation does *not and never has* provided a real solution, and to articulate collectivisation as a desirable and feasible alternative. The struggle against ruling class domination and exploitation, which operates through both private companies and state companies, must be linked to a conscious struggle to replace both types with a new bottom-up model: the workers' collective, based on the slogan Resist-Occupy-Produce, and located within a democratic worker-community-run anarchist communist economy.

### AIMS OF ARTICLE

This article develops these arguments, making concrete reference to the long and unpleasant South African experience of state industry and nationalisation. The extensive South African experience of nationalisation and state industry, including Eskom (power), Spoornet (rail) and Sasol (oil), provides a concrete case showing nationalisation has nothing to do with the "liberation of the working class" – as some, like Julius Malema of the ANCYL, have claimed.[2]

Recent reports – by state-owned Eskom, the biggest power utility in Africa, of 60 percent profits, despite its record of racism before 1994, of massive retrenchments, discriminatory tariffs, millions of cut-offs of poor households, and economically devastating rolling blackouts – are just the tip of a dirty iceberg.

The failings of nationalisation are true regardless of the party holding office. And true regardless of whether the state in question calls itself a "workers' state", a "people's republic", or "soviet", or "anti-imperialist".

### WHY DO SOME WANT NATIONALISATION?

Here, we must distinguish between the Malema/ ANCYL leadership, who use the "nationalisation" slogan with a hidden elitist agenda, and the progressive forces who genuinely see nationalisation as a way forward for the working class.

In 2010 and 2011, the ANCYL grabbed headlines worldwide by calling for the "nationalisation of the mines" and "other monopoly industries", as a means of democratising wealth and funding welfare, more and better jobs and "economic freedom".[3]

This was a case of simple political dishonesty. Then-ANCYL head Julius Malema, who posed

as a radical champion of the poor, was an exploiter of the worst type. A controversial and corrupt multi-millionaire, he made a fortune stealing money from hospitals, schools and public housing projects through crooked privatisation deals.[4] (See article on Malema, this issue).

But Malema had touched a proletarian nerve. Whatever the antics of the ANCYL leadership, the organisation certainly attracts some sincere black working class youth, who are desperately looking for solutions. South Africa remains a society with massive inequalities, and so a range of other leftwing forces also sought to ride the wave

of enthusiasm that the nationalisation slogan evoked.

Cosatu (correctly) condemned Malema's ANC faction and allies as "predators" for their role in looting the Limpopo province through the state.[5] Yet it also highlighted nationalisation as a plank in its (essentially social democratic) programme of slowly reforming capitalism into socialism.[6]

Since Cosatu's strategy centres on winning the ANC over from neo-liberalism, it used Malema's outbursts to raise nationalisation with the ANC,[7] meanwhile "engaging" the ANCYL.[8 on facing page] The SACP – like Cosatu, allied to the ruling ANC – also endorsed some nationalisation at its July 2012 congress. (For more on Cosatu's programme see article on the "New Growth Path", this issue.)

Outside the ANC/SACP/ Cosatu milieu, the newly formed Democratic Left Front's (DLF's)

*"The struggle against ruling class domination and exploitation, which operates through both private companies and state companies, must be linked to a conscious struggle to replace both types with a new bottom-up model: the workers' collective, based on the slogan Resist-Occupy-Produce, and located within a democratic worker-community-run anarchist communist economy."*

Brian Ashley (editor of *Amandla* magazine) asked: “Nationalisation: can we afford not to?” He insisted “the left should welcome” the nationalisation call, since nationalisation was supposedly a “radical reform” linked to the “struggle for socialism”.<sup>[9]</sup> The Democratic Socialist Movement (DSM), a well-established Trotskyist formation that played a heroic role in the 2010/11 Mine-Line occupation in Gauteng,<sup>[10]</sup> and has recently played an important role in supporting strike committees during the strike wave on the Rustenburg mines, also called for nationalisation, although “under workers’ control”.

### SO, WHERE DOES THE PROBLEM LIE?

The exploitation of the working class – as well as other forms of oppression, such as national oppression – are to a large extent the result of a society run from the top down, as a small ruling class monopolises production, administration and coercion. Such a society is undemocratic, exploitative and inegalitarian. This situation helps grow the bitter fruits of wars, poverty and racism.

To really change society, economic and political power needs to be removed from the ruling class, and be placed in the hands of the majority of people; to exercise control through self-management, assemblies, worker and community councils, and participatory planning. This is precisely the vision of anarchism/ syndicalism (as well as other libertarian socialist currents, like Council Communism).

### THE STATE IS PART OF THE PROBLEM

So, if socialism means anything, it must mean democratic working class power. But how can this exist in a nationalised industry? The SACP, Cosatu and Ashley are fairly vague, placing their hopes in a “progressive” government taking its lead from the electorate (with some input from unions).

The problem is that the state *cannot* be placed under the control of the working class, as it is a hierarchical structure run by a ruling class minority, in which most people have no say at all. For example, current South African state policy under the ANC is neo-liberal, stressing privatisation and the like. While the majority of the population openly opposes these measures, it has never really been asked its opinion: the ANC imposes these measures nonetheless. The state

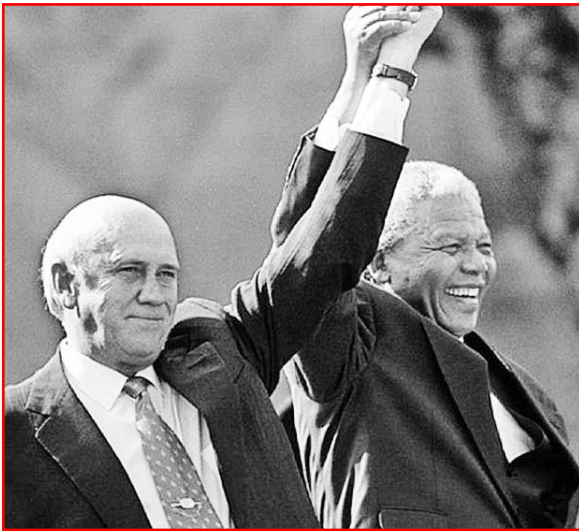
is always and everywhere *unaccountable to the working class*.

Nationalised and state industries have exactly the same features as the state more generally. Like private companies, they are run from above, by and for the ruling elite, and rest upon accumulation through exploitation.

### “UNDER WORKERS’ CONTROL”?

As a result, “nationalisation under workers’ control” is a contradiction in terms; it is impossible to implement. If the means of production are nationalised, they *cannot* be under any real “workers’ control”, but only under elite control. Nationalisation and privatisation are just two different ways that the ruling class runs society; they are not means through which the working class can run society. Both are undemocratic, run top-down by and for the rich and powerful.

Now, it may be argued (in the classical Marxist tradition), that what applies to nationalisation under a *capitalist* state will not apply under a so-called “workers’ state”.<sup>[11]</sup> The so-called “dictatorship of the proletariat” would operate, it is claimed, under the democratic control of the working class. This, supposedly, is



what happened in the early years of the Soviet Union.

In fact, that there is not a single historical example of “nationalisation under workers’ control” – and the history of the early Soviet Union bears this claim out; it does not contradict it.

### THE SOVIET MIRAGE

All of the so-called “workers’ states”, of which the Soviet Union was the first, were, from day one, one-party dictatorships based on the classical Marxist idea of a “political party” grabbing “state power”, using “centralisation”, “dictatorship” and “force”,<sup>[12]</sup> with the economy in “the hands of the state”, worked by state-directed “industrial armies”.<sup>[13]</sup>

The Soviet Union under V.I. Lenin set the pattern. Lenin imposed nationalisation

on worker-run industries, with the workers’ committees set up at the start of the revolution replaced by state-appointed managers with “unlimited” power.<sup>[14]</sup> Unions were illegal, wages fell, industrial accidents were commonplace; protestors were murdered or jailed. Like Joseph Stalin, Leon Trotsky too insisted upon state-run industry, and upon the dictatorship of a single Party, “even if that dictatorship temporarily

8. For example, “Vavi joins ANCYL in Calls for Nationalisation”, 6 Aug 2011, *Mail and Guardian Online*, at <http://mg.co.za/article/2011-08-06-vavi-speaks-in-favour-of-nationalisation>

9. B. Ashley, 2010, “The Left and the Nationalisation Debate: shape it, don’t sidestep it”, *Amandla*, no. 13

10. See S. Hattingsh, 2011, “Take Back What’s Yours: the Mine-Line Occupation”, *Zabalaza: a journal of southern African revolutionary anarchism*, no. 11, pp. 4-5

11. E.g. *New Nation*, 7-13 Dec. 1990, “Nationalisation”

12. Marx’s words: H. Gerth (ed.), 1958, *The First International: Minutes of the Hague Conference of 1872*, University of Wisconsin Press, 1958, pp. 216-17, 285-86

13. K. Marx & F. Engels, [1848] 1954, *The Communist Manifesto*, Henry Regnery, pp. 40, 55-56

14. E.g. M. Brinton, 1970, *The Bolsheviks and Workers Control, 1917-1921*, Solidarity



clashed with the passing moods of the workers' democracy".[15]

(Of course, there are alternative Marxist traditions, like Council Communism, which take entirely different positions: however, the statist, dictatorial "classical" strand has been overwhelmingly dominant in the Marxist tradition and its history).

### NO SUCH THING AS THE "PUBLIC SECTOR"

It is also flatly wrong to describe the state sector as the "public sector", as we have been taught to do: the state is neither run for, nor by, the working class majority of the "public". And state industries basically operate to ensure economic growth, profits and war preparation for the benefit of the ruling class.

Anarchists have long argued that the state is part of ruling class power. No matter which party is in power, "*States are ... not neutral entities or potential allies of the oppressed; they are rather part of the oppression of the majority of people*".[16] There is nothing democratic about the state: *the state managers are part of the ruling class, along with the private capitalists.*

The working class is exploited in state industries, just as in private industries, through wage labour, and lacks any real control over these means of production. The work process is authoritarian, run top-down by the state elite, and, just as in the private sector, unpaid surplus value is accumulated and reinvested.

Sometimes the state subsidises nationalised industries, but it does so by purchasing inputs (excluding labour) at a loss, and/ or by selling the products at a loss. It does not subsidise the workforce: rather, *the workforce* subsidises the nationalised industry through direct exploitation as well as through taxes and levies. Anarchist theorist Pyotr Kropotkin stressed that "*the amount of work given every year by the producer to the state must be enormous*".[17]

### THE ANC, NP AND NATIONALISATION

Although privatisation is today embraced by most states, nationalisation was routinely adopted by capitalist states and parties worldwide until the late 1970s; it was not a controversial policy, but one shared by everyone from Lenin, to Hendrik Verwoerd. Big "Western" powers used nationalisation regularly: Britain had nationalised coal mines, BP, Rolls Royce; the US nationalised some railways and banks; Park Chung Hee's rightwing South Korean dictatorship nationalised banks, railways and other sec-

tors; Brazilian dictator Getúlio Dornelles Vargas used nationalisation, and industries were routinely nationalised in the Soviet Union.

The ANC, now South Africa's ruling party, favoured nationalisation in its 1955 "Freedom Charter", and again in the famed 1969 "Morogoro" statement. But this was not a radical position: its opponent, the ruling *apartheid* National Party (NP), was elected in 1948 on a pro-nationalisation platform. Its project included massively expanding the state industry over the 30 years that followed, and offering large-scale assistance, in an effort to expand and boost the historically weak Afrikaner elite.

In this, the NP merely built upon the policies of earlier South African governments, notably the 1924-1948 Pact / Fusion era: Eskom / Escom (a contraction of "electricity supply commission") was formed in 1923, the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) in 1927, Iscor (iron and steel) in 1928, and South African Airways (SAA) in 1934.

The ANC was never anti-capitalist: it was a nationalist party controlled by the African elite that was being throttled by racist laws. Of course, it played a progressive role in the fight against *apartheid*, but that is a separate matter.

Nationalisation was envisaged as a means of helping that elite expand through a supportive ANC government.

Specifically rejecting claims that the Freedom Charter was "communist", Nelson Mandela insisted that nationalisation was aimed at "the development of a prosperous non-European bour-

geois class".[18] (This is comparable to the NP strategy discussed above)

### SA COMMUNIST PARTY AND THE CHARTER

The Freedom Charter was largely written by SACP cadre; but this does not change the above analysis – because the SACP (and the earlier Communist Party of South Africa/ CPSA) was from 1928 committed to the Marxist-Leninist two-stage strategy for the "colonial and semi-colonial world": first anti-imperialism (in SA, anti-"internal colonialism"/*apartheid*); socialism later.

In the 1940s, the CPSA/ SACP decided that the ANC (not the CPSA) was the vehicle for stage one. So, the CPSA, the dominant force in black politics at the time,[19] transferred its base and cadre to the small crisis-ridden ANC, which subsequently became a mass movement. (Mandela's and Tambo's small ANCYL later got the credit).



15. Quoted in Alec Nove, 1990, *Studies in Economics and Russia*, Macmillan, p. 181

16. Hattingh, 2011, pp. 4-5

17. Quoted in C. Berneri, [1925] 1995, "Kropotkin: his federalist ideas", *The Raven*, no. 31, p. 274

18. N. Mandela, June 1956, "In Our Lifetime", *Liberation*,

19. See P. Alexander, 2000, *Workers, War and the Origins of Apartheid: Labour and politics in South Africa*, James Currey et al; L. Callinicos, 1990, "The Communist Party during the War Years", *South African Labour Bulletin*, vol. 15, no. 3.

But the party did *not* aim to make the ANC anti-capitalist; instead it was to be transformed, into a multi-class, anti-monopoly, anti-imperialist Popular Front for a “national democracy”. Such a Front *cannot* be anti-capitalist, as it aims to *include* capitalists – and this is why the Charter was explicitly designed to accommodate all classes, including the supposedly anti-imperialist “non- European bourgeois class”.

### A “MIXED ECONOMY”?

The 1969 “Morogoro” statement used the fiery language of “revolution”, but “revolution” here simply meant the recently-banned ANC’s turn to guerrilla war in the face of relentless NP persecution. For the ANC, “revolution” meant only the forcible defeat of the NP (now that lobbying was impossible), thereby enabling implementation of the ANC’s moderate, pro-capitalist reform programme.

Using guns is not, in fact, automatically “revolutionary”: a liberal with guns is just an “armed liberal”.<sup>[20]</sup> “Morogoro’s” framework remained the Freedom Charter, and all that that entailed.<sup>[21]</sup> Twenty years on, the ANC’s leader, O.R. Tambo, again clarified:<sup>[22]</sup>

*The Freedom Charter does not even purport to want to destroy the capitalist system. All that the Freedom Charter does is to envisage a mixed economy in which part of the economy, some of the industries, would be controlled, owned by the state (as happens in many countries), and the rest by private ownership – a mixed economy.*

In short, a “mixed economy” was merely a mixture of top-down state and top-down private ownership: the main forms were the Keynesian Welfare State (KWS) and Import-Substitution (ISI) models.

### STATE INDUSTRY IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Such a “mixed economy” was commonplace under the southern African colonial and *apartheid* regimes that parties like the ANC opposed. Portugal nationalised extensive foreign assets in colonial Mozambique and Angola from 1910. Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) got seriously started on its ISI policy in the 1930s, and its state sector kept growing under Ian Smith’s 1960s and 1970s white republic.

The NP in South Africa regularly used nationalisation as a policy, as part of an ISI project, both in its first term in office as part the 1924 Pact government, and then again from 1948. It eventually ran a larger state sector than Marxist Czechoslovakia. Nationalisation was the openly stated policy of men like J.B.M. Hertzog, D.F. Malan, and Verwoerd.

Some of these assets were privatised from 1979, when the NP shifted policy (see below), notably the flagship Sasol and Iscor enterprises; most were not. When the ANC entered government from late 1993 (as part of the Transitional Executive) there were an estimated 300 state companies, which the ANC inherited when the NP left the ANC-led “Government of National Unity” in 1996.

*“[T]he party [the SACP] did not aim to make the ANC anti-capitalist; instead it was to be transformed, into a multi-class, anti-monopoly, anti-imperialist Popular Front for a “national democracy”. Such a Front cannot be anti-capitalist, as it aims to include capitalists*

### THE BLACK STATE ELITE

The ANC has continued the privatisation policy, started by the NP in its last years, but even so, the state sector remains vast. Those who complain that the black elite lack economic power need look no further.

The state is still the biggest single employer, the state’s 2009/2010 budget is around 23 percent of the value of total GDP,<sup>[23]</sup> and the state is responsible for 44 percent of fixed capital stock, also owning at least 25% of land (more if we include state companies’ land).<sup>[24]</sup>

In state industry, the old Afrikaner elite has been rapidly replaced by a new African elite, but the state companies’ old tradition of bad services, low wages, casual labour, and high prices continues. None of these companies were ever “beacons of safer working environments and working conditions”<sup>[25]</sup> - as the logic of the nationalisation argument suggests they should have been.

### ESKOM AND THE “BIG FOUR”

The four largest state companies (the “Big Four”) include Transnet (transport), which was created by the NP in 1990 from South African Airways (SAA, formed in 1934), and the SA Railways and Harbours division (formed 1910). Telkom (telecommunications) emerged in 1991 from the Post and Telecommunications Department. Denel was formed in 1992 from Armscor (weapons, formed in 1948).<sup>[26]</sup> (Contrary, then, to ridiculous ANCYL calls for the nationalisation of “rail and energy”, these have been in state hands for roughly 100 years).<sup>[27]</sup>

Other notable state operations today include the SA Post Office (also from the old Post and

20. S. Christie and A. Meltzer, 2010, *The Floodgates of Anarchy*, PM Press, second edn., p. 92

21. Online at <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=149>

22. Online at <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=149>

23. See inter alia, *World Factbook: South Africa* (2010) at <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/sf.html>; and Government of South Africa, *The Public Service* (2010) at <http://www.info.gov.za/aboutgovt/publicadmin/index.htm>. South Africa is ranked 32nd in conventional, non-nuclear, indexes of world military strength, and is the third most powerful military state in Africa, following Egypt and Libya: [www.globalfirepower.com](http://www.globalfirepower.com)

24. R. Rumney, 2005, “Who Owns South Africa: an analysis of state and private ownership patterns”, in J. Daniel, R. Southall and J. Lutchman (eds.), *State of the Nation: South Africa 2004-2005*, HSRC: Pretoria, pp. 405-406,

25. ANCYL, 2010, *Towards the Transfer of Mineral Wealth*, p. 13

26. “Armscor” today refers to the state weapons procurement division; the old Armscor manufacturing division is now Denel.

27. On this bizarre call, see *Mail & Guardian*, 6 Nov 2009, “Nationalising Eskom”

Telecommunications Department), the SABC, the main universities (e.g. Wits, UCT), the Rand Water Board, the state forestry company Safcol, state mines like Alexkor and Nkomati Anthracite Coal, and state banks like the Land Bank, the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), and the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC).

### WHY DID NP AND ANC DROP NATIONALISATION?

As the world changed rapidly from the 1970s, state-capitalism (and the KWS and ISI “mixed economy”) were rapidly replaced by the neo-liberal “free market”, central to which was privatisation.[28] Contrary to some views, the state is *never* absent in neo-liberalism: it is a central actor because it *creates* and maintains the so-called “free market” by aiding capitalists, and suppressing and expropriating labour.[29] Neo-liberalism entails massive restructuring to dismantle state-capitalism, the KWS and ISI, and it is the state that drives the process.

Thus the NP government, like its counterparts abroad – including in Zambia and Britain, where the ANC’s exile leadership was based – started to shift to neo-liberalism. The NP sold off most of Sasol (1979-1982), followed by Iscor (1987-1989), and experimented with municipal privatisation.

### ANC PRIVATISATION

As early as the late 1980s, the ANC was re-considering nationalisation: by 1991, years before taking office, it had largely shifted to neo-liberalism. Nationalisation has not been ANC policy for the last two decades,[30] despite press hysteria that nationalisation is on the cards.

Under the ANC government, municipal privatisation has been drastically accelerated. While over 60% of Telkom has been sold off plus (briefly) part of SAA, the ANC’s preferred forms of privatisation are not divestiture (sales), but outsourcing, concessions and leases. For example, every single South African university adopted outsourcing in the 1990s and 2000s, under pressure from the national government. (See the Zabalaza pamphlet *Fighting Privatisation in South Africa* and *South Africa: from apartheid to neo-liberalism*).

### THE BLACK PRIVATE ELITE

In South Africa, these measures are closely

tied to the ANC’s historic agenda of fostering “a prosperous non-European bourgeois class”. With nationalisation off the agenda and the ANC committed to budget cuts[31] and privatisation[32] as the basis for capitalist restructuring, it has substituted privatisation as the main means for its elitist Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) measures.

Key policies include “affirmative” tendering directed to BEE companies, discounted BEE shares when state companies are sold, and the use of divestiture revenues to capitalise the National Empowerment Fund. Malema is a product of this policy mix.[33]

So, while neo-liberalism has major benefits for big white capital, it is also key to the ANC’s BEE project of building black capitalists.

### ESKOM: REAL WORLD TEST CASE

But it is not necessary to go back before 1979 in South Africa, when privatisation started, or to the Soviet Union before its collapse in 1991, or to travel to North Korea today, to learn what state industry entails. The working class in South Africa currently encounters these realities daily – and most frequently in the form of Eskom.

Eskom – under both the NP and the ANC – illustrates the point that state companies, and nationalisation, have absolutely nothing to do with working class empowerment (let alone socialism), regardless of the political system or ruling party.

Eskom is a state-run monopoly in electricity generation, distribution and transmission. It originally operated to regulate (and supplement) the then-dominant private electricity industry, ensuring cheap power for mines and the state.[34] Cheap electricity (resting on South Africa’s large coal stocks) was (and is) just as essential to state power and capital accumulation as cheap black labour (resting on coercion and conquest).

### ESKOM AND NATIONALISATION

By the end of the 1940s, Eskom had grown dramatically, largely through the nationalisation of municipal power stations, and of the giant Victoria Falls and Transvaal Power Company (VFTPC).

As *apartheid*’s capitalist economy boomed from the 1950s, Eskom grew dramatically, backed by World Bank loans. By the close of the 1970s, Eskom had nationalised (or driven out of business), almost all rivals. By the 1990s, it was the 5th largest energy producer in the world.[35]

28. For a partial explanation, see WSF, 1997, “Stealing From The Poor: ‘Free Market’ Policies”, *Workers Solidarity: voice of anarcho-syndicalism*, vol. 3, no. 1

29. P. Kropotkin, [1912] 1970, “Modern Science and Anarchism”, in *Kropotkin’s Revolutionary Pamphlets*, New York: Dover, pp. 182-183

30. M. Merten, 11 Feb 2012, “‘Mine Nationalisation not ANC policy”, *IOLNews*, at <http://www.iol.co.za/news/politics/mine-nationalisation-not-anc-policy-1.1232105>

31. R. Vollgraaff, 30 October 2011, “Gordhan Leaves Little Room for Maneuvering”, *Sunday Times*

32. This could be through outright or partial sales, or through public-private partnerships like outsourcing, leases and concessions.

33. B. Naidu & S. Pliso, 21 Feb 2010, “How Malema made his Millions”, *Sunday Times*

34. See Govt. of South Africa, 2010, *The Public Service*, <http://www.info.gov.za/aboutgovt/publicadmin/index.htm>

*“Eskom – under both the NP and the ANC – illustrates the point that state companies, and nationalisation, have absolutely nothing to do with working class empowerment (let alone socialism), regardless of the political system or ruling party.”*



It currently accounts for 95.6% of South Africa's electricity generation, and around 65% of Africa's electricity generation, and also dominates transmission (i.e. the power grid) and distribution (i.e. sales).

Eskom today operates in 31 African countries, as a state-run, profit-driven, multi-national corporation.[36] Its after-tax profits were reportedly twice the international average for electricity utilities in 2005.[37] It is heavily involved in neo-liberalism on the continent, since much of its African business entails privatisation contracts and sales. It must also be seen as a key part of current South African imperialism,[38] as it is a core means of projecting the economic and political power of the South African ruling class across the continent.

### ESKOM VS. THE WORKERS AND POOR

This state-run multinational giant has historically played an enormous role in polluting South Africa, through the use of dirty coal burners. These have often been located near poor black neighbourhoods, while consistently failing to provide decent electricity to the black majority of the working class.[39]

And, Eskom has always been – and remains – associated with oppressive working conditions and low wages, as well as with union-busting. Until 1995, when labour law reforms finally extended farm, domestic and state workers legal bargaining rights, state companies like Eskom barely tolerated trade unions – not even those of skilled white workers.

Although union rights are now legally guaranteed, they are continually undermined. For example, Eskom's workforce has been gutted, falling from 65 000 in 1985 to 30 000 in 2003.[40] Benefits and allowances have fallen steeply since 1996, with the new (ANC-linked) management taking a hard-line position.[41] Wage negotiations have broken down regularly over the last five years, as Eskom has tried to unilaterally impose terms, insisting that (as electricity is an essential service), strikes are illegal. (This led to a major strike in 2011).

### THE PRICE OF POWER

Meanwhile, prices for electricity have jumped sharply since the 1980s: the highest increases have been for residential (i.e. home) users, the majority of whom are working class, getting eight times more costly from 1980 to 2005.[42] From the available data, charges are far higher

per unit for the residential user than for industrial and agricultural capitalists.

Furthermore, charges are also far higher for poor rural black areas than for urban black townships, and far higher for urban black townships than for historically white suburbs, which are now of course enjoyed by middle and ruling class people of all races. Research in 2000 showed that rural black areas were paying twice what suburbs paid, and Soweto users 30% more than Sandton users.[43]

### UNEQUAL COVERAGE & "FREE BASIC ELECTRICITY"

It is true – and commendable – that Eskom has massively increased coverage of black townships in the 1990s, with over 3.1. million new connections from 1991 to 2004. This is to be welcomed as a *victory* for mass struggle, not a gift from above. It must be remembered that this is the result of massive community risings in the 1980s and early 1990s.

However, many of the new links are low-voltage single-phase connections that cannot run major appliances (like fridges). Installation is usually tied to enforcing cost-recovery ("user-pays") policies, with strict cut-offs through mass disconnections or prepaid meters. In early 2002,



a quarter of a million people were cut-off monthly by Eskom and municipalities,[44] part of perhaps 10 million cut-offs from 1994.[45] *Connections*, in short, do not mean *access*, because at least as many people get cut-off as get connected every year.

Eskom's cut-offs and escalating prices provoked

widespread resistance, some channeled through bodies like the Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF, formed 2000), in which anarchists and others were active. Here, disconnections were met with illegal reconnections, prepaid meters were burnt, and debts were not paid.

The state was finally forced to write off many debts, plus provide a Free Basic Electricity (FBE) policy for "poor households": announced in 2003, FBE took some years to cover most of the country.

Again, this was a victory, providing some relief. But it is only a partial one, always limited by the overall Eskom model. The free 50kWh allocation is usually accessed through the low-voltage single-phase connections, and usually requires households to accept prepaid meters. It is also a very small amount for households that average 6-8 people. For example, using four 60W

35. See S. Greenberg, 2009, "Market Liberalisation and Continental Expansion", in D.A. McDonald (ed.), *Electric Capitalism: recolonising Africa on the power grid*, HSRC/Earthscan

36. M. Wagnagel, 12-18 April 1996, "'Power' to the Masses Comes First", *Mail & Guardian*

37. S. Greenberg, 2006, *The State, Privatisation and the Public Sector in South Africa*, Cape Town: AIDC/ SAPSN, p. 39

38. International Rivers, 2003, "Eskom's Expanding Empire: the social and ecological footprint of Africa's largest power utility", available at <http://www.internationalrivers.org/africa/eskom-s-expanding-empire-social-and-ecological-footprint-africa-s-largest-power-utility>

39. M. Gandar, 1991, "The Imbalance of Power", in J. Cock and E. Koch (eds.), *Going Green: people, politics and the environment in South Africa*, Oxford University Press, Cape Town

40. Greenberg, 2006, figure 4 p. 38

41. Greenberg, 2009, p. 85

42. Greenberg, 2006, figure 3 p. 37

43. D.A. McDonald, 2002, "The Theory and Practice of Cost Recovery in South Africa", in D.A. McDonald and J. Pape, eds., *Cost Recovery and the Crisis of Service Delivery in South Africa*, HSRC/ Zed Books, p. 27

44. Greenberg, 2006, table 4 p. 37

45. McDonald, 2002, p. 22

light bulbs for four hours a day, and boiling a kettle for 30 minutes a day, over a month, will use up 42kWh.[46]

### PROFITS FROM POWER

The ANC has also continued the NP's drive to commercialise (i.e. operate state companies on a for-profit basis), and privatise, electricity. The 1998 *White Paper on Energy Policy*, the 2001 Eskom Amendment Act, and the 2001 Eskom Conversion Act, made Eskom a tax-and-dividend-paying entity, owned entirely by the state.

Commercialisation has perpetuated Eskom's anti-working class policies: it requires holding down wages, increasing prices, and top-down control, plus ongoing lay-offs, cuts in maintenance, some outsourcing, and cutting coal stocks. Rather than Eskom draining state revenues raised by tax (as was the case before the 1980s), Eskom now pays hefty taxes (and dividends) to the state: it is a highly profitable state investment.

### FAILED PRIVATISATION

Regarding privatisation, the initial plan was to sell off parts of Eskom: some stations like Kelvin were, in fact, sold. However, this approach was later shelved in favour of opening up space for the entry of Independent Power Producers (IPPs) (new private power stations), and for competing Regional Electricity Distributors (REDs) (which would compete to sell power).

Eskom therefore halted expansion of its own production facilities: not only would such expansion discourage IPPs, but the whole point of attracting IPPs was to shift expansion costs onto the private sector. Prices were also raised, partly to increase Eskom profits but partly to attract potential IPPs with the prospect of high profits.

However, the plan failed dramatically: the IPPs never materialised, and Eskom never stepped in to prevent the massive electricity shortfall that resulted. Rather, it recorded the money generated through rising prices and falling spending as profit, for which Eskom executives received enormous salaries plus performance bonuses. Eskom executives earned R73 million in the 2004/5 year — the second highest executive salary bill in South Africa. Ac-

tually, top Eskom managers routinely earned far more than most private sector directors.[47]

### “LOAD-SHEDDING” AND JOB LOSSES

The failure to build new stations, or to maintain existing facilities, and the failure to attract IPPs, plus some mismanagement by self-enriching ANC-appointed managers and cronies,[48] led straight to a series of disastrous power crashes from 2005-2009. This “load-shedding” scared private investors, contributing to a decline in private investment and to fewer jobs.

Throughout the disaster, Eskom execs continued to pay themselves performance bonuses: and when public anger finally forced Eskom CEO Jacob Maroga to resign, he sued for R85 million in “lost earnings”. Malema and the ANCYL leadership naturally supported his outrageous claims: as an admirer of getting rich by any means necessary, including looting the state, Malema recognised a true master of the art.

### POWER TO THE ELITE

Now finally having been forced to start investing in power stations, Eskom and the state have used the situation to further attack the working class. As recorded profits were wiped out by the costs of repairing the existing facilities, and of building new stations, Eskom pushed for and got massive annual increases in electricity charges of 30% per year for 2010-2012.[49] This was in the face of massive opposition by unions and community groups.

This money was earmarked to repay massive loans, used mainly to contract-in private construction consortiums. The key contracts for the new Medupi and Kusile stations have gone to a coalition of local and foreign capitalists, centred on Hitachi

Africa.[50] And Chancellor House, the ANC's investment arm, owns a 25% stake in Hitachi Africa.

With at least R500 billion rand involved in the expansions, fortunes will (as usual) be made, for the lucky few; the ANC-linked state elite and the big private companies.

Who pays? A large part of the expenditure to fix the elite's Eskom mess is being borne by the historically nationally oppressed black, Coloured and Indian working class through exploitation, taxes and rising tariffs. Charged the

*“A large part of the expenditure to fix the elite's Eskom mess is being borne by the historically nationally oppressed black, Coloured and Indian working class.... Charged the highest rates despite the lowest incomes, given the poorest electricity access and affected most by cut-offs, the working class as a whole has to pay for Eskom's mess.”*

46. F. Adam, 2010, *Free Basic Electricity: a better life for all*, research report, Earthlife Africa: Johannesburg, p. 6

47. K. Davie, 24-30 Mar 2006, “Power Pay Day”, *Mail & Guardian*

48. A. Habib, 15 Nov 2009, “Power Crisis is Rooted in a History of Poor Governance”, *Sunday Times*

49. S. Njobeni, 11 Jan 2010, “Eskom's Growing Appetite for Cash”, *Business Day*

50. Rumney, 2005, pp. 405-406

highest rates despite the lowest incomes, given the poorest electricity access and affected most by cut-offs, the working class as a whole has to pay for Eskom's mess.

With three years of sharp increases already in place, Eskom has again become highly profitable, posting nearly a 60 percent profit for the 2012 year. It is now requesting a *further* five years of 14.6 percent annual tariff increases, effectively doubling the average price of electricity.[51]

### NEITHER NATIONALISATION NOR PRIVATISATION

Truly, the system is unjust. But nationalisation, like privatisation, is not a solution to the problems the working class faces. Eskom's past performance (as a state company built through nationalisation), is evidence enough that nationalisation takes us nowhere. And Malema's support for Maroga shows clearly the elite's common interest in maintaining this vicious system.

State bureaucrats and managers are part of the ruling class, part of the problem. Nationalisation is an extension of the power of the state, and should be opposed by the working class and poor because this is in direct opposition to their own interests.

### COLLECTIVISE: RESIST-OCCUPY-PRODUCE

There is an alternative to both privatisation and nationalisation. It is an alternative that is pro-working class, and that can also complete the national liberation of the country's working and poor Africans, Coloureds and Indians – by radically changing the distribution of wealth and power rather than just enriching the economic and political elite.

Revolutionary anarchism/ syndicalism wants workers' control, collective self-ownership, real peoples' power. It is only through building up a formidable counter-power in opposition to both private capitalists and state managers i.e. *the ruling class*, that this project can be driven forward.

The horrors of the Soviet Union have shown that the road to socialism lies *outside and against the state*, in *occupation and collectivisation*, from the bottom-up, not nationalisation from the top-down. It is in Spain 1936, not Russia in 1918, that the example of a new world, free and equal and just, is to be glimpsed.

51. Reuters, 14 June 2012, "Big Profits for Eskom", *Sowetan Live*, at <http://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/business/2012/06/14/big-profits-for-eskom>; Jan de Lange, 16 July 2012, "Industry seeks Talks over Eskom Tariff Proposals"; *Miningmx*, at <http://www.miningmx.com/news/energy/Industry-seeks-talks-over-Eskom-tariff-proposals.htm>

# Get Rich or Lie Trying: Why ANC Millionaire Julius Malema posed as a Radical, why he lost, and what this tells us about the Post-Apartheid ANC

by Tina Sizovuka and Lucien van der Walt

**T**his article aims to explain, from an anarchist / syndicalist perspective, the rapid rise and fall of Julius Malema, the controversial and corrupt multi-millionaire leader of South Africa's ruling party, the African National Congress's (ANC's) "youth league" (ANCYL). It is demonstrated that Malema's posturing as radical champion of the black poor was simply a means to an end: rising higher in the ranks of the ANC, in order to access bigger state tenders and higher paying political office.

The larger political implications of the Malema affair are also considered, especially the role of the ANC – as a vehicle for the accumulation of wealth and power by the rising black elite, which is centred on the state. It is

not a party that serves, or can serve, the working class; on the contrary, it is the site of bitter struggles for state contracts and office between rival elite factions. It is a bureaucratic-bourgeois-black nationalist party, lodged in the state.

Malema represented a frustrated faction of the black elite in these internal battles, who sought to build a black working class base by posing as a radical, in order to win a better seat on the ANC's "gravy train". In doing so, however, Malema made enemies in high places. His defeat by the dominant Jacob Zuma-Gwede Mantashe faction must be understood in this context. In turn, the largely black state managerial elite is allied to the largely white private business elite.

*"Malema represented a frustrated faction of the black elite... who sought to build a black working class base by posing as a radical, in order to win a better seat on the ANC's "gravy train"."*



Neo-liberal measures – including privatisation through state tenders – are key to the enrichment and empowerment of these two wings of the ruling class. This elite pact rests upon the exploitation and domination of the whole working class, and reproduces the national/ racial oppression of the black, Coloured and Indian working class majority.

In the absence of a left pole of attraction, able to break the ideological grip of the ANC over large swathes of the masses, it becomes possible for racist demagogues like Malema to pose as radicals, to get rich or lie trying. Such posturing hides the complicity of the ANC elite in South Africa's terrible inequalities – indeed, it feeds upon it. In the context of mass suffering, such demagoguery will certainly resurface again, promoting racial tensions and providing fertile grounds for serious clashes, while providing no solutions to the problems of the working class.

Obviously many sincere working class and poor youth join the ANCYL for the best of reasons. However, the ANCYL, like the larger ANC, is controlled by the rich and powerful; it has no genuine interest in empowering the masses.

It is therefore necessary to build an effective anarchist/ syndicalist movement, rooted in the black working class, that is able to promote an independent, participatory-democratic, revolutionary front of the oppressed classes. This will build counterpower and counterculture in order to end national oppression and class domination and exploitation, through a fundamental change in society. Such a movement must, naturally, be independent of the ANC tradition.

### BACKGROUND: MALEMA RISING

The ANCYL grabbed headlines for several years, particularly under Malema. Politics can change rapidly: Malema has since been expelled from the ANC, stripping him of his party position. This removes his access to the lucrative state contracts that made his fortune, as well as the access to the money and patronage networks that funded his political activities. Also affected are five other key ANCYL figures, including Malema's lieutenant, Floyd Shivambu. The purge followed prior disciplinary actions against the Malema group, going back to 2010.

None were more shocked at this outcome than the six affected. Malema had held the media spotlight for years, and was presented in the

media as a rising ANC leader, even, perhaps, a future head of state.

Malema's claims to fame were many, including outrageous public statements (successfully) calculated to maximise coverage; ongoing investigations for corruption, money-laundering and fraud, notably his R16 million mansion on a monthly ANC salary of R25 000; insulting journalists at press events; open support for the dictators Muammar Gaddafi and Robert Mugabe; and public threats against both the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) and the SA Communist Party (SACP).

But most striking of all was Malema's call for "economic freedom," meaning specifically the "nationalisation of the mines" and "other monopoly industries." This was presented as a means to redistribute wealth, fund welfare and create more, and better, jobs. [1] Malema even called himself an enemy of "ruthless capitalism." [2] Yet, behind the imagery of Malema-as-champion-of-the-poor, is a man who spent R400,000 on his 2010 birthday party without batting an eyelid. [3]

This call resonated widely precisely because it touched a nerve: it was directed to the oppressed black working class, and framed as the key to complete national liberation – something that remains to be achieved.

### QUESTIONS: MALEMA MYSTERIES

There are several mysteries here.

First, why was Malema expelled, especially since he was having real success in presenting the ANC as a champion of the black working class? Cynicism towards the ANC is widespread in the masses, although loyalty is strong. Malema seemed to show that the ANC could become radical.

Second, why did Malema, an out-and-out capitalist and an open anti-communist, start to champion nationalisation? His wealth, after all, has been made largely through state tenders for supplying hospitals, schools and public housing projects – that is, through *privatisation*. [4]

Malema is a typical "tenderpreneur" (a capitalist reliant on state tenders) – hardly a rare species in the ANC. But he is especially famous for the high prices, poor services and outright fraud that characterise his contracts. (Malema and his family have made their fortune through state privatisation contracts. No enemy of mining capitalism, he has instead been closely

*“Malema and his family have made their fortune through state privatisation contracts. No enemy of mining capitalism, he has instead been closely linked to mine bosses like the late Brett Kebble... and ANC minister, mining billionaire Tokyo Sexwale.”*

1. ANCYL. 2010. *Towards the Transfer of Mineral Wealth to the Ownership of the People as a Whole: a perspective on nationalisation of the mines*, available at [http://us-cdn.creamermedia.co.za/assets/articles/attachments/25571\\_nationalisation\\_of\\_mines\\_document-feb\\_2010.pdf](http://us-cdn.creamermedia.co.za/assets/articles/attachments/25571_nationalisation_of_mines_document-feb_2010.pdf)

2. SAPA, 20 July 2011, "Malema: My money is nobody's business," *Business Report*

3. IOL NEWS, 4 March 2010, "Malema a Bourgeoisie and Not Pro-poor – PAYCO," *IOL News*, at <http://www.iol.co.za/news/politics/malema-a-bourgeoisie-and-not-pro-poor-payco-1.475274>

4. B. Naidu & S. Pliso, 21 Feb 2010, "How Malema made his Millions," *Sunday Times*

5. See M. Wiener, 2011, *Killing Kebble: An underworld exposed*. Pan Macmillan

linked to mine bosses like the late Brett Kebble [5] and ANC minister, mining billionaire Tokyo Sexwale.)

Third, why did Malema increasingly use racist populism – demagoguery mixing pseudo-left and racist rhetoric – in the form of an increasingly vicious anti-white (and sometimes anti-Indian) rhetoric, exemplified by use of the old (now banned) ANC song *Dubul'ibhunu* (“kill the Boer”)?

This *racist populism* is at odds with the elite pact between the black state managers and white capitalists at the very heart of the post-apartheid system. Malema's racist populism actually targeted groups closely *allied* to the ANC in a range of ways.

### ANC: STORM CENTRE OF ELITE RIVALRY

The ANC is not a progressive party which the working class can capture, and win to a left position, as Cosatu and the left-wing of the SACP insist. Instead, it is an integral part of the capitalist state, and a key means for the rising black elite to access state power and the wealth that brings (e.g. enormous salaries and benefits, access to lucrative privatisation tenders and deals etc.). Not only has the ANC never been anti-capitalist, but it today embraces the free market so long as this benefits (mainly black) ANC leaders and state officials – and their (mainly white and Indian) allies in big private business.

Because the black elite is largely locked out of the core of the private sector corporations (for various reasons), it is heavily dependent upon access to the state for access to wealth as well as power. (At most a quarter of Johannesburg Securities Exchange-/JSE-listed company directorships are held by people of colour, [6] with the proportion of senior and top managers in the private sector at 32.5 percent in 2008). [7]

Since the ANC, as a bureaucratic-bourgeois-black nationalist party, provides the main vehicle for accessing state resources, it is inevitable that the ANC becomes the storm centre of the struggle between different factions of this emerging elite for access to state resources. ANC factions are not organised on ideological lines, that is, around serious divisions in ideology and strategy, but into rival groups of the wealthy and powerful, fighting for top ANC and state positions.

### ISSUE 1: WHY MALEMA FELL

Malema was expelled, not for being a radical (as he claims), but for openly challenging the dominant Zuma-Mantashe faction, openly lining up with ANC factions that aimed to oust Zuma, and by defying ANC directives. Malema has also blamed everything from “imperialism” to white conspiracies “in the ANC”. [8] In reality, Malema was expelled *by the ANC's black leadership*, and this can only be seen as a result of the failure of the Malema faction to successfully challenge the Zuma-Mantashe bloc in the ANC's endless factional struggles.

Malema's insistence that he was expelled for his fight to win “economic liberation” for the black working class [9] is false. Calling for nationalisation formed no part of the charge sheet that the Zuma-Mantashe faction wielded against Malema; rather, the charges centred on ill-discipline i.e. insubordination to Zuma (ANC President, as well as South African head of state) and Mantashe (ANC secretary-general).

Malema has no real commitment to nationalisation, let alone “economic liberation” for the masses. He was part of the ANC, an openly neo-liberal party, and part and parcel of the same corrupt establishment and ruling class that helps oppresses the black working class.

As evidence for Malema's real

views: one of Malema's businesses (in engineering) made R130 million from tenders to supply water, sanitation, drains and paving in poor areas, yet spectacularly failed to deliver on the contracts. [10] This outright theft from the black poor has helped fund Malema's lavish lifestyle of German sedans, Gucci suits and R700-a-bottle whiskeys. Cosatu is perfectly correct to describe Malema as a “political hyena” who wants a “predator state”. [11]

This is certainly not to suggest that the black elite, represented by men like Zuma and Malema, is any more venal or corrupt than its white counterparts: large, mainly white-led, corporations were directly responsible for apartheid; they are today routinely involved in corrupt deals involving white as well as black politicians, [12] plus have been proved, beyond a shadow of doubt, to actively collude to “fix” the prices for building materials, food, gas, and medicine. [13]

### A PAPER TIGER

The notion that Malema was ousted since he was a major power in the ANC, a supposed king-



6. 951 out of 3450 posts: M. Sibanyoni, 10 Oct 2010, “Black Directors Arrive on JSE,” *City Press*.

7. R. Southall, 2010, “Introduction: South Africa 2010: Development or Decline?” in J. Daniel, P. Naidoo, D. Pillay & R. Southall (eds.), *New South African Review*, no. 1, p. 11

8. SAPA, 15 Feb 2012, “Juju: whites control judiciary,” *The Citizen*

9. “We’re guilty for thinking – Malema,” 10 Feb 2012, *News24*, <http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/Politics/Were-guilty-for-thinking-Malema-20120210>

10. B. Naidu & S. Pliso, 21 Feb 2010, “How Malema made his Millions,” *Sunday Times*

11. SAPA, 1 Oct 2010, “Cosatu defends Vavi after Malema Criticism,” <http://www.polity.org.za/article/cosatu-defends-vavi-after-malema-criticism-2010-10-01>

12. See M. Wiener, 2011, *Killing Kebble: An underworld exposed*. Pan Macmillan

13. S. Adema, 2 Sep 2009, “South Africa: price fixing can land company directors in jail,” *IPSNews*



maker, is also incorrect. The ANCYL holds only a small minority of seats at ANC congresses (a mere 68 out of around 4,075 voting seats at the 2007 ANC congress in Polokwane), and, outside Limpopo province, it has no real purchase on the larger ANC apparatus.

Hysterical private sector media attention has exaggerated Malema's power, within as well as beyond the ANC. He was, and remains, a paper tiger. The ANCYL's "Economic Freedom" march in October 2011, organised as a show of strength ahead of an ANC disciplinary hearing, attracted at most 7,000 people. This was despite millions spent on bussing and publicity – and despite a claimed ANCYL membership figure of 366,435 (2010).[14] Township protests around corruption and poor conditions attract similar figures on a weekly basis. But most members of the ANCYL (as of the ANC) are passive; most local branch structures do not function.

This farce was repeated in September 2012, when Malema addressed soldiers fired for their role in a strike (strikes are illegal in the army; unions are not). Press hysteria about Malema "destabilising" the military fell flat when a mere 40 ex-soldiers arrived.

Nor did Malema ever have sole control of the ANCYL. For instance, when Malema's initial suspension was reaffirmed in February 2012, ANCYL rivals organised street celebrations, including in his home town and supposed stronghold Seshego. [15] Equally notable is the absence of any real ANCYL campaign for its reinstatement.

### LOSING THE FACTIONAL BATTLE

Last, Malema was not expelled for corruption, as some commentators have speculated. This was also not on his ANC charge sheet. And besides, corruption only rarely leads to expulsion from the ANC.

Corruption infuses the party – although let us stress, the ANC is by no means uniquely corrupt; it is part of a corrupt parliamentary system, a corrupt capitalism, a corrupt state. And the ANC is simply a prominent example of the corruption infusing states and capitalism everywhere.

To his credit, Zuma has stepped up prosecutions of corrupt officials since taking the Presidency in 2009, but no well-connected figure has ever been subject to serious sanctions – let alone expulsion from the ANC.

Zuma himself is a perfect example: dismissed from the Cabinet by then-President Thabo Mbeki in 2005, for his apparent role in a corrupt

R40 billion arms deal, Zuma remained an ANC member. He was able to mobilise a coalition of anti-Mbeki factions, including Cosatu, the SACP, and Malema's ANCYL, ultimately ousting Mbeki at the ANC's 2007 Polokwane congress.

As Zuma's power rose, court cases for rape, racketeering, money laundering and fraud fell away, with dozens of charges dropped around the time he was sworn in as State President in May 2009. Money talks, and might makes right; Malema was himself untouchable despite endless revelations of his crooked deals, until he challenged Zuma and Mantashe.

### TOP-DOWN PARTY POWER

Malema's expulsion underlines the fact that the ANC is very much a top-down party machine: whoever wields the ANC machinery can make short shrift of enemies. Mbeki tackled Zuma; Zuma tackled Mbeki; Malema tackled Zuma; Zuma tackled Malema. The most powerful person at any time, is a member of the most powerful faction. Mbeki's faction had a weak grip, and was ousted by a coalition of other fac-

tions; the Zuma-Mantashe faction currently enjoys an iron grip on the party, and acted decisively when challenged by the loud, but weak, Malema faction.

But the anti-Mbeki Polokwane bloc collapsed rapidly. SACP leaders, in particular, benefited handsomely from appointments under the Zuma administration, not least SACP general-secretary Blade Nzimande (now a minister). Mantashe, now at the top of the ANC, is also SACP chair. Cosatu was largely ignored, and the Malema faction quickly sidelined. Its limited power, and its flirtations with Zuma rivals, like Sexwale, [16] led straight to Malema's crushing in 2012 by the Zuma-Mantashe bloc. Sexwale was also quick to back away from Malema. [17]

Then-product of this party infighting, Malema now finds himself its victim. During Zuma's fight against Mbeki, Malema's demagoguery was useful to Zuma; now it proved a problem.

Few have shed few tears for Malema, least of all Cosatu and the SACP. But the authoritarianism of the ANC should be feared, not praised.

The disciplinary decision shows that Zuma and Mantashe can suppress any ANC member who "divides" the party, or brings it "into disrepute". And this is part of a larger ANC intolerance of criticism and opponents, seen recently in the attempt to impose a draconian Secrecy Bill and the increased repression of struggles.



14. SAPA, 25 Sep 2011, "ANCYL Membership Half as Claimed: Report," *The Citizen*

15. M. Moloko, 5 Feb 2012, "Malema's Foes Celebrate his Downfall," *IOLNews*, at <http://www.iol.co.za/news/politics/malema-s-foes-celebrate-his-downfall-1.1222526>

16. Malema has finally admitted the ANCYL was backing anti-Zuma, anti-Mantashe factions for the 2012 ANC Mangaung congress: M. Mofokeng & G. Matlala, 29 Jan 2012, "Malema Puts up his Fists," *IOLNews*, <http://www.iol.co.za/news/special-features/malema-puts-up-his-fists-1.1222526>

17. E.g. B. Peta, 25 Nov 2011, "I Didn't support Malema – Sexwale," *Cape Times*



(NOTE: this was written before, but is confirmed by, the Marikana Massacre).

Cosatu and the SACP defend their ongoing alliance with the ANC on the basis that the party can somehow be made pro-working class. But what space is there to make any real changes in the ANC? The high-handed treatment of Malema shows that no serious internal challenges will be tolerated. And the changes Cosatu wants in the ANC – not least, an end to privatisation and “tenderpreneurship” – will get short shrift.

## ISSUE 2: WHY MALEMA POSED AS RADICAL

Malema's faction sought to increase its power in the ANC. It lacked access to the central ANC structures; its leaders were confined to enriching themselves from tenders in the economically marginal Limpopo province.

The only way to escape this marginal base, which frustrated their elite ambitions, was to become a national force in the ANC.

But how? Their genius was to recognise, in the then-moribund ANCYL, an excellent opportunity. South Africa has a young population, and around 72% of the unemployed are “youth” under 36, predominantly blacks. [18] Unemployment has risen sharply under the ANC, from 38% of blacks in 1995, to 50% today, in large part due to ongoing capitalist crisis and the effects of ANC-led neo-liberal restructuring. [19]

The black working class youth is a potentially powerful, but generally marginalised group – and Malema and his cronies saw in it an untapped resource – as a constituency that could be used as a power base for ANC factional battles, through which they could ride to the top of the ANC.

Of course, it is not only the ANCYL which has sought to use this constituency for its own agenda. The ANC's main rival, the equally neo-liberal Democratic Alliance (DA) has tapped it too: in the 1990s through sponsoring the murderous Unemployed Masses of SA (UMSA) group, and more recently, in its May 2012 march on Cosatu House.

But the matter had to be handled very carefully. Mobilising these youth could backfire easily; especially since they have been at the forefront of post-apartheid township protests. Raising their class temperature could easily boil over into mass protests *against the ANC*.

And rightly so. ANC policies have played a di-

rect role in the oppression of black working class youth. It is the ANC that governs most of the black ghettos, the ANC that operates the run-down state schools, the ANC that has gutted jobs. Many are unemployed, and amongst them, the face of the ruling class most seen is not a private capitalist, but a state manager.

Therefore, the ANCYL under Malema took two approaches: *radical talk combined with no action, to get rich or lie trying*. Of course, the ANCYL *cannot* wage a serious campaign against matters like cut-offs and evictions, without fighting the ANC, and *it is part of the ANC* – the very party responsible for such cut-offs.

## GET RICH – OR LIE TRYING

Fearful of the consequences of mass mobilisation, the Malema faction – by now heading the ANCYL structures – began to rely on radical rhetoric.

Some of this was racist populism. Popular frustration with the daily oppression of black working class life was carefully channelled away from the ANC and the black elite, *towards whites in general*. This required presenting all blacks as poor and oppressed, and all whites as rich capitalists. In this way, the differences between the black elite, of which Malema was

merely one example, and the black poor, could be hidden away. Malema's address to the SA Students' Congress (Sasco, an ANC-aligned university formation), is one example of this manipulation of the truth: [20]

*The rich keep getting richer and it is white males who continue to own the means of production in the country. Not even Tokyo (Sexwale), who is the Minister of Human Settlements, is an owner. Tokyo is owing the white baas because he wants to borrow from the banks. Who owns the banks? Tokyo is a rich man, but he doesn't own...*

This is simply baseless. The ANC state accounts for around 23% of the value of total GDP, 44% of fixed capital stock and at least 25% of land (not including land through state companies). [21] Sexwale is one of a number of black billionaires that populate the country's list of the 20 richest. [22] Even if only a quarter of JSE-listed company directorships are held by people of colour, [23] that still means wealth is not entirely white.

As Murray Bookchin once noted, “There is no collective ‘white man’ who is the universal

*“The black working class youth is a potentially powerful, but generally marginalised group – and Malema and his cronies saw in it an untapped resource – as a constituency... through which they could ride to the top of the ANC.”*

18. NUMSA, August 2011, Numsa Central Committee Meeting 15 - 19 August 2011: Central Committee Statement, D1.1

19. NUMSA, August 2011, D1.1

20. B. Naidu & S. Pliso, 21 Feb 2010, “How Malema made his Millions,” *Sunday Times*

21. R. Rumney, 2005, “Who owns South Africa: an analysis of state and private ownership patterns,” in J. Daniel, R. Southall & J. Lutchman (eds.), *State of the Nation: South Africa 2004-2005*, HSRC: Pretoria, pp. 405-406

22. See R. Southall, 13 February 2012, “South Africa's Fractured Power Elite,” WISER seminar, University of Witwatersrand,

23. Sibanyoni, “Black Directors Arrive on JSE”

24. Murray Bookchin, 1999, “The 1960s,” in his *Anarchism, Marxism and the Future of the Left: interviews and essays 1993-1998*, AK Press: San Francisco, Edinburgh, p. 76

enemy of a collective ‘black man’”, because both blacks and whites are deeply divided by class and other hierarchies. [24] True, rich whites abound in wealthy Sandton in Johannesburg, and huge numbers of poor blacks suffer in the immediately adjacent Alexandra slum. But rich blacks – among them Nelson Mandela, Patrice Motsepe, Sam Shilowa and Malema – also live in Sandton, and hundreds of thousands of poor whites live in squatter camps and trailer parks. [25]

### ISSUE 3: RACIST DEMAGOGY

However, such claims make good propaganda, and when tied to *Dubul’ibhunu*, make the elite ANC sound almost like a party of the poor. Malema portrayed the ANC as a liberation movement waging an anti-colonial struggle, and played on traditional South African racial hatreds – insulting whites plays to grassroots frustration at the failure of the ANC to deliver national liberation to the black, Coloured and Indian working class, while letting the ANC off the hook.

There is no doubt that large (mainly white) private corporations are central to the ongoing exploitation and national oppression of the majority of the working class. However, the ANC itself also plays a direct role, being allied to those corporations, and committed to neo-liberalism.

The Malema-led ANCYL is not just playing to the gallery, however. It has long been a stronghold of the ANC’s racist Africanist wing that is overtly hostile to the national minorities: Coloureds, Indians and whites.

Something more was added, and this was the slogan of nationalisation: the ANC had once advocated (like many others, including the old apartheid government), a degree of nationalisation. This was dropped in the neo-liberal period, but revived in Malema’s hands, the old ANC nationalisation call seemed to promise the prospect of escape from poverty for the masses.

If implemented – an exceedingly unlikely prospect, given the ANC’s neo-liberal outlook (see below) – nationalisation would also have opened access to additional wealth, for well-connected ANC leaders. (It would not, however, have benefitted the black working class: see “Alternative Needed to Nationalisation and Privatisation” article this issue).

### TALK, NOT ACTION

So, the Malema faction sought to feed upon the very misery that the ANC (and Malema) helped create – through privatisation – in order to rise in the ranks of the rich and powerful – not to end this misery.

Great care was meanwhile taken to reduce the youth to passive spectators, cheering the antics of the demagogue and his bold talk.

For a man who posed as a militant and revolutionary, one thing stands out: the almost total absence of the ANCYL under Malema from any actual mobilisation; theirs was the politics of the press conference, not the protest. On the contrary, the ANCYL condemned a number of township protests, as it “does not approve of violence and destruction of infrastructure”. And, in line with the ANC position that protests should be calmed, not addressed, the League “appreciates President Zuma’s and other government leaders visits to protesting communities.” [26]

There are only two exceptions to this pattern of lethargy. In 2010 and 2011, the ANCYL

protested degrading municipal policies (notably, open toilets and evictions) in the Western Cape slums. [27] Its role was actually quite minor, largely based around parachuting in with press statements and media events. In fact, the ANCYL plays almost no role in any Cape Town social movements, [28] although there are some individual activists.

However, these protests raised the ANC profile in the 2011 local government elections – in the one province that the ANC consistently loses to the DA. This

was cheap politicking, which the Malema faction hoped would raise their value in the party. Meanwhile, identical anti-working class, anti-poor policies in the rest of the country (including open toilets), by the ANC were carefully ignored.

The other ANCYL protest was the 2011 “Economic Freedom” march from Johannesburg. The march attracted some militant working class youth, desperate for a better future, but the march was not to serve their needs: it was part of Malema’s struggle against Zuma-Mantashe.

Malema’s elite agenda was laid bare when, straight after the march, he flew out to Mauritius for the all-expenses-paid island wedding of his ally, David Mabilu – an event costing over R10 million. [29] (NOTE: Malema, now expelled from the ANC, has turned his attention to the

*“True, rich whites abound in wealthy Sandton..., and huge numbers of poor blacks suffer in... Alexandra slum. But rich blacks – among them Nelson Mandela, Patrice Motsepe, Sam Shilowa and Malema – also live in Sandton, and hundreds of thousands of poor whites live in squatter camps and trailer parks.”*

25. Beeld, 6 July 2010, “Wêreld sien Wit Armoede”

26. ANCYL, 6 August 2009, “ANCYL to close Lembede Investment Holdings,” media statement, at <http://www.politicsweb.co.za/politicsweb/view/politicsweb/en/page71654?oid=138824&sn=Detail>

27. G. Underhill, May 27-2 June 2011, “Toilet Activist on Cape Metro Council,” *Mail & Guardian*

28. E.g. Jared Sacks, 2012, *Sweet Home Report: An investigation into the socio-political character of recent road blockades by protesting shackdwellers*, unpublished report, Cape Town, at [http://cdn.mg.co.za/content/documents/2012/09/19/Sweet\\_Home\\_Report\\_Final.pdf](http://cdn.mg.co.za/content/documents/2012/09/19/Sweet_Home_Report_Final.pdf)

29. A. Basson & P. Rampedi, 6 Nov 2011, “Malema’s Sugar Daddy,” *News24*, <http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/Malemas-sugar-daddy-20111106-2>



victims of the ANC bloodbath at Marikana: this is a desperate gamble, feeding upon misery to try win back into the ANC).

### CONCLUSION 1: WHAT THE ANC REALLY IS

What this sordid tale reveals is that the ANC is central to the current order in South Africa, to deep racial divisions, enormous inequality and ongoing attacks on the working class. ANC factional struggles, and supposed ANC “radicals”, have nothing to do with fixing this mess – these are simply fights over access to the spoils – having very little to do with issues like nationalisation or privatisation, socialism or capitalism.

The ANC and the ANCYL actively maintain the system that traps poor black working class youth, the majority of the unemployed, in misery. The ANC (like all political parties) is not a party that can change society for the better; it is not for the working class, it is not a party that end the national oppression of the black, Indian and Coloured working class, and nor will it end the exploitation of the white working class.

The ANCYL (like the ANC) played a role in the anti-apartheid struggle, an often heroic role, but post-1994 is another matter entirely. The ANC since 1994 must not be mistaken for a liberation movement; but rather an integral part of the state machinery – the central role of which is to ensure the continued existence of capitalism, and to defend the ruling class.

A jackal cannot be expected to look after sheep. An elite party cannot be expected to look after the working class and poor masses.

### NEO-LIBERALISM PLUS “BLACK EMPOWERMENT”

Official ANC economic policy is fundamentally neo-liberal. This predates the so-called “1996 class project”, being the central thrust in the *RDP White Paper* (1994), Growth, Employment and Redistribution (Gear), 1996, Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for SA (Asgisa) 2006, and the New Growth Path (NGP), 2011. (see article “All Geared Up for a New Growth Path”, pg. 13.)

In this framework, state outsourcing and public-private partnerships (PPPs) are used as a key means of creating a black bourgeoisie via

state-backed Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) – the rise of Malema from son of a domestic worker to a very wealthy man, through state contracts, is a case in point.

The ANC-led, largely black, state elite is allied to the largely white private corporate elite: together they wreak havoc upon the working class, and perpetuate the legacy of apartheid for the black, Coloured and Indian workers and poor, impoverish a growing section of the white workers, and terrorise immigrant workers.

BEE serves a small, powerful elite, while the NGP attacks the poor. By 2002, 10 million South Africans (mostly poor blacks) “had their water cut off and 10 million ... had their electricity cut off”; further, “two million people have been evicted from their homes” for non payment of services. [30]

Cut-offs, evictions, and shoddy (but expensive) services will continue to generate ongoing protests. These factors contributed to the rise of the Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF); official reports noted around 19 township “protests” per month in 2009, half “violent.” [31]

### NO PRINCIPLES BUT POWER

Tolerance of the Malema faction’s racist demagoguery, because of political calculations, exemplifies the cynicism and lack of principle at

the heart of the ANC. Senior ANC officials including Mantashe supported Malema when he was prosecuted for hate speech. Regardless of whether we support this kind of censorship (see below), Mantashe’s backing effectively enables hate speech to be a legitimate part of ANC discourse – and mocks the ANC’s own 1955 Freedom Charter, which declares that South

Africa belongs to “all who live in it, black and white,” that “our people” must “live in brotherhood, enjoying equal rights and opportunities,” and that “all national groups shall be protected by law against insults to their race and national pride.”

And this incident, as Mikhail Bakunin pointed out, shows that the ruling class has a “very shabby, very narrow, especially mercenary” attachment to its own “patriotism”: it is “quite willing to sacrifice the property, life and freedom of the proletariat,” but “rather reluctant” to sacrifice its “own gainful privileges” on any matter of principle. [32]



30. D.A. McDonald, 2002, “The Theory and Practice of Cost Recovery in South Africa,” D.A. McDonald & J. Pape (eds.), *Cost Recovery and the Crisis of Service Delivery in South Africa*, HSRC/Zed, p. 21

31. H. Jain, 2010, “Community Protests in South Africa: trends, analysis and explanations,” *Local Government Working Paper Series no. 1*, pp. 4, 11

32. Maximoff, G. P. (editor), (1953). *The Political Philosophy of Bakunin: scientific anarchism*. Glencoe / London, Free Press / Collier-Macmillan, pp. 133-134



**CONCLUSION 2: ON HATE SPEECH**

Malema was subject to two successful prosecutions for hate speech: one, for claiming that a rape victim had had a “nice time”, and another, for calling whites “criminals,” and singing the now-banned *Dubul’ibhunu*, which certainly advocates racial violence.

Anarchists/ syndicalists defend free speech, and this means defending the right of people to express views *that are fundamentally against the basic principles of anarchism* – including sexist and racist ones. This implies disagreement with censorship of any kind, including that which is attempting to silence Malema.

But equally, a defence of free speech must include using it to *openly contest, critique and defeat these anti-anarchist views*. And where those views are tied into actual racial or xenophobic attacks, even more serious actions may be needed.

Facts must also be faced: Malema’s racist attitudes promote his agenda, but also reflect the views of a deadly tendency in the ANC. This tendency has second thoughts about the black elite’s alliance with big white capital; it would rather have big black capital instead.

Now, an attack on big white corporations is hardly dangerous, but racially polarising South Africa – a country with a serious national question and deep racial tensions certainly is, no matter what reason is given.

It can only inflame multi-sided racial and ethnic conflict, divide the working class, and burn down the door to civil war. The combination of immense misery in the country and the lack of a powerful left pole of attraction provides explosive grounds for populist demagogy to ignite. No matter how cynically racist demagogy is used, it has real consequences.

Anarchists defend Malema’s right to sing racist songs, but must explain that South Africa’s problems cannot be solved through racial conflict, that working class whites are not real enemies of the black poor – any more than poor black immigrants are the enemy – and that the real enemy is the ling class, rich black capitalists like Sexwale (and Malema) as much as rich white capitalists like Nicky Oppenheimer.

**CONCLUSION 3: TAKE THE GAP**

Unwittingly, Cosatu and the SACP create the space for corrupt demagogues like Malema because they fail to provide a serious, socialist struggle and alternative.

This is because they are, first, tied to the ANC (which is part of the problem, not the solution); and second because their most ambitious hopes, which they hope the ANC will implement – Keynesianism plus exports – is unworkable in today’s South African and international conditions. [33]

It is a severe indictment of the revolutionary movement – of the whole left, not just the anarchists/ syndicalists – that it was outpaced by a crooked millionaire, who can promise nothing more than looting the state and keeping the working class down.

*Malema is not a solution, but a warning.* Unless there is a *real* alternative to the ANC, black working class desperation will be ruthlessly exploited by demagogues of the Malema type, emulating his political style of authoritarian leadership, patronage politics, and the larger system of BEE plus neo-liberalism.

But what sort of left alternative is needed?

The collapse of the Soviet Union, and the horrors created by its classical Marxist dictatorship, should shatter any illusions that the old road of “the dictatorship of the proletariat” under the Marxist-Leninist vanguard is worth following. This is a discredited system of totalitarian state-capitalism.

Faced with this collapse, the SACP and Cosatu have shifted to social democracy, hoping to slowly reform capital-

ism into something better. Not only, however, will the ruling class never allow itself to be peacefully shut down, but the greatest social democratic examples – the Nordic Keynesian welfare states – are in crisis, destroyed by the very capitalism they promised to tame.

So, this leaves anarchism/ syndicalism.

**BLACK WORKING CLASS**

What is needed is an independent, participatory-democratic, revolutionary front of the oppressed classes, infused with anarchism/ syndicalism: a counterpower to the system and a counterculture based on honesty, solidarity and humility, and internationalism – far removed from the politics of the ANCYL and ANC.

This requires building an anarchist/ syndicalist pole of attraction, centred on a black working class cadre. And black working class youth will be central to this project, belonging under the red-and-black banners of anarchism/ syndicalism, not the ANC’s black, green and gold.

*“What is needed is an independent, participatory-democratic, revolutionary front of the oppressed classes, infused with anarchism / syndicalism: a counterpower to the system and a counterculture based on honesty, solidarity and humility, and internationalism”*

33. L. van der Walt, 2010, “COSATU’s Response to the Crisis: an anarcho-syndicalist assessment and alternative,” *Zabalaza* no. 11

# Municipalities, Service Delivery and Protest

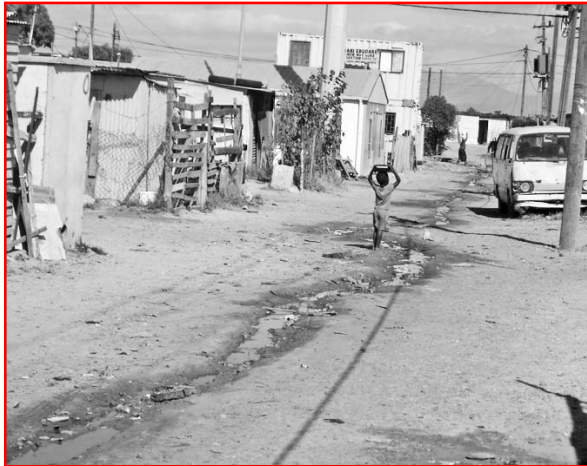
by Oliver Nathan

## INTRODUCTION

South Africa is an extremely unequal society. The post-apartheid dispensation has seen the situation of the majority poor black working class worsening (characterised by increasing unemployment, a lack of adequate and affordable service delivery and exacerbated by rampant inflation). On the other side of the coin, a few elites have 'made it' in capitalism and through the state, often through the elitist forms of 'Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE)' and corruption. Inequality in South Africa is easily illustrated when one observes the massive disparities in development, service delivery and wealth between townships and rural areas on the one hand, and suburban areas on the other.

Nationally, South Africa faces a massive backlog in service delivery. Some 203 out of 284 South African municipalities are unable to provide sanitation to 40% of their residents. This means that in 71% of municipal areas, most people do not have flush toilets. A staggering 887 329 people still use the bucket system and 5 million people, or 10.5% of the population, have no access to sanitation at all.[1] It is perfectly understandable, then, why working class and poor people take to the streets in protest against poor and costly service delivery; it is these same people that are impacted most by insufficient and costly service delivery, corruption and municipal mismanagement.

The post-apartheid state's promise of an extensive roll out of service delivery in 1994 has been severely undermined by its long standing neoliberal approach to the provision of services (discussed in the next section). While the state has made some headway in rolling out services since 1994, thousands of communities living in rural areas and townships continue to receive inadequate services. Moreover, the private sector approach has meant that where services have been provided, the costs have generally been transferred to poor communities who often cannot afford them.



The ability and willingness of the South African state to provide adequate service delivery to all is not simply a question of having the 'right' political party or sufficiently skilled people in power. Nor is it simply a question of having good policies, or the adequate administrative means or technical capacity to implement it.

Should massive disparities in service delivery between wealthy and poor neighbourhoods be put down to corruption, mismanagement, administrative incapacity and a lack of consultation? Or is there something in how the state is structured and the way in which it rules which means that it can never give the majority of people what they need?

## NEO-LIBERALISM AND PRIVATISATION IN SOUTH AFRICA: RDP AND GEAR

Privatisation, at its most basic, refers to the state selling off public enterprises to capitalists. The theory behind this neo-liberal approach is that that once privatised; service delivery will become more efficient, cost effective and far-reaching. The privatisation of electricity provision through the

installation of pre-paid electricity meters in township homes is a case in point. Electricity privatisation through pre-paid meters ensured that the price of electricity shot up dramatically – up to 20 per cent in some cases.[2]

Between 1993 and early 1994 the ANC, in conjunction with its alliance partners,

the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) and the South African Communist Party (SACP), created the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). The RDP could be seen as the election manifesto of the ANC in 1994, maintaining elements of the 1955 freedom charter and promising an end to the social and economic inequalities generated under apartheid.

The RDP election manifesto was put into effect in 1994 with the adoption of the RDP white paper. The RDP overall contained a set of

## PHOTO

Shack life “terrifying and impossible” says shack dweller  
Source: <http://antieviction.org.za>

1. [http://www.da.org.za/docs/633/5%20worst%20municipalities\\_document.pdf](http://www.da.org.za/docs/633/5%20worst%20municipalities_document.pdf)

2. City of Johannesburg, (2003), downloaded from: [www.coj.gov.za](http://www.coj.gov.za).

## PHOTO

Water scarcity – an unresolved issue in many parts of the country often leads to protests over service delivery

Source:

<http://www.wrc.org.za>

*“Firstly, all states are fundamentally undemocratic and largely unaccountable to the citizenry; secondly, all states are hierarchically organised, with those at the top unaccountable to those at the bottom; and thirdly, all states have a bias in favour of serving the long-term interests of the ruling classes.”*

‘Keynesian’ macroeconomic measures, which stipulated that the state ought to take the lead in delivering services, housing and infrastructure to the majority poor, mostly black popular classes. However, the RDP election manifesto also, and this is less well known, *already* contained some neoliberal elements alongside Keynesianism. The White Paper brought neoliberalism to the fore, firmly establishing it as the basic framework. This means that the ANC didn’t just step into a neoliberal state and take its programme on board: it actively endorsed and adopted the neoliberal framework, evident in its very first general policy document.[3]

The RDP was soon replaced by the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) macroeconomic framework in 1996. GEAR essentially promoted a far more aggressively neoliberal approach to the state and the market, firmly consolidating the ANC’s neoliberal orientation. Very broadly, GEAR promoted the privatisation of ‘non strategic’ state assets and services, liberalised trade and promoted “flexibility” in the labour market.

Despite claims that neoliberalism represents a weakening of the state, in fact it merely designates it a different role: maintaining law and protecting private property, while creating a suitable environment for the functioning of the market (including infrastructure provision for the benefit of business), The role of the state in intervening directly in markets is what is undermined in neoliberalism, not the state itself.

GEAR promoted privatisation, according to its own justifications, as a means to attaining efficient and far-reaching service delivery – by placing it in the hands of the supposedly more efficient private sector. Neoliberal theory is based on the assumption that unfettered competition in the free market will deliver the greatest good to the greatest number of people. It argues that state intervention into markets, such as the state owning and operating enterprises which it itself subsidises, leads to uncompetitiveness (higher prices for consumers) and inefficiency in service delivery. Privatisation has been deployed, according to the state, to make the delivery of services more efficient, and to help municipalities in particular to save money so that they can provide services better. Although selling off ‘non-strategic’ SOEs can allow the state to commit less capital and administrative capacity, it can also allow the state to raise capital for other projects from the proceeds of

selling the asset to a private sector buyer.

Crucially, the post-apartheid neoliberal state sought to justify the imposition of neoliberal restructuring by appropriating Keynesian and developmental language and rhetoric from aspects of the RDP and by arguing that GEAR was the means to which goals of the RDP could be achieved. Behind the rhetoric however, GEAR represented the ultimate and final consolidation of ANC neoliberalism and its abandonment of even a paper commitment to Keynesian policies.

## STATE LOGIC

There are three structural characteristics of the state that are common to all states. Firstly, all states are fundamentally undemocratic and largely unaccountable to the citizenry; secondly, all states are hierarchically organised, with those at the top unaccountable to those at the bottom; and thirdly, all states have a bias in favour of serving the long-term interests of the ruling classes. The South African state, at all levels, is no exception. It’s character has implications for how services are delivered and how we understand corruption. Analysing it helps us to assess the prospects for popular class interests to be leveraged and maintained through the state.

Firstly, the local state in South Africa is fundamentally undemocratic because state managers are not accountable to their constituents; people can only vote for new state managers once every five years and have no control over them in the interim period. Secondly, because of the hierarchical structure of the local state, high level managers are not accountable to subordinate workers in the state. Therefore, upper management can exercise managerial prerogative (authoritarian decision-making) to promote their own interests ahead of those of subordinates and ahead of the class interests of the popular classes. Thirdly, by virtue of the local state’s undemocratic and hierarchical structure, it can be, and indeed is used by the ruling classes to secure the interests of the ruling class (the state managers and capitalists) at the expense of the popular classes (the workers and the poor).

Several factors combine to help explain why services are not delivered to the poor: the statist structure of municipalities (regardless of the party in power), privatisation of basic services, pervasive corruption and mismanagement including the under-spending of budgets and the



3. Fighting against privatisation in South Africa



over-spending on state managers' salaries. This is compounded by the fact that the poor themselves have little say in determining how services ought to be delivered.

## UNDERSTANDING MUNICIPALITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

Municipalities, otherwise known as local states are the level of state that operates at the level of wards. Wards are geographical areas set up that divide provinces into smaller chunks. Municipal governments then govern a grouping of wards, which are known as a region or jurisdiction. Municipality leadership consists of a mayoral council, headed up by a mayor, a municipal manager and executive councillors, who lead the various local governments' departments (e.g. Local Economic Development, Social Development, Health, and Education.) District Municipalities, such as the City of Johannesburg Municipality and the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality have executive, legislative and judicial functions too. This means that they have an executive that rule over wards, a legislature to formulate by-laws and have magistrate's courts and a police force to enforce the laws.

Under this layer of executive leadership are the ward councillors, who ought to represent the interests of communities to the executive council and mayor. Ward councillors should hold regular council meetings in which ordinary people can bring their grievances to the councillor who then passes them onto the executive council of the municipality for resolution. Municipalities are taken to be democratic and participatory spaces where ordinary people can participate in the decisions taken, and elect new officials should the current officials not be seen to be representing the people's interests. However, the local state is still highly undemocratic.

The ward system in particular is highly undemocratic in that ward committees often hand-pick the members they would like to participate in decision making.[4] Over and above this, most officials at the municipal level are actually unelected. While the mayor or a councillor might be elected, the city managers and other officials are appointed by the party in power. These people often maintain their office regardless of the mayor who gets voted in.

## WHY IS MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT RELEVANT?

The municipalities are thus understood by the national state as the most appropriate level of governance to carry out the objectives of service

delivery and local economic development. This is justified for three reasons [5]:

1. The national state *argues* that municipalities are better positioned to know what people need, as municipalities are *allegedly* institutionally closer to communities.
2. Because the national state *argues* that municipalities institutionally closer to communities, decision making can allegedly be more participatory through the council system.
3. The national state, in light of the above, *argues* that policies can be applied more effectively at the municipal level than at the national level.

However, as was mentioned earlier, a strong case can be made that the interests and imperatives of government officials at the national, provincial and municipal levels of the state are diametrically opposed to those of the poor and the working class. The interests of capitalists and elites in government are taken by the state, at all levels, to be the interests of all. A few officials in the

*“[T]he interests of the ruling classes will always trump those of the popular classes because the state exists solely to protect ruling class interests.”*

state may have genuinely emancipatory or egalitarian aspirations with regards to the popular classes. However well intentioned, these aspirations are never articulated in meaningful, coherent and sustained ways because of the authoritarian and hierarchical organisation of the state. Moreover, state actions that might seem to serve the interests of the popular classes, no matter how well intentioned, are always stymied by the ruling-class bias of the state. That is, the interests of the ruling classes will always trump those of the popular classes *because* the state exists *solely* to protect ruling class interests.

Given the inherent class bias in the state, there cannot be a genuine unitary 'national interest' that is cultivated by the ruling class through the state that is ever fully accepted by the popular classes. This is reflected in policies which are created by elites who do not live in poverty or misery, are not oppressed, and have little understanding or appreciation of the day-to-day struggles poor communities face. The hierarchical structure of the state also means that policy-making cannot be democratic, and that ordinary people cannot properly participate in its structures. The implication is that the state can never give the masses what they really want.

Specifically, the claims of the democratic nature of local government should be interrogated. Most municipal officials are in fact unelected. The municipal manager, for example, remains

4. Oldfield, S. (2008), "Participatory Mechanisms and Community Building Projects: Building Consensus and Conflict". In M.van Donk, et al (eds), *Consolidating Developmental Local Government: Lessons from the South African Experience*. Cape Town: UCT press.

5. [http://www.dplg.gov.za/subwebsites/publications/type\\_muni/muni\\_ward.htm](http://www.dplg.gov.za/subwebsites/publications/type_muni/muni_ward.htm)

in power regardless of the party of the incumbent mayor. All of the senior members of the municipal management are in fact part of the ruling class and have used their positions for personal gain or to push forward the agenda of their own class (for example through so called 'tenderpreneurship'). Thus, the very structure of local government means that it cannot be democratic, nor can it be participatory.

### CORRUPTION

Almost all municipalities have experienced corruption at one time or another. In South Africa, this predates the democratic transition – despite some common perceptions that this is somehow a new phenomenon. Because of the hierarchical character of the state and the related lack of accountability of high level officials to their subordinates and the general public, 'shady' tender deals with private firms and outright theft of state funds and property is the norm.

The existence of such brazen forms of corruption is often put down to a lack of effective anti-corruption policies, laws and 'checks and balances' that fail to make officials more accountable to the national state or the public at large. However, because of its hierarchical and undemocratic structure, the state affords state managers opportunity to steal money and resources from the municipal almost unchecked. Even officials with the best intentions going into local government are unable to meaningfully make an impact. This is because rather than changing the local state; the local state changes them.[6] Ordinary people have no control over corruption because they are never given information or control over how the money in municipalities is spent.

### MUNICIPAL UNDER-SPENDING, LACK OF DELIVERY AND PROTEST

National treasury reported that municipalities had under spent their budgets by R18,9bn in the 2009/2010 year. In the 2008/09 year aggregate net under spending was recorded at R16,6-billion, or 9,1%.[7] In addition, despite a stipulation that no more than 30% of provincial budget allocations should be spent on salaries, the reality is that in many cases salaries absorb up to 60 percent of the budget. Local government salaries rose by 53% between 2006/2007 and 2009/2010 while municipal employment levels rose by just 4% in the same period.[8] The City of Cape Town Municipality's top earner

was Mayor Helen Zille, who earned R858 260 (which includes a vehicle allowance of R214 564 [9]), while councillors received only 7 percent of the budget in 2008 and an average of 5,75 percent in 2007. In 2009 Zille's salary will be almost R200 000 more than when she took office in March 2006, at which point her salary was R669 214.

In 2009, in contrast, over 150,000 municipal workers in South Africa struck over paltry pay offers in the face of massive inflation. In an overwhelming display of unity, over 150,000 workers employed by municipalities and belonging to both South African Municipal Workers' Union (SAMWU) and Independent Municipal and Allied Trade Union (IMATU) across the country rejected a wage offer of the employer body, South African Local Government Association (SALGA).

On 27 July 2009 SAMWU and IMATU embarked on strike action in all municipalities in every province of the country.[10] In Johannesburg 10,000 workers marched to Mary Fitzgerald Square, rejecting SALGA's offer and reaffirming SAMWU's demand for a 15% increase and a housing subsidy based on a R200 000 house. In Cape Town 3,000 workers marched to the SALGA provincial offices to hand over a memorandum reasserting the union's key demands of a living wage of R4000, as well as the filling of the 25% vacant

posts in the sector, and the improvement of the housing benefit. In Durban 5,000 workers marched and picketed in workplaces to ensure that no scabs performed the work of the strikers.

Though the actions around the country were conducted in a peaceful and disciplined manner by SAMWU members the union expressed "outrage" at reports of police action against its members in Polokwane, where workers have been shot at and arrested.[11]

In 2011, Andries Tatane was murdered by the police while engaging in protest against the lack of service delivery in Ficksburg, Free State province. This, after his community after had "repeatedly written to the mayor and local government of Ficksburg pleading for these necessities".[12]

Tatane's murder shows how municipalities are willing to deploy the police in order to crush any resistance to people demanding their right to service delivery.

*Because of the hierarchical character of the state and the related lack of accountability of high level officials to their subordinates and the general public, 'shady' tender deals with private firms and outright theft of state funds and property is the norm.*

6. Rudin, J. (2011) "Municipal Dysfunction can be Cured". In *Mail & Guardian*, 7-13 October, 2011.

7. *ibid*

8. Donnelly, L. (2011) "Municipal Salary Bill Rockets while Staff Levels Stagnate" in *Mail & Guardian*, 16-22 September, 2011.

9. Dentlinger, L (2009) "Council Salaries Go Up", <http://www.iol.co.za/news/politics/council-salaries-to-go-up-.429975>

10. <http://libcom.org/news/municipal-workers-strike-across-south-africa-28072009>

11. *ibid*

12. Hattingh, S (2011), "Andries Tatane: Murdered by the Ruling Class". In *Zabalaza: A Journal of Southern African Revolutionary Anarchism*. No. 12



## MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

The most recent municipal elections, held in May of 2011, promised changes to the way in which services are delivered to the poor. All of the political parties that campaigned promised heaven and earth to communities. However, nothing so far has really changed (except that some houses and toilets were built in a rush to secure votes for parties).

Soon after new councillors were voted in, people unhappy with the selections were involved in the burning down of certain councillors' houses. Many people understand the ploy to lie with 'bad apples' – corrupt and inefficient candidates in local government. It is believed that voting for a new trustworthy councillor or manager will bring about improvements in service delivery. But this almost never happens. This is because few criticisms are ever raised by protesters towards municipalities as *structures fundamentally unable to deliver*.

## CONCLUSION: SOUTH AFRICA'S NATIONAL QUESTION AND MUNICIPALITIES:

In this paper, I argued that three characteristics of states in general, and the local state in post-apartheid South Africa in particular, prevent the poor and working class from attaining suitable services from the state. These arguments were the following: firstly, that states are fundamentally undemocratic and largely unaccountable to the citizenry; secondly, that all states are hierarchically organised, with those at the top unaccountable to those at the bottom (which allows for corruption and mismanagement); and thirdly, that all states have a bias in favour of serving the long-term interests of the ruling classes (as expressed through neoliberal forms of privatisation in service delivery).

This explains why protests have become the principle means for expressing the frustrations

of poor and working class communities over the provision and cost of service delivery. Protests by municipal workers are also an expression of the unwillingness of municipalities to provide better wages and working conditions for these workers. The local state in some cases is simply *unable* to provide adequate service delivery for poor and working class communities or decent wages for its workers. But more importantly, the local state is in fact *unwilling* to provide adequate service delivery and living wages because the interests of the local state are the same as the interests of the ruling class. Furthermore, the state exists to protect those interests, directly against the interests of the popular classes.

According to Van der Walt (2011), South Africa's transition to 'democracy' was a *massive victory* against national oppression, which was won from below. It is therefore incorrect to speak of the post apartheid situation as a continuation of "white supremacy". There have been huge gains in legal and social rights; many routine *apartheid* practices are illegal, while affirmative action etc. is mandatory; yet the national liberation struggle was left *incomplete*.<sup>[13]</sup>

The ANC cannot bring about the completion of the national liberation struggle, and neither could any political party using the state for national liberation. While a political revolution may have occurred (the transition from apartheid to a national capitalist democracy) an economic revolution has not occurred. The poor are still poor, workers still exploited and only a few black people have become rich through BEE and other means. While the roll out of extensive service delivery was a key thrust of the ANC's election manifesto, so far municipalities have not been able to carry out service delivery in a democratic fashion in a sustained an equal way. Rather, municipalities have been used by officials to enrich themselves.

## PHOTO

Residents from 10 informal settlements in Khayelitsha and Delft march to the local municipality offices in Ilitha Park on 21 October  
Source: <http://westcapenews.com>

13. Bekker, I. and Van der Walt, L. (2011) "Build a Better Worker's Movement". In *Zabalaza: A Journal of Southern African Revolutionary Anarchism*. No. 12





# Egypt: the Lost Transition and the Libertarian Alternatives

by Yasser Abdullah \*

## INTRODUCTION [ZACF]

*Beginning in December 2010, a series of uprisings in Arab countries brought hope to workers and the poor - not only in the Middle East but throughout the world. Dictators have been toppled in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya, and struggles continue throughout the region.*

*For anarchists the question has always been: will the struggles stop with overthrowing dictators, an important victory but one that cannot end oppression? Or will it go further? Can a mass movement continue the struggle until imperialism, exploitation, capitalism and the state itself are finally destroyed?*

*In the Arab countries and elsewhere, the ruling class – the capitalists, the officials of national governments and imperial powers, the generals, and their propagandists in the mainstream media – have hoped to maintain “order”, to hold elections that will at most offer a little more freedom and a change of faces at the top, while keeping the core structures of hierarchy intact.*

*In this article, an Egyptian anarchist explains how not only the ruling class but even “leftist” parties have joined in this attempt to keep the military and capitalist bosses in control – and at the same time how this trickery is being exposed, and how a libertarian working class movement is emerging to continue the struggle.*

*The situation has changed since this article was written, as a new wave of protests against the Muslim Brotherhood and the SCAF has broken out. Although Morsi has offered concessions, the protests continue with chants of “leave means go! Morsi doesn’t get it”, and there are unconfirmed reports of the formation of revolutionary councils in Mahalla, north of Cairo, and a few other Egyptian cities.*

Right after the announcement of the first round of presidential elections in Egypt, it became clear that the choice was between two old authoritarian persons: Ahmed Shafik, a retired general, the last prime minister under fallen dictator Hosni Mubarak; and Mohammed Morsi, the chairman of the Muslim Brotherhood’s “Freedom and Justice” party. Many foreign commentators, and some local ones too, started to talk about a “lost transition” in Egypt; i.e. international crisis group published an article called “Egypt lost in transition” [1], they had supposed there was a chance for a smooth, pre-determined transition, and they thought this chance was lost after the results.

come was disastrous for any authority: that day people burnt most police stations in major cities; the police were totally defeated; Mubarak ordered the army to interfere. For many commentators, that was a predictable crisis; some of them actually wrote about this before 2011 (e.g.

Steven Cook from the Council of Foreign Relations). After the crisis they hoped for a smooth transition that could restore stability and maintain the old state. This was exactly what was lost in transition for them; Mubarak’s successors and loyal generals in the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) failed to learn the lesson.

The main structure of the Egyptian state is the army, so when Mubarak’s civil repression forces

were defeated he ordered the backbones of the state to interfere. Actually, it’s not just Mubarak’s army, somehow Mubarak himself was their civilian face, concealing the oldest state apparatus in the Middle East. The Egyptian army was formed by Mohammed Ali in the 19th century, and gained control of the state after the 1952 military coup. That apparatus need a civilian cover to hide under: when the state became stronger the civilian veil became



## WHAT HAPPENED IN JANUARY 28TH, 2011?

To understand their viewpoint about the lost transition, and to propose another alternative, we need first to know exactly what happened on 28 January 2011. That day angry youth, poor masses, intellectuals declared clearly that people want to remove Mubarak’s regime. The out-

1. <http://www.crisis-group.org/en/regions/middle-east-north-africa/egypt-syria-lebanon/egypt/121-lost-in-transition-the-world-according-to-egypts-scaf.aspx>

thicker, but when the state became weaker, it couldn't put on the civilian veil and threw it away. What's really lost in transition is that the military state apparatus has totally failed to cover itself again, and it will be exposed for many years to any attacks from the Egyptian masses.

### NOT JUST GENERALS, BUT ALSO BIG CAPITAL

The state apparatus in Egypt is an original model for many neo-colonial states in the Middle East. Gamal Abdel Nasser, the dictator from 1956 to 1970, formed a very strong apparatus that rules and governs many aspects of life: it owns all the land space in Egypt; it controls about 25-30% of the Egyptian economy; even after the privatization in 1990s, it keeps a lot of big capital controlled by the Egyptian army, either by owning it or by controlling it through partnership with private business. The hidden face of the military apparatus in Egypt is their economics and business. Only after SCAF took power in Egypt did some journalists and commentators begin to realize this hidden face. The Egyptian army is not just a repression tool, it's a repression-governing-industrial compound, it's the ruling class in its pure sense.

### THE POLITICAL PARTIES AND THE PEOPLE

The army, which forms the main ruling class apparatus in Egypt, has many relations throughout the society: the army personnel's families, the army's civil workers, and some intellectuals who try to join the ruling class. After Mubarak stepped down in February 2011 it was the opportunity for many of them to become the ruling class organs. This would happen many times after: in many clashes between people and army, the political parties would try to take a "neutral" position between the ruling structures they hope to join and the people they want to govern. So all the political parties, especially the Islamists, stood against the angry masses in the November 2011 clashes: the parties hoped for a quick election that would form a parliament through which

they could rule, after defending SCAF's parliament in many ways. The SCAF had declared the dissolving of the parliament, sending the parties out of the ruling strata, and sending its civilian cover away.

### THE WORKERS' STRUGGLE, THE LEFT, WHAT ABOUT PEOPLE'S PARTIES?

The traditional political parties defended SCAF in many clashes, but there was a small fraction of political forces that not did so, mainly a leftist organization called Revolutionary Socialists, the Egyptian affiliate of the International Socialist Tendency, which includes the Socialist Workers Party in



Britain and Keep Left in South Africa. They have some influence among workers, but unfortunately, they are using it in a most reformist way. They helped workers to build an independent trade union federation, which is another bureaucratic federation; they helped workers to form independent trade unions to join the independent federation, and gave them leftist rhetoric to propose a reformist agenda. The independent federation succeeded to send its chairman to the dissolved parliament, to become another yellow trade unionist.

Before the elections one of the revolutionary socialist divisions, called Socialist Renewal Current, backed an Islamist candidate, Abdel Moneim Aboul Fotoh. For them he is a moderate Islamist; one of their main figures even called him a revolutionary Islamist, and wrote an article, called "An Essay about the method", which was totally mixed up with many Marxist terms but without any analysis.

Right after the first round results the Revolutionary Socialists declared they would back the Muslim Brotherhood candidate, Mohammed Morsi, in the last. The Egyptian left main force has joined the political parties block which strive to be a ruling class one day.

For me the Egyptian left played the most dangerous counter-revolutionary part in the Revolutionary process. They make rhetorical speeches containing many Marxist terms, many rebel slogans, but they don't give people any analysis of the state, class, and revolution. They are using revolutionary slogans to adopt same reformist transition model; they hold a socialist banner to build a bourgeois state.

### IS THERE ANY CHANCE FOR A LIBERTARIAN ALTERNATIVE?

Last December I wrote personal notes about the coming insurrection in Egypt: after the formation of parliament I expected the state crisis would continue for many years. The ruling class can't adopt a solution from above; it can't repair the damaged state; it only holds now the military apparatus, but can't build

a civilian one; it can hold aggression but can't build consent and hegemony.

But people can build hegemony from below; a counter-state could be built through local councils, syndicates, etc. The libertarian alternative can still bring fresh air to this struggle. The difficulties for the libertarian solution are many, one of them being that a lot of people believe the authoritarian rhetoric about anarchy. Many full paid commentators which are pro ruling state escaped from analyzing the state and created another silly term called "Deep State". Another difficulty is that we don't have any anarchist organization, after a failed attempt to build one. But the libertarian alternative will still be out there, as long as state is not able to repair the damaged civilian apparatus. I think the next few months are likely to give some answers.

Cairo, June 15th, 2012



**ADDENDUM:**

*This morning Mohammed Morsi, the Muslim Brotherhood candidate, declared himself the winner of the presidential elections, there's no official results yet, but most likely it would be the same, according to his campaign, Morsi has won by 52% of votes, after SCAF released supplementary constitutional announcement, which reduce the president's powers, now the SCAF, will form the constitutional assembly, and keep the veto against its decisions, the new president will be a new cover for SCAF, a new puppet, Egypt will face a new kind of*

*regime, a military-Islamist which has been tried before in Sudan, an Islamist puppet president with no force, and tremendous SCAF power control everything. After a few days the court will give its verdict about dissolution of Muslim Brotherhood itself, is it a chance for a conflict between Islamists and SCAF, or it's a chance for people to topple down both SCAF and political Islam?*

**18th, June, 2012**

\* Yasser Abdullah  
is an Egyptian  
Anarchist



## A Close Look at the Syrian Revolution: An Anarchist among Jihadists

by a Syrian comrade

*“The Syrian people, ...showed unprecedented courage and determination in the first few months of the revolution”*

**T**his could to some extent tell my situation when I was inside the “liberated territories” of Syria, that is the territories controlled by the free army, the armed forces of the Syrian opposition. But still it is not the whole truth. It is true that not all the free army militants are devoted jihadists, although most of them are thinking, or telling, that what they are practicing is “Jihad”. The truth is there are a lot of ordinary people, even thieves, etc. among them, as in any armed struggle. My first and lasting impression about the current situation in Syria is that there is no longer a popular revolution going on there – what is taking place there is an armed revolution that could degenerate simply into a civil conflict. The Syrian people, which showed unprecedented courage and determination in the first few months of the revolution to defy Assad’s regime despite all its

brutality, is really exhausted now. 19 long months of fierce repression, and lately, of hunger, scarce resources of all types, and continuous bombardment of the regime’s army, weaken its spirit.

Cynically, the beneficiary of all these wasn’t the regime, but the opposition, especially the Islamists. Depending on its international relationships, especially with the rich despotic Gulf governments, the opposition can now feed and support the hungry population in the areas controlled by its forces. Without such support, a grief humanitarian situation could be there. But this support is not provided for free, neither by the Gulf rulers, nor by the opposition leaders. They are, like any other authoritarian force, asking the masses for submission and obedience. This in fact could only mean the real death of the Syrian revolution as a popular courageous



act of the Syrian masses.

Yes, I helped some jihadists to live [1], and others to go back to fight; but my real intention was to help the masses I belong to, firstly as a physician, secondly, as an anarchist. To tell the truth, I don't think that our problem is with Islam itself. Islam can also be egalitarian, or even, anarchistic. In the history of Islam there were scholars who called for a stateless and free Muslim society, even a free universe without any sort of authority.

The problem in what is happening now in Syria is not only the difficult and bloody process of changing a ruthless dictatorship, but might even be worse: substituting it with another dictatorship, which could be worse and bloodier. Early in the revolution, a small number of people, mainly devoted Islamists, claimed to represent the revolting masses, and self-appointed

themselves to be the true revolutionaries, the true representative of the revolution. This went unchallenged by the mainstream of the revolutionary masses and intellectuals. We did oppose such authoritarian and even false claims, but we were, and still are, too few to make any real difference.

These people claimed that what was taking place is a religious war, not a mere revolution of repressed masses against their oppressor. They used very aggressively the fact that the oppressor was from another sect of Islam different from the sect of the majority of the people he is exploiting, a sect that was judged frequently by Sunni scholars in the past to be against the teachings of true Islam, and that is even worse than non-Muslims. We were shocked by the fact that the majority of Allawete, the sect of the current dictator, who are poorer and more marginalised than the Sunni majority, did support the regime; and that they participated in his brutal suppression of the revolting masses. This came as "evidence" of the "actual religious war" taking place between Sunni and Allawete. And in this regard these people could really claim to be the real Sunni; they are Muslim scholars and they are so sectarian that no one can challenge them in this regard. In fact, they built their spiritual and moral authority, before the material one. Then came the material support from Gulf rulers.

Now, the potential for any real popular struggle is decreasing rapidly; Syria is now governed by arms; and only those who have them can have a say about its present and future. And that is true not only for Assad's regime and its Islamic opposition. Everywhere in the middle east, the great hopes are disappearing rapidly.



In Tunisia, Egypt, and elsewhere. The Islamists seem to get all the benefits of the courageous struggles of the masses. And they could easily initiate the process of establishing their fanatic rule, without strong opposition from the masses. I could feel exactly as Emma Goldman felt in 1922 when she broke with the Bolsheviks and finally became disillusioned about their rule. In fact, no one in the whole Arab and Muslim world looks closer to the Bolsheviks nowadays than the Islamists, even devoted Stalinists lack the full criteria of their ancestors compared to the Islamists. For a long time they were badly repressed by local dictators, used to frighten the masses and the west; and because of that might have looked as the most decisive part of the opposition to these dictatorships. At the same time, they really have the same efficient propaganda machine as the Bolsheviks once did. They

are so authoritarian and aggressive, exactly as the Bolsheviks were during the decisive days of the October revolution. So it looks rational if the Arab peoples opted to try them, or to accept their rise to power. Even to hope, as the Russian workers and peasants once did, that they could

really create a better and different type of society. For Emma she awoke very early from such disillusion, for the masses themselves, it took so long to realise the truth. Still as Emma thought, rightly as I claim: the masses were very righteous to rise up and try to change their miserable reality, the big "mistake", if it could be described as a mistake, was made by the authoritarian forces which sought to hijack the revolution. We still support the revolution, not its false "leaders".

### **BUILDING THE LIBERTARIAN ALTERNATIVE: ANARCHIST PROPAGANDA AND ORGANISATION**

The other issue that I think is so important for us, Arab anarchists and Arab masses, is how to build the libertarian alternative: that is how to initiate an effective anarchist or libertarian propaganda and how to build libertarian organisations. To tell the truth, I never tried before to convince anyone to become anarchist. I opted only for a free dialogue between "equals" with everyone. I never claimed that I know everything or that any anarchist or any other human being deserves to be the "guide" or the "leader" of others, that anyone deserves to be in the same position of the Pope, Muslim Imams, or the general secretary of any Stalinist or Leninist party. I always thought that trying to affect others is another way to practice authority upon them.

1. Here I want to share some details about this. In fact it wasn't easy for me to be among Jihadists, but for some reason it wasn't the same to treat them. For me, I was so clear since the first moment I entered that front hospital I was working in: that I would treat anyone who needs my help, let them be civilians, fighters, from any group and religion or sect; and I was so particular that no one could be mistreated inside that hospital, even from Assad's army. I will repeat here that my real problem, and that of the oppressed in general as I think, is not with God himself, but with human beings who act as gods, who are so sick with authority that they think and act like gods, be they a secular dictator like Assad or an Islamic Imam, etc. God himself is never as deadly dangerous as those who "speak" for him.

But now I see this issue from another perspective: it is all about making anarchism “available” or known to all those who want to fight any oppressing authority they suffer from; be they workers, unemployed, students, feminists, the youth, or ethnic and religious minorities, etc. It is about trying to build an example or sample of the new free life in the body of a free or libertarian organisation; not only as a living manifestation of its potential presence, but also as a MEANS to achieve that society. We have to make anarchism well-known to all the slaves and victims of all the current oppressive systems and authorities. An EFFECTIVE ANARCHIST PROPAGANDA is, as I think, the first aim of such organisations. In a word, we are witnesses to the bankruptcy of the “secular” authoritarian trends (including the nationalists and Arab-national-

ists, and Stalinists and other verities of Leninism), and very soon the bankruptcy of the religious authoritarian ones too. The future alternative should



be, logically, a libertarian one. Of course, anarchism cannot be implanted artificially, it must be a “natural” product of the local masses’ struggles. But still it will need good care and to be

properly highlighted. This will be, supposedly, the role of our propaganda. Still there will be no “center” in our organisation, no bureaucracy, but it is still supposed to be as effective as its authoritarian counterparts, or even more efficient.

Our Stalin or Bonaparte is still not in power, the Syrian masses still have the opportunity to get a better outcome than that of the Russian revolution. It is very true that this is difficult and becomes more so every minute, but the revolution itself was a miracle, and on this earth, the oppressed can create their own miracles, from time to time. This time also, we, Syrian anarchists, put all our cards, and all our efforts with the masses. It couldn’t be any other way, or we would not deserve our libertarian name.



## BLACK STARS OF ANARCHISM



# T.W. Thibedi (1888-1960): The Life of a South African Revolutionary Syndicalist

by Lucien van der Walt



**T**he son of a Wesleyan minister, Thibedi William Thibedi was one of the most important black African revolutionary syndicalists in South African history. Thibedi was a leading figure in the International Socialist League (ISL) and in the Industrial Workers of Africa syndicalist union. Later he played an important role in the early Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA), particularly its union work. He was active in all of the key black unions from the 1910s to the 1940s.

According to Eddie Roux of the CPSA, Thibedi was a “genius at getting people together, whether workers in a particular industry, women, location residents, or whatever was needed at the moment”.

### THE ISL

Hailing from the small town of Vereeniging, T.W. Thibedi trained as a school teacher and worked at a church school in Johannesburg. Around 1916, he joined the ISL as its first major

African leader.

In September 1917, Thibedi was involved in organizing an ISL-sponsored conference that led to the formation of a “Solidarity Committee” intended to reform the orthodox trade unions on syndicalist lines. These existing unions generally excluded people of colour (except in Cape Town), tended to craft unionism, and were prone to binding no-strike agreements. Thibedi served on the Committee, which was not, however, a success.

### UNION MILITANT

From 1918, Thibedi was involved in the Industrial Workers of Africa’s Johannesburg section, arguing for One Big Union united on class lines across the races, and mass action. This union was an ISL initiative, and had well over a 1000 members countrywide. The first Industrial Workers of Africa leaflet, written by committee, and issued in IsiZulu and Sesotho, proclaimed:

[See box this page]

The ISL advocated struggle against the pass and indenture laws, and against the compound system, through mass action centred on the One Big Union. The Industrial Workers of Africa was just one of several syndicalist unions it formed and led.

## INSIDE THE ANC

Along with other Industrial Workers of Africa militants, Thibedi promoted syndicalism as part of the syndicalist current in the leftwing of the late 1910s South African Native National Congress (SANNC, now the African National Congress, or ANC). When a failed joint, general strike in July 1918 led to a crackdown on the ISL, the Industrial Workers of Africa and the SANNC leftwing in the Transvaal, it fell to Thibedi to revive the union in Johannesburg. A leaflet by Thibedi in 1919 argued:

*...Black African open your eyes, the time has come for you all who call themselves Country Workers that you should join and become members of your own Council. It is not to say that we workers stop you from joining any other Councils, but you must know what you are in the Country for (rich or poor). All workers are poor therefore they should have their own Council... Why are you afraid to become members of the Industrial Workers of Africa whilst you call yourself Workers?*

The union in Johannesburg drew its members from across the African working class, and was actually more of a general union than the industrial union on IWW lines, to which it aspired (its Cape Town section, by contrast, was mainly based on the docks).

## THE CPSA AND AFTER

The key African in the early CPSA, Thibedi put his syndicalist background to work when he ran the Party's night school in Johannesburg; he became a full-time CPSA organiser and unionist. He worked inside the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU), and when the ICU broke with the CPSA, and the CPSA set up "red" unions, he led the CPSA's Federation of Non-European Trade Unions (FNETU).

The CPSA was wracked with purges at the time, and expelled Thibedi in 1929. He rejected the two-stage approach (which still remains Communist Party

policy, and is the basis of the alliance with the ANC). However, FNETU rebelled, and forced Thibedi's reinstatement; he was finally expelled in 1931.

Later Thibedi flirted with Trotskyism, especially the Workers' International League: this ran an opposition caucus in the CPSA-led Council of Non-European Trade Unions (CNETU) in the 1940s.

## LEGACY

Thibedi repeatedly rejected requests to rejoin the CPSA, and, tired of militant work, faded from public life from the late 1940s. Living in Eersterus, he died in 1960 (Eersterus was a freehold township in Pretoria from which Africans were evicted from 1959, a bitter experience for the aged man).

Thibedi's years of union and left activism – spanning syndicalism, Communism and Trotskyism – and his absolutely pivotal role in this period, have not received their due recognition. However, in 2006 the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu), with close Party links, resolved to memorialise him and other "worker heroes". The status of his monument is unclear.

*Workers of the Bantu race:*

*Why do you live in slavery? Why are you not free as other men are free? Why are you kicked and spat upon by your masters? Why must you carry a pass before you can move anywhere? And if you are found without one, why are you thrown into prison? Why do you toil hard for little money? And again thrown into prison if you refuse to work? Why do they herd you like cattle into compounds? WHY?*

*Because you are the toilers of the earth. Because the masters want you to labour for their profit. Because they pay the Government and Police to keep you as slaves to toil for them... There is only one way of deliverance for you Bantu workers. Unite as workers. Unite: forget the things which divide you...*

*The sun has arisen, the day is breaking, for a long time you were asleep while the mill of the rich man was grinding and breaking the sweat of your work for nothing.*

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## BOOK REVIEW:

# My Dream is to be Bold: Our Work to End Patriarchy

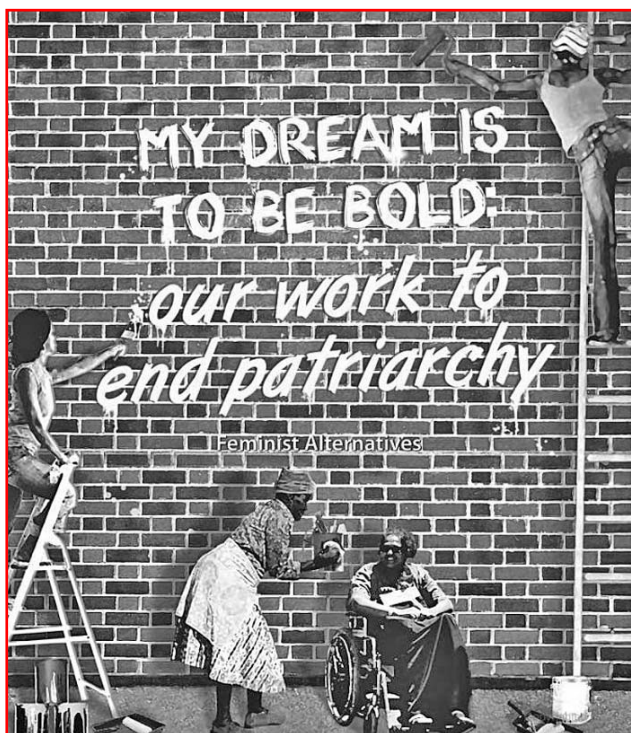
Reviewed by Jonathan Payn (ZACF)

Published in 2011 by Pambazuka Press, *My Dream is to be Bold: Our Work to End Patriarchy* is the welcome result of the work of Feminist Alternatives (FemAL), “a group of feminist activists in South Africa working against sexism and oppression”. The book provides insight into the lives, struggles and ideas of nineteen feminist activists based in South Africa, who organised “to come together over two days and reflect on women’s organising in the context of a patriarchal, neoliberal social and world order”. The book itself is a collection of writings by the nineteen activists, developed during a publication workshop held in Cape Town in June of 2009. The workshop, organised by FemAL, sought “to build collective analysis through speaking to other women, comparing experience, collectively trying to understand that experience and theorise it”.

In the introduction FemAL explain how the workshop – which seems to have been a very interesting experience in and of itself – was structured in order to generate the content published in this book:

*“The process unfolded through an initial plenary that set the context, collectively established the collective basis for the work and laid the foundation with regards to the idea of collective publishing, ethics and process. After intense discussion and debate on this as well as issues of political orientation and the underpinnings of FemAL’s work, we moved very quickly in a way that allowed the people present to share deeply. Women divided up into groups of two or three plus a scribe. Participants were given an interview guide with basic interview tips as well as guiding questions. The ensuing conversations/interviews were facilitated and conducted by the women present within the groups*

*whilst the scribe recorded on computer in a pre-designed template, the word-for-word transcript of the interview. Whilst participants took an extended break, scribes tidied up the transcripts in terms of spelling and grammar and the now ‘cleaned’ up interviews were handed back to the groups together with an editing guide so that further editing could take place in order to ensure that each woman present was comfortable and happy with her story. This was done over night.”*



In addition to this, an art session was facilitated by South African artist Gabriella Van Heerden, and the whole book is brought to life by full-colour reproductions of the artwork produced by the participants during this session, as well as other photographs both of the workshop itself as well as the day-to-day activism of the people involved. The collection of stories presented in this book provide provoking insight into the lives of the majority of black women living in South Africa, including those who were

born on other parts of the continent, seventeen years after the end of Apartheid. One thing this book confirms is that the lives of poor black and coloured women have not improved since the coming of bourgeois democracy and, indeed, due to the gendered nature of neoliberal capitalism, the living and working conditions of women have in many ways deteriorated. Despite the advances made by the struggle against Apartheid in terms of workers’ and human rights, women still suffer the brunt of the oppression and exploitation of the capitalist system. This

is evidenced in the fact that, for example, owing to the privatisation, corporatisation and commercialisation of basic services, such as that of water, even greater hardship has been placed on women. After all, in a patriarchal and sexist society such as that of South Africa, with very rigidly defined gender roles, it is the women of a household that are expected to do the cooking, cleaning and laundry – all of which require water. What this means in practice is that women, who are already not recognised by the majority of society for the unpaid work they do in the home (often in addition to some kind of [under-] paid work outside the home), are put under even more pressure as; for example, they often have to walk long distances and wait in long queues to get water – or pay exorbitant prices for the ‘luxury’ of having running water at home.

Another example of the increased exploitation and oppression of women under neoliberal capitalism is cited by Shereen Essof, who talks about her experience struggling against outsourcing and restructuring at the University of Cape Town, where “dodgy gender-neutral policies on health and safety, leave, benefits and salaries” undermine women workers’ rights to decent and dignified conditions. Indeed, according

to Essof, it is not only women who are affected by outsourcing – although they do bear the brunt – as, “[f]or most outsourced workers, women and men, their labour has been feminised. The reproductive work performed by women in the household has been extended by outsourcing into the public sphere of the university, and the work continues to remain invisible, undervalued and underpaid”.

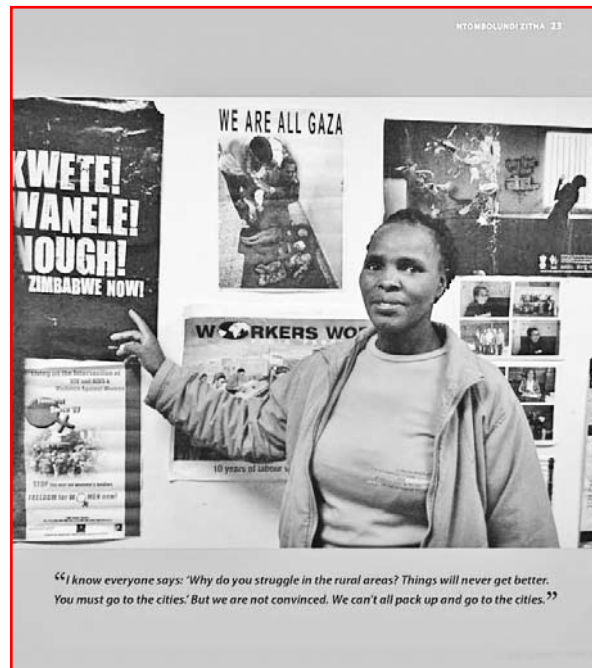
Some of the other areas that the contributors elaborate on and which provide for very interesting reading include the notion of corruption in RDP house allocation as a cause of xenophobia, the strength of direct action and unity and the divisive effects of political parties, the continued economic dependence of women on men, bureaucratisation of struggle and the effects of funding and “NGOism” on social movements, forced sterilisation, etc.

Each contribution to this book raises important questions and provides interesting insights into the alternative forms of politics and struggle the women involved are attempting to forge for themselves and their communities. When one considers that although the majority of social movement activists in South Africa are women, the leadership of these movements is by-and-large male-dominated, it becomes uncomfortably clear just how far we still have to go to challenge and rectify this situation. The Sikhula Sonke farm workers’ trade union provides just one possible alternative (which also raises interesting questions around the tactical question of dual unionism versus boring-from-within; although it is not within the scope of this article to address these).

Sikhula Sonke is an independent trade union which aims to gain benefits for women as workers, such as having housing contracts and land ownership in women’s names, having crèche facilities on farms where they organise, equal pay for equal jobs, etc. Wendy Pekeur raises questions as to how democratic and representative the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) really is, owing to its position in the Tripartite Alliance, and states that Sikhula Sonke is not affiliated to Cosatu for this reason – believing that “you have to be outside government in order to be critical of it” – and due to the fact that the Alliance in male-domi-

nated. In contrast, Sikhula Sonke has made a commitment to remaining women-led and, although men are admitted to the union, it has passed a “resolution that the President and General Secretary will always be women”.

Although this is consequence of a legitimate desire to ensure that women, who are the most exploited and oppressed on the farms where Sikhula Sonke operates, remain in control of the union it is probably not a principle that we in the ZACF would fully agree with in that it does not necessarily ensure that the best person for the job will actually do it. On the surface it may appear a bit of a catch-22 situation in that there is an apparent risk that people will be put into positions based on their gender and not on their experience and suitability for the job; but, at the same time, if a concerted effort to put



women into leadership positions is not made, they will always lack the necessary experience due to never having been given the opportunities to gain it in the first place. However, it seems to us that in a democratic mass movement activists can – and should – gain the necessary experience through rotating specific tasks and responsibilities, and not simply by being elected into leadership positions. Indeed, reserving “top jobs” for women can be contrary to this approach in that it puts too much emphasis on the leadership role – as if to suggest that only the leaders are actually responsible for building the movement, falling into the trap of authoritarian vanguardism.

Although we wouldn’t go about it in

the same way, the commitment to building women’s leadership in the trade union movement is critical, and something to be supported wholeheartedly. It will be very interesting to see how Sikhula Sonke and its female leadership develop, and what influence this might have on other unions and social movements in the region. The fact, however, that men continue to join and support the union in full knowledge of its policies on women leadership is encouraging.

Although the contributors do a good job of locating patriarchal oppression firmly in a neoliberal capitalist framework, there are one or two statements with which one could take issue. Jean Beukes, for example, states that the capitalist patriarchal system in South Africa is “a system for men by men”. Now, although it would be hard to deny that, to a greater-or-lesser extent, men generally *do* benefit from patriarchy, it is important to recognise that, despite these benefits, the system of patriarchy and women’s oppression is *not* actually in the interests of all men – particularly not those of working class and poor men. Indeed, much like racism and nationalism, sexism and patriarchy only serve to divide the poor and working class and, as such, are actually in diametrical opposition to the real interest of working class and poor men – which is to unite with women, as a class, in order to be able to wage an effective and revolutionary class struggle against neoliberal capitalist patriarchy and the state and for the complete social, political and economic emancipation of

all people, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, etc. Claiming that capitalist patriarchy is “a system for men by men” only serves to reinforce the idea that working class men’s and women’s interests are opposed, and that all men, across classes, have the same interests; which are in opposition to those of all women, across classes, thus undermining the possibility of a united, class-based response: the only response we believe capable of effectively and decisively combating capitalism and the state. It would be more apt to say that capitalist patriarchy is “a system for the rich and powerful by the rich and powerful” and that it is therefore in the interests of *everyone* who is neither rich nor powerful, the exploited and oppressed, to unite against it as a class.



Another example of a somewhat weak or flawed analysis is the assumption that women in power should naturally be more sympathetic to the plight of other women, more sensitive to their needs and therefore more committed to challenging patriarchy than their male counterparts. This is suggested by Lorraine Heunis, for example, who says when speaking about Democratic Alliance (DA) then-councillor (now Premier of the Western Cape) Helen Zille that, “Zille is a woman, yet she didn’t even think of women’s needs”. The underlying assumption of this statement, that all women share something in common regardless of their social position, fails to acknowledge the very real and very different – even opposing – class interests that different women may have. Helen Zille, for example, has committed to pursuing a neoliberal capitalist agenda, the DA being capitalist through-and-through, and so it is politically naive to assume that she would subordinate her *class interests*, of accumulating wealth and power, to those based on her anatomy. Indeed, capitalism being patriarchal as it is, it is more than likely that, were she to come out in favour of women’s rights and an end to patriarchy in any way other than rhetoric, she would simply be sidelined by the men – and some of the women – in the DA in defence of *their* class interests. Besides which, the access to women’s health care, protection from domestic violence and economic dependency on men, etc., that is afforded to her by her class position, mean that Zille experiences patriarchy in a very different way to the majority of poor, black women in South Africa. Heunis’ statement also fails to recognise that individual politicians and councillors have very little power to implement policies and changes that do not represent the overall interests of the ruling class.

One of the overriding themes found in the book is to do with the importance with which probably every contributor views women-only spaces where, “If a woman is involved with other women, and hears their stories, it is easier to disclose these things”. Spaces in which women can come together, as women, and share their experiences and struggles and find support from other women, who have of course often had similar experiences. According to

FemAL it is in these “sharings” that “women often gain a political understanding which years of activist experience in mixed gender struggles will never give: a raw gut understanding of everything; a space where all parts of each of us are welcome”.

Having never been part of one of these spaces I will have to rely on the word of those that have. My feeling, however, is that as important as these safe spaces may or may not be – al-



“Communication was the thing that drew us together. For the first time, I could describe what was happening in my life in a common language. Because we could communicate, we trusted each other.”

though I can appreciate a need for them – I think they also run a risk which must not be dismissed. That is to say there is always a risk that, when you have women-only spaces or commissions that are associated or linked to larger mixed-gender movements or organisations, so-called women’s and gender issues can sometimes be “dumped” on the women’s groups to deal with, consequently sidelining or marginalising the issues, instead of involving the whole organisation or movement. This is a problem in that it does not require the whole movement to take responsibility for a particular problem, nor is it conducive to developing a common understanding between men and women of gender and sexual oppression and thus undermines a united response.

While it may sometimes be easy to appreciate the need for safe or women-only spaces, I feel it is also important that these spaces feed into the broader organisations or movements. Otherwise, as Promise Mthembu says, “[t]he establishment of women’s desks is quite counter-productive to women’s causes”.

One such example of this risk materialising was in relation to a rape case within the Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF), where the issue was left to be dealt with by the APF Women’s Forum, Remmoho, effectively absolving the general male membership from taking any responsibility.

Thus, although there seems to be consensus among the authors as to the need for women-only spaces – a right that every anarchist must defend, whether they agree with the strategic or tactical implications or not – it also raises some questions I would have found beneficial for the authors to address: do the advantages of women-only spaces outweigh the dangers? Do they hold the view that women-only spaces need to feed back into larger integrated organisations; or do they consider them a permanent project that will somehow build up its own contribution to the struggle against capitalism and patriarchy? If they feed back into broader organisations, what mechanisms can be put in place to ensure that the entire membership thereof adopts the resolutions of the women-only spaces and commits to their implementation? If they are seen as permanent separate projects how do they relate to other mixed-gender movements

and organisations also engaged in constant struggle against domination and exploitation?

Various desires are expressed throughout the book for feminist activists to find or develop new ways of doing politics and struggle; for “building and exercising collective power”. In so doing, the authors propose a number of concepts that anarchists have long advocated: direct democracy, rotation of tasks, free association and mutual aid being amongst them. This is very encouraging, although a couple of concerns remain, such as the question, “How do we create cross-class/race/sexualities solidarities that address issues of power?” This, for anarchists, is the crucial question on which there should be no confusion: cross-class alliances are undesirable, and dangerous to the cause of human emancipation.

As touched on earlier, the idea that all women share the same or a similar experience of patriarchy due to their anatomy (and therefore have the same interests) is incorrect: different women have vastly different experiences of



capitalist patriarchy depending on, for example, their race, ability, sexual orientation and, centrally, their class position. As previously stated, a wealthy and powerful heterosexual white woman is far more insulated from the domination, exploitation and violence that is capitalist patriarchy than is an unemployed black lesbian. The idea that these women have common cause is false, and encourages working class and poor women to subordinate their class interests – of overthrowing capitalism and the state, and with them patriarchal domination – to false alliances outside of their class based on their identity and the illusion of common struggle.

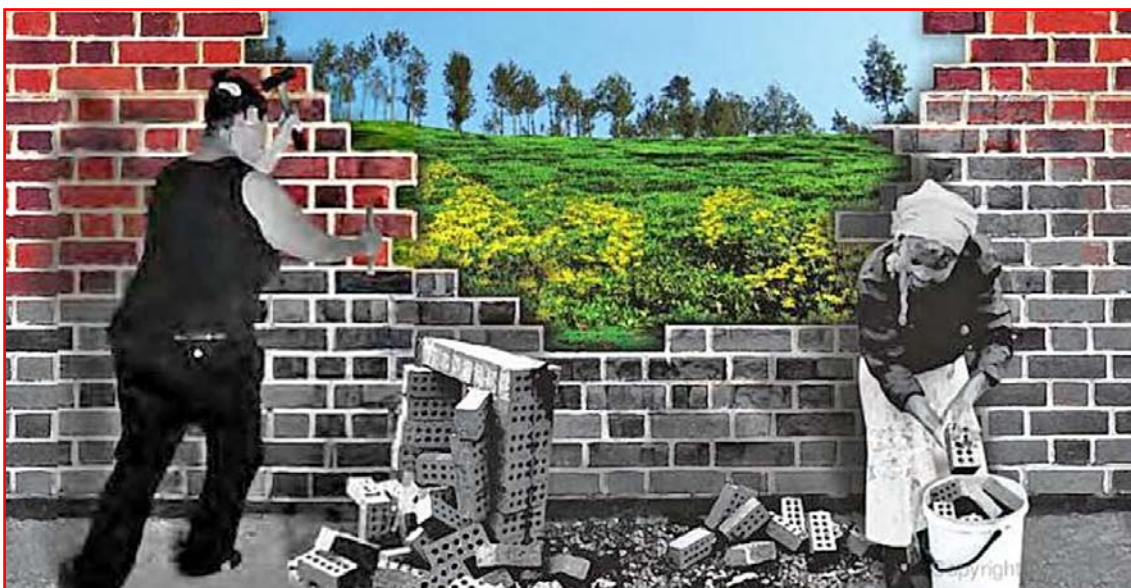
The liberation of all women requires the complete destruction of the state and capitalism and their replacement with a new social order – based on solidarity and equality – designed to meet people’s needs. Generally speaking, women who are relatively privileged under capitalism due to their class position are not going to want to give this up. This does not exclude women and men from outside of the broader working class from taking part in and supporting this struggle, but they must do so acknowledging that what is required is the complete overthrow of capitalism and the state through class struggle – thus putting themselves at the service of the working class – and not through trying to make capitalism gender-neutral or less oppressive to women.

In seeking to develop new liberatory forms of politics and struggle we must also be careful not to throw the baby out with the bath water. “Working by consensus”, for example, “because hierarchy and authoritarianism characterise patriarchy” should be carefully considered as this can lead to the “Tyranny of Structurelessness” [1] as warned against by feminist activist Jo Freeman in her essay of the same name. Indeed, despite often noble intentions, consensus can sometimes have the effect of undermining collective and directly democratic

decision-making processes in that, for example, if 99 out of 100 people agree on something, and one person doesn’t, they all would have to deliberate again and try and reach another agreement in order to accommodate the one. This can of course be very time-consuming, and effectively means that the one person in disagreement wields power over the 99.

We should bear in mind that the decision-making process is but a means to an end – the end is a classless, stateless society in which patriarchy and all forms of exploitation and domination have been abolished – and not an end in itself. And, indeed, if one of the principles of the new politics these comrades are trying to forge is free association, then a more democratic and efficient decision-making process could be that, failing consensus – which should at least be attempted – organisations could make decisions by vote: majority being 50% plus one, two thirds or whatever the membership decides. Because affiliation to the organisation is on the principle of free association, members know in advance that at times they may be a minority in a vote, and be expected to carry out a decision or proposal they did not support. This should not be a problem, however, as at other times their proposals might win. See the Zabalaza Books pamphlet *Anarchist Decision-making and Organisational Form* [2] for more on consensus and directly democratic decision-making structures and processes.

In closing we can say that this publication is an interesting and welcome contribution to understanding and exploring the social struggles and conditions of poor and working class black and coloured women in post-Apartheid South Africa. The book can be bought online from Fahamu Books and Pambazuka Press [3] in paperback and PDF.



1. <http://flag.blackened.net/revolt/anarchism/pdf/booklets/structurelessness.html>
2. [http://zabalaza-books.files.wordpress.com/2012/04/agitprop\\_02\\_anarchist\\_decision\\_making\\_and\\_organisational\\_form.pdf](http://zabalaza-books.files.wordpress.com/2012/04/agitprop_02_anarchist_decision_making_and_organisational_form.pdf)
3. <http://fahamu-books.org/book/?GCOI=90638100257140>

# Linking Environment Activism and Other Struggles: An Anarchist Analysis <sup>[1]</sup>

by Warren McGregor (ZACF)

## INTRODUCTION

Movements for ecological awareness and protection, such as those against climate change, are making important contributions to social understanding regarding the effects of industrial production and consumption. However, many arguments and analyses against ecological destruction and for environmental protection are seemingly not based on a class analysis and not informed by the lives of working class people. Thus many of these analyses do not question the systems of domination that lie at the root of social inequality and ecological devastation: *capitalism and the nation state*.

What follows is an anarchist analysis of a way forward for linking environmental awareness and protection to working class and poor people's issues (as do movements for environmental justice), as an attempt to make these relevant to the majority in our society. In doing so, I argue that ecological protection must be intrinsic to any fight for social, political and economic freedom, as ecological destruction impacts immediately on all our lives and especially those of the working poor. However, it is only a working class-led social revolution against social and economic domination that can ultimately guarantee a world that not only meets all our needs and desires, but a world in which sustainable co-existence with nature is fostered and secured.

## WHAT IS ANARCHISM?

For many readers, the terms anarchism and anarchist conjure a variety of images, many of which might not be favourable, and many of which are inaccurate and down-right wrong.

Anarchism [2] is a *revolutionary, libertarian form of socialism*. It is a political ideology that is *against domination* of all kinds:

- ▶ economic (capitalism: state or market-led),
- ▶ political (best exemplified in the form of the nation state) and
- ▶ social (in the form of the varieties of hierarchies of power that exist in society between genders, age groups, sexual orientations, abilities, races, etc.).

Because anarchism directs its attention at and seeks to fight against all forms of hierarchy

and domination in society, *class* is not only defined in terms of whether or not you own the means of production, but also whether or not you control the means of social administration and coercion. Therefore, the ruling class is made up of the big *capitalists* and the managers of the *state* – in the government, military, state-owned enterprises (parastatals), police and the judiciary/courts. The working class is that which does



not own nor control – it produces wealth for the benefit of those who rule and own. However, the working class includes the unemployed, home-based workers, women (especially) who go unrewarded for the daily tasks they undertake to ensure a safe, clean home and meals for the family, those working in the informal economy, etc. Together with the peasantry, who are exploited by landlords, banks and the state, they form the popular classes. It is the popular classes as such that, for the anarchists, have a revolutionary potential to recreate society – one that is classless and stateless; a society without domination or exploitation.

## WHY AM I SAYING THIS?

The ideas we have about past and present society, ways of struggling and what we want for the future inform the strategy and tactics we choose to use in attempting to create social change. The key to fighting against both capitalism and the state, to building free, or libertarian socialism, is that we should be seeking always to develop the strength and fighting ability of our organisations of counterpower in the workplaces (revolutionary, or syndicalist trade unions) and the communities (revolutionary mass-based social, or civic movements).

1. This piece is an edited version of a discussion document presented by the author at the October 2011 International Labour Research and Information Group (ILRIG) annual Political School held in Cape Town.

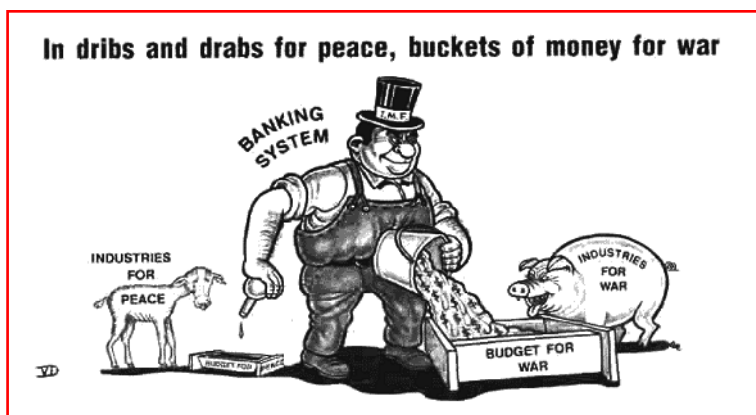
2. For a thorough examination and explanation of what anarchism is, its historical origins, and debates around anarchist strategy and tactics, see M. Schmidt and L. van der Walt's book titled *Black Flame: The Revolutionary Class Politics of Anarchism and Syndicalism*. Published by AK Press.



## ENVIRONMENTAL DESTRUCTION IS A WORKING CLASS ISSUE – THE PRODUCTION QUESTION

We as anarchists feel that the ecological problem we face is not industry and production in and of itself, but the way production is organised and controlled and how goods are distributed. Most modern industrial techniques make inefficient use of resources (both human and other) and many are based on the use of resources which are scarce (such as fossil fuels, e.g. oil, coal, etc.) and which produce massive waste and huge levels of pollution. Also, much of production is ultimately useless to the vast majority of people who can't afford the goods produced (gold watches, big houses, yachts, etc.) and who need other goods for their daily needs (housing materials, nutritious food, adequate clothing, etc.). As a result much of what is produced is dumped and literally thrown into the sea [3]. However, anarchists reject the argument that economic development and economic growth always leads to the destruction of the environment. The implication of this type of argument is either that environmental crisis is unavoidable and that we should just “grin and bear it”, or that the world's economy must be drastically shrunk, and industry replaced with small-scale craft and agricultural production.

What we require, however, is an economic growth and development that takes into account human needs and the availability of resources. For this we need anarchist social economics – and the anarchist society. The problem we are faced with is not excessive consumption, since most people, especially the popular classes, are short of housing, decent health, jobs, transport, education, etc. The problem is wasteful production for the world's ruling minority. In the anarchist society production to meet the immediate and longer term needs of society will not only be entrenched, but will need to be greatly expanded.



We argue that it is not technology and its development in and of itself that is problematic, but capitalist and state uses of technology that systematically under-invest in useful, necessary and ecologically sustainable technology in favour of “high pollution-high profit” technology

and weapons of war for elite power and control.

We also reject a purely “developed” versus “developing world” argument that states that poorer countries (in the so-called “Global South”) are made poor and their poverty and underdevelopment is sustained by richer countries (the so-called “Global North”) who are also the biggest polluters. These arguments also fail to incorporate a localised class analysis and thus fail to see hierarchies of control *within* all countries. Because capitalism and the state always result in the accumulation of wealth and power in the hands of a few, this means that there is huge inequality in the countries of the “North” between its ruling and working classes.

South Africa might be a “developing” country, but is, relative to the size of its economy, one of the biggest polluters in the world [4]. The ecological crisis is clearly due to the excessively high consumption of the ruling classes of the so-called “developed” and “developing” worlds and the massive industries created to produce for their desires.

### WHAT THE ANARCHISTS ARGUE FOR

We argue for a decentralisation and collectivisation of decision-making and production.

Why? Because:

1. Capitalism is a wasteful socio-economic system that over-produces niche products for the minority who can afford them. It breeds competition between private owners of productive means whose goods are made by exploited wage-slaves and then exchanged through a market for profit and perpetual growth. Most production techniques today use fossil fuels (as mentioned above).

Thus capitalism's drive is towards profit and expansion and not efficient, sustainable productive practices. Importantly, because of its nature, as to produce things based on exploitation and for sale, it ultimately under-produces for people's needs [5] and is a system that generates regular crises.

2. States are also responsible for ecological destruction. Competition between states for power and control over people and land leads to the development of huge war industries and war technology adapted for industry. These have obvious serious negative implications for people (injuries, death, refugees, etc.) and the environment (the terrible effects of current nuclear technological failures, etc.).

State-owned enterprises contribute massively to ecological destruction [6]. In South Africa, the nationalised and capitalist enterprise Eskom uses the energy released from burning coal to

3. For example, huge amounts of plastic waste are being deposited into oceans causing waste dumps twice the size of the United States; see: <http://www.ecology.com/2008/08/14/pacific-plastic-waste-dump/>; see also [http://www.environment911.org/144.The\\_Effects\\_of\\_Ocean\\_Dumping](http://www.environment911.org/144.The_Effects_of_Ocean_Dumping) to read about some of the effects of ocean dumping.

4. See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_countries\\_by\\_carbon\\_dioxide\\_emissions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_carbon_dioxide_emissions) for a list of the world's leading carbon emitters.

5. See Herbert Read's *Kropotkin: Selections from his Works*.

6. See, for example the harmful effect on Venezuelan society and ecology inflicted by the state-owned oil company, the *Petróleos de Venezuela, S.A. (PdVSA, Petroleum of Venezuela)*, the fifth largest oil company in the world, in the documentary film *Our Oil – and Other Tales* by the Gattaciová Collective; see also J. Cock's book titled *Going Green: People, Politics and the Environment in South Africa* for figures of pollution in South Africa and land degradation by the early 1990s.



*"Under capitalism, solutions to ecological crises are based on consumer choice – a green consumerism ... this form of consumerism, however, is based on an inadequate and incorrect analysis as to where the pollution problem actually lies – at the doorsteps of big industry, not individuals, and certainly not the working class and poor."*

generate electricity. Eskom has plans to increase its use of coal for electricity. This puts into serious contradiction the South African government's role in the Congress of Parties (or COP) -17 which took place in late 2011.

Competition between states for resources (such as oil, natural gas, land, etc.) breeds conflict and war not only between countries, but also within countries, e.g. the diamond-funded civil wars of west Africa of the late 1990s and early 2000s.

Also, states are not willing to enforce strong ecological protection laws against capitalist bosses and themselves as owners because these would cut into the profits and the states' own tax revenue.

3. Many solutions to ecological and social degradation don't question a hierarchical order of social organisation; or if they do they focus on eliminating one form of control while usually ignoring other dimensions of oppression.

Under capitalism, solutions to ecological crises are based on consumer choice – a green consumerism –

whereby customers choose to buy products and make choices that will supposedly help to sustain the environment, e.g. buying electric cars and energy-saving light bulbs, going vegetarian or vegan, recycling, living in eco-villages or eco-squats, etc. This form of consumerism, however, is based on an inadequate and incorrect analysis as to where the pollution problem actually lies – at the doorsteps of big industry, not individuals, and certainly not the working class and poor. Green consumerism is then, ultimately, a class-based choice and doesn't question the role of capitalist production in creating and exacerbating ecological destruction. The majority of people, the working class, does not have the financial ability to afford these products and lifestyle choices (due to the very nature of capitalism) and thus does not have the financial power to shift production to more sustainable, "greener" means.

There is also no evidence to suggest that a "greener" capitalism will adequately provide for society's energy needs. For example, it may produce fuel efficient or electric cars, but what production procedures were used to make these cars, and how will electricity be provided for them? Energy will still have to be bought, and the many "service delivery" struggles around

South Africa show that most of our people cannot afford energy.

*Ecological crises DO NOT, however, signal the end of capitalism itself, and we should guard against such thinking.* Due to resource pressures, e.g. oil shortages, etc. and people's struggles, capitalism will be forced to "go green". However, this transition to different kinds of technology will be, at best, slow and lengthy and will not alter the class relations of who controls what. Also, weapons production, ultimately, cannot by its very nature be green, never mind the devastating impact it has on people the world over.

Calling for more *state intervention* is another solution offered. However, this model of produc-

tion and distribution is still not outside a capitalist framework as it serves to centralise control of resources (land, factories, water, air and people) in the hands of those lucky few who manage and control the state apparatus. One needs only reflect on the terrible environmental records of the former East-Block countries to see that a centrally-

planned or state-led development model is not an automatic solution to ecological and social degradation (Steele, 2002).

## LINKING THE CLASS STRUGGLE TO THE ENVIRONMENT

### ► *Development and Growth: issues brown and green*

The working class and poor bear the brunt of economic and political domination and ecological destruction. Not only are we forced into wage-slavery (for those of us lucky enough to find work), but our class also carries the burden of the *externalities* of production (those effects of production, like waste and pollution, that the bosses in the state and capital don't pay for). We also lack the ability to make decisions to affect and control industry.

The working class is forced to perform the most unclean and dangerous jobs – jobs which threaten and take the lives of workers on a very regular basis. Capitalism and apartheid have also forced the majority black working class of southern Africa to live in poorly serviced communities close to production sites where the surrounding air, soil and water are heavily polluted. Unlike us, the bosses and the rulers



Solidarity, June 30, 1917. The Hand That Will Rule the World—One Big Union.

(including the black politicians and business people) are protected from the effects of their greed and appetite for power by their air-conditioned offices, luxury suburban homes and ostentatious holiday resorts far away from polluted zones.

Therefore we must organise and mobilise for the struggle against capitalism and the state for a democratic and sustainable economy and society. We need a big movement of the working class and poor – a *counterpower* – that would, for example, fight for conversion of power stations to clean technologies for free electricity provision, for free and quality public transport, for sustainable growth to improve living standards worldwide, for cleaner, safer working environments. These organisations would also exist as centres of democratic social education and training, developing an anarchist *counter-culture* equipping us for the road of struggle ahead and for the future society beckoning us towards it.

We must organise and fight for an *ecologically-sustainable development* and economic growth in order to deal with poverty and under-development. We will still need a massive programme of house-building, provision of electricity, water, food, etc. and large scale ecologically-sustainable industrialisation is vital to this end.

Industrial technology holds a number of advantages over small-scale craft production as to meeting the ends of development and growth. Industry can produce many types of goods on a larger scale and at a faster rate than craft production, and can thus not only increase the level of economic growth, but also help shorten the working day, and free us from many unpleasant jobs.

A safe environment is a basic need for the workers and the poor of South Africa, the region and the world. The environment is not just something “out there” such as the veld [7] or the sea. The environment also refers to where people live and work. As such, we can distinguish between “green” ecological issues (like wildlife, trees, etc.) and “brown” ecological issues (like workplace safety and community development). The two are obviously connected: brown ecological issues (like lack of sewerage facilities) directly affects green ecological issues (like marine life) when authorities dump waste into the oceans. Also, human-exacerbated climate change will have devastating effects on the world’s poor and development in

terms of destructive floods and disastrous droughts. Tackling brown issues must generally take into serious consideration green environmental conservation and the sustainable use of natural resources.

### ► *The class and ecology struggles*

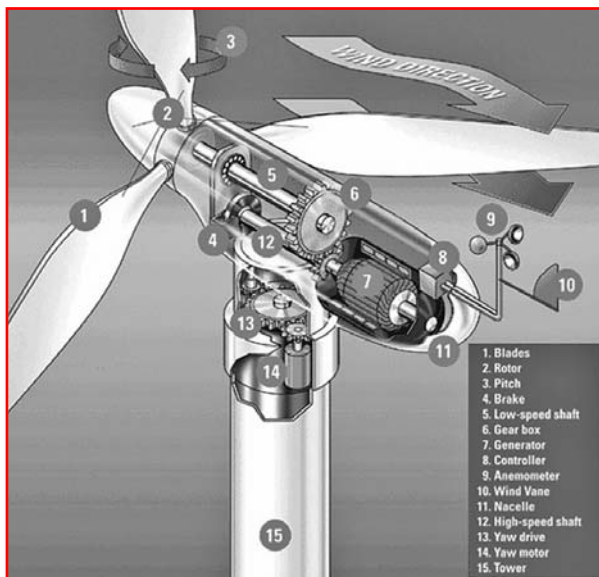
Many working class people in South Africa have been alienated by the actions of sections of the local environmentalist movement. These sections generally focus their attention on wilderness and wildlife conservation and climate change, and tend to be based amongst a white middle class. The contrast in focus of struggle is revealed when, for example, environmentalists strongly supported the state’s establishment of nature reserves. But many of these reserves were established by the forced removal of rural communities, who lost their land and access to natural resources such as fishing areas and building materials. The campaign to save the St. Lucia nature reserve that began in 1989 generally failed to consult the people who lived in the area, many of whom had been forcibly removed when the reserve was set up. To add insult to injury, many of these nature reserves were (until the 1990s) reserved for “Whites only” and can only be enjoyed by those with leisure time and money. These practices can only breed contempt for conservation issues and programmes among the poor, the majority of whom are black.

Related to this is the fact that *few* environmental organisations in South Africa address environmental issues of direct relevance to the

working class. To use the distinction we drew above, many focus on “green” environmental issues as opposed to the “brown” environmental issues that working class people tend to emphasise. We do not, however, support the drawing of a simple distinction between “brown” and “green” issues and having that as a battle line for separate struggle. We do not uncritically support struggles that focus

solely on one issue. We must defend “the veld” and the wondrous beauty and necessity of nature – an intellectual, emotional and physical need for human life and development. We do not reject “green” issues, but seek to use “brown” issues to mobilise people for organisations of counterpower around both “brown” and “green” issues.

Thus we must organise and fight for sustain-



7. An Afrikaans word meaning field, usually used in English to denote a wide and flat open rural space.



able technologies and safer working conditions, *but not at the cost of the workers and the working class*. We cannot accept job losses and an increase in the costs of services imposed on the working class and poor by a company (whether controlled privately or by the state) seeking to remain competitive in a “greening” capitalist environment.

The working poor must engage an environmental justice that builds the capacity and the strength of our organisations to fight against capitalism and the state – against oppression and hierarchy. We need to continue to build working class counterpower by focusing on winning demands from those who rule; but we need to make sure that in fighting for these day-to-day gains, these struggles act in building the strength of our organisations – using this terrain of struggle as the working class gym, so to speak [8]. We should always make sure that in waging this fight, we are not co-opted by capitalism and the state and their agents – that our demands are won and not lost to the idea of building the nation, or to accept that our fights are threatening jobs. The nation exists for the ruling class; job loss serves to accumulate profit!

#### ► *COPs and robbers?*

With these perspectives in mind, we must seriously question working class mobilisation for COP-17 and other such conference calls. Did our presence at COP-17 build the power of our social movements and worker organisations? What will happen now that the activist party in Durban has passed?

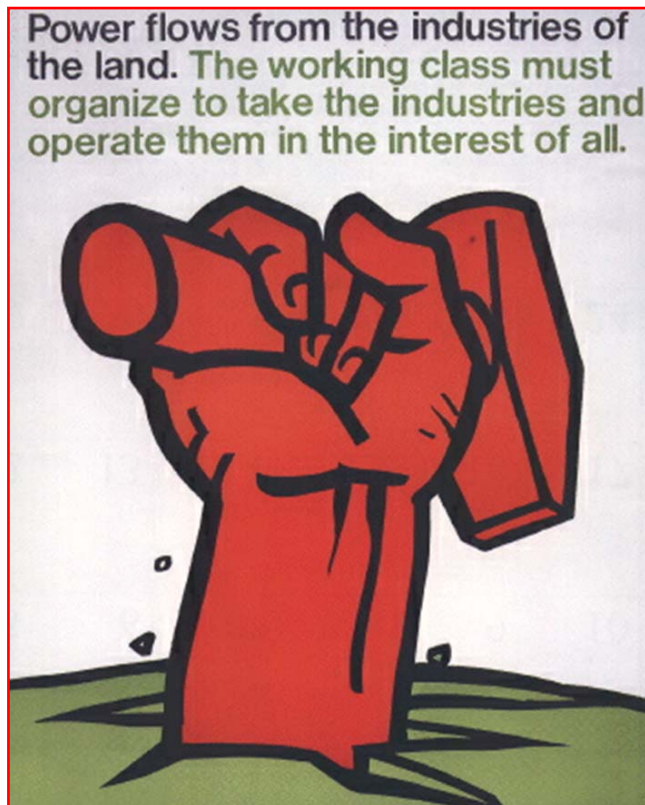
Did our presence there contribute to building a counterpower to both capitalism and the state, or even to ecological degradation?

We also need to ask questions of the conference itself. Was COP-17 a site of decision-making or another in a long line of meaningless ruling class talk shops? If the United States was one of the notable absentees to signing any resolution (as this might jeopardise profits and the balance of global power), will any COP-17 mandate carry significant power? Of course not, and the results of the conference were a major disappointment to environmental activists both

local and international, many who move from one conference to another yet achieve no positive result. There is still no change to South Africa’s macro-economic strategy and its use of productive resources. Thus, surely we need to question what we are aiming for and how we seek to get there.

Comrades, we are not saying not to go to conferences like those, but we would stress that we, as activists, ask ourselves these questions and decide where our struggles would be better focused if we decide against going to protest. We should also make decisions based on honest and democratic reflection of the benefits (like networking and popularising our struggles) and losses of attending such protests (like using precious limited resources and energy sending comrades to workshops and marches for a few days, and at the behest of organisations that we don’t control).

We should *use* protests and other forms of demonstration to build sustained mass formations of counterpower. Our protests should reflect and energise



mass structures and not be, as it seems today, something of a “rent-a-crowd” substitute for organising and/or re-energising mass formations. We must not allow our movements to be used to swell the ranks of protestors so as either to placate NGO sponsors, or the authoritarian, undemocratic desires of leaders [9]. These structures should be strong and sustainable enough so that they exist and grow between events. This we see as opposed to a politics of summit-hopping, which

could rob activist organisations of vital resources and energy and which might see little achieved in the way of having demands met.

#### ► *Environmental justice and the working class – for anarchism!*

As stated above, revolutionary mass organisations are required to fundamentally challenge and defeat capitalism and the state. These organisations of counterpower must seek to use mass direct action to achieve their goals as *opposed* to elections and lobbying to put new or different leaders into the ruling class. These

8. A term coined by the Italian anarchist Errico Malatesta (see the ZACF’s James Pendlebury’s article titled *Tangled Threads of Revolution* at: [http://theanarchistlibrary.org/HTML/James\\_Pendlebury\\_Tangled\\_Threads\\_of\\_Revolution.html](http://theanarchistlibrary.org/HTML/James_Pendlebury_Tangled_Threads_of_Revolution.html)) and an idea also developed in Rudolph Rocker’s *Anarcho-syndicalism*.

9. For an account of the COP-17 protest mobilisation and presence, see a piece by the ZACF’s Jonathan Payn titled *Towards a Truly Democratic Left: an Anarchist Assessment of the DLF at Cop-17* detailing the exasperating experience of many activists who were part of the Democratic Left Front entourage, at: <http://anarkismo.net/article/21515> and a pre-COP-17 analysis by the ZACF’s Shawn Hattingh titled *Not Another Fucking COP Out* at: <http://www.anarkismo.net/article/21271>



electoral and reformist strategies only serve to perpetuate our subjugation to authority and domination. Throughout history, the working class and poor have only ever achieved rights through struggle!

This struggle has to be *international*. We must work towards global popular class solidarity against the exploitative and consumerist upper classes. We should not let ourselves be drawn into divisive “developed” versus “developing” world arguments and characterisations that ultimately divide the working class into nationalities; but seriously challenge and destroy divisions within the class based on race, gender, nationality, etc.

We must come again to the realisation of working class commonalities across borders.

It is the consumerist upper classes, the capitalists and the state bosses, that are the real polluters – the real enemy! We have nothing in common with them!

We should be organising against capitalism and the state, as single-focus protest movements (for electricity or water), vital for organising people in their communities, can easily be sidelined and might also not seek to build links across the popular classes.

*Anarchism* offers us that path. It is a path that develops the fighting capability of our organisations to move away from petitioning the state and capitalist elite for a few more crumbs from the table of the ruling class. Anarchism offers us the path of class struggle to move towards claiming an entirely new table for ourselves, one at which all can feast as equals.



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# **ANC Throws Off Its Mask! Workers Murdered!**

**Capitalists and politicians guilty! Stop police brutality.**

**No justice, no peace. No Zuma, no Malema, no LONMIN!**

## **South African Anarchist Statement on the Marikana Massacre**

**Joint statement on the Marikana Massacre issued by the Tokologo Anarchist Collective, Zabalaza Anarchist Communist Front and Inkululeko Wits Anarchist Collective.**

The Constitution promises political rights and equality. It is quite clear that the bosses and politicians do exactly as they wish. They walk on the faces of the people. This is shown by the police killings of strikers at Lonmin's Marikana mine.

The Constitution promises political rights and equality. It is quite clear that the bosses and politicians do exactly as they wish. They walk on the faces of the people. This is shown by the police killings of strikers at Lonmin's Marikana mine.

### **WHOSE RIGHTS?**

People! We must face the facts. The ANC government and the big capitalists run the show. The system makes the rich and powerful richer and more powerful.

The workers and the poor suffer. We have no protection. You work, but you do not survive. Food prices are going up. ESKOM is going up. We must pay? With what? But when we struggle, we get shot.

### **ANC/ STATE + BOSSES/ CORPORATIONS = ALLIES**

The state uses brutal force against the majority. We are marching, raising our grievances. This is our right. We must struggle to live. So, we fight against all elites: those who control government and those who control companies (like Lonmin).

But our voices are silenced with bullets.

While we do not agree uncritically with all the actions of the workers at Marikana, we are always with the working class and poor against the state and capitalists.

### **ANCYL = ANC = MARIKANA MASSACRE**

The ANC promised to change the system. Instead, it became part of the system. Complaining against the National Party's (NP's) oppression, the ANC took office. The NP murdered workers. But now the ANC murders workers.

The ANCYL has no grounds to pretend to condemn the police killings (see its Statement 17 August 2012). The ANCYL is part and parcel of the ruling ANC regime.

Malema and other expelled ANCYL leaders also want to use these events to get reinstated into the ANC – to get rich or lie trying. But the ANC's hands are dripping with blood.

The past and present ANCYL leaders (like all ANC leaders) want more money, not more freedom for the people.



## **CAPITALISM NO THANKS!**

Capitalism is a system of brutality and exploitation, of suffering. The black, Coloured and Indian working class suffers from the legacy of apartheid national oppression and from daily capitalist and police repression. (And even the white working class is exploited and oppressed).

## **COLLECTIVISE, NOT NATIONALISE**

ANCYL uses the ANC murders to bang the drum again for "the nationalisation of mines and other strategic sectors of the economy." But Marikana shows the true nature of the state/ government, no matter what party: a bloodthirsty killing machine for the rich black and white ruling class.

Real workers' control of the economy does not mean private corporations (privatisation) or state corporations (nationalisation). It must mean real people's democratic control of the economy through worker and community committees, serving people's needs.

## **POLICE CANNOT BE CHANGED**

The role of the police is to repress and silence the working class and poor. This problem cannot be fixed by commissions or enquiries – as some people think. Ask the family of Andries Tatane. It cannot be changed by elections. Remember: Sharpeville 1960, Soweto 1976, Uitenhague 1985, Michael Makhabane in 2000, SAMWU workers in 2009, Andries Tatane in 2011 ... Marikana 2012. At least 25 protestors and strikers were killed from 2000, before Marikana.

## **PEOPLES POWER NOT ELECTIONS & PARTIES**

Look at Marikana. Elections do not change the system. Joining the government and becoming a politician is no solution. Replacing Jacob Zuma with another ANC leader is no solution. A new political party – even a "left" or "workers" party – is no solution. All the political parties are no solution.

## **UNIONS: WAKE UP!**

The Marikana unions, NUM and AMCU, have fallen into the trap set by the ruling class politicians and bosses. They fought each other, instead of fighting the real enemy. Unity is strength: do not be divided and ruled. Workers of the world unite! Working class of all countries and races unite! **End the alliance! COSATU should have no links with the bloodstained ANC.**

## **ANARCHISM = COUNTER POWER**

It is time to replace the capitalist / state system with Counter Power by the people. This means that we want workers'/ community control of the economy, from below. We want democratic and direct self-management of industry by the workers in the workplaces; we want self- government of communities by those living in them. We want to collectively decide on how we run our lives. We refuse to live according to the rules determined by bosses and politicians, who use the police to shoot us like dogs when we disobey.

***One Solution: Working Class Democracy !  
We Need You! Don't Vote, Mobilise!***

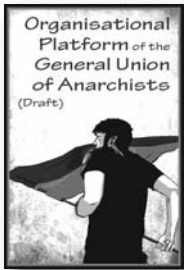
**IF YOU AGREE WITH THESE IDEAS OR WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT ANARCHISM:  
072 399-0912 OR [zacf@riseup.net](mailto:zacf@riseup.net) OR <http://zabalaza.net>**

**Issued by:**

- ★ Tokologo Anarchist Collective
- ★ Zabalaza Anarchist Communist Front
- ★ Inkululeko Wits Anarchist Collective







## THE ANARCHIST PLATFORM ARCHIVE

The Anarchist Platform Archive is an archive of texts relating to the publishing of the *Organisational Platform of the General Union of Anarchists (Draft)* by the Group of Russian Anarchists Abroad (“Delo Truda” Group) in 1926. Also, and maybe more importantly, we hope to archive texts that have added to, and expanded on, this tradition in the hope that this can play however small a part, in the development and continuing growth of the organised class-struggle anarchist-communist movement.

<http://anarchistplatform.wordpress.com/>

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The website of the Confédération nationale du Travail (CNT's) French paper *Afrique sans chaînes* (Africa without Chains), the quarterly French-language African sister journal to *Zabalaza*, where you can download copies of the magazine in .pdf format

<http://www.cnt-f.org/international/spip.php?rubrique33>



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