

#FeesMustFall

- AUGMENTED CC ON THE STUDENT PROTESTS
- YCLSA ASSESSES THE WAY FORWARD

December 2015

Voice of the South African Communist Party

Unsebenzi

WE SALUTE COSATU!

- 30 YEARS OF CLASS STRUGGLE!
- FORWARD TO A UNITED & MILITANT FEDERATION!



COSATU 30th ANNIVERSARY

Build a militant and fighting federation

Cosatu must drive a second, more radical phase of our democratic revolution, cde Blade Nzimande told the federation's 30th anniversary rally

On behalf of the South African Communist Party and its entire membership, I am here to say to Cosatu: “inqola ema sondo sondo”; and to the entire 1,9-million membership: Happy 30th anniversary! Cheers to 30 years of struggle!

This occasion presents us with an opportunity to critically look back at the road that we have travelled, appreciate our successes and failures and most importantly to learn from them. We often make such reflections as individuals when we celebrate such important milestones. Organisations are no different. Their anniversaries are used for critical reflection and most importantly to articulate a way forward.

You could have not chosen a more appropriate rallying call, *Unity and Cohesion of the federation in advancing the National Democratic Revolution*. This is why the 500 000 founding members established this federation: to unite workers and build a strong and cohesive federation that will assert a working class agenda in the execution of the NDR.

This 30th anniversary celebration must not be divorced from the revolutionary role played by your predecessors. It must in fact be a continuation. Of course the formation of Cosatu signalled a major victory against the oppressive racist apartheid minority that has sought to suppress shop-floor mobilisation in our country.

Thirty years later, many have started to ask important questions, albeit cynically sometimes, about the role, need and character of Cosatu. Some have started to question in a cynical way Cosatu's strategic path of the NDR being a seamless



An early Cosatu poster, reflecting the federation's defiance of apartheid repression

and most direct route towards socialism. In questioning this path they have gone ahead to question the organisational forms that express this strategic objective in action made up of our revolutionary Alliance. They have wiped from the collective memory of society the important

...this federation of Elijah Barayi, John Nkadimeng & John Gomomo remains an important instrument for our liberation

gains of our revolution: a constitutionally entrenched right to organise and to strike, the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, the Labour Relations Act, and the Employment Equity Act etc.

For as long as we live in a society wherein the rich and the poor are free to go to school but only the rich can exercise a choice of which school to go to, or to which clinic and hospital to go, or whether to sleep under the bridge or not, then this federation of Elijah Barayi, John Nkadimeng, John Gomomo remains an important instrument for our liberation.

Saying this doesn't mean we are nostalgic and not aware of the quantitative shifts that have taken place in relation to how capitalism has restructured production and the workplace and consequently posed an objective challenge with respect to the work of Cosatu – on the back of our integration into the global division of labour post-1994, adoption of liberalisation measures and deregulation of the financial sector. Those measures have not been beneficial to our fight against our strategic enemy, monopoly capital.

The SACP is aware that our democratic breakthrough didn't represent the defeat of monopoly capital in our country. It didn't mean the defeat of an especially oppressive capitalist system. It still left Anglo American, De Beers, Sasol, SA Breweries (now SA Breweries Miller), Naspers (which today is threatening to take over and privatise the SABC), Old Mutual, and the big banks dominating our economy.

Monopoly capital has not been idle. In response to progressive labour legislation it has actively under-cut our gains through casualisation, labour brokers,



Above: Delegates to Cosatu's 12th Congress last month, and (below) at it's first in Durban November 1986, carrying the founding general secretary, Cde Jay Naidoo through the hall. Cover: Delegates outside the Gallagher Estate 12th Congress venue



mass retrenchments and employment of desperate economic migrants. Over the past 21 years there has been massive capital flight – reaching some 20% of our GDP in some years. All kinds of tricks are used to maximise monopoly profits and to minimise any responsibility for developing South Africa. There is transfer pricing

and trade misinvoicing. There is tax evasion, there is the use of tax havens, and there is collusion.

In response to the attempts by our new majority-rule ANC-led government to advance reconstruction and development, South African monopoly capital has launched an investment strike.

Monopoly capital has often succeeded in infiltrating our own organisations. It has used narrow BEE. It has used bribes and all manner of fronting to find entry-points into government departments. It has fostered a class of vultures, the tenderpreneurs.

Monopoly capital – in the shape of the old apartheid, Broederbond, media giant Naspers and its off-shoot MultiChoice – has even swallowed up what was supposed to be democratic South Africa's public broadcaster, the SABC. They have done this with the connivance, of course, of their bought lackeys in Auckland Park. We say that those in senior positions in the SABC who have lied to parliament, who have lied about their qualifications and who have been appointed illegally, as the courts ruled, must go! Our government shouldn't even be wasting time and resources appealing the judgment to protect those who lie. It's about time that we appoint a truly independent, competent board at the SABC that is not remote-controlled by an individual to rescue our public broadcaster.

Trade unions control (in theory)

4 UMSEBENZI

vast retirement funds and these have been used to leverage union investment arms. In principle, these union financial resources could be used to fund useful things for the working class – public transport, affordable housing, and improved training opportunities for your children. There are some inspiring examples of union funds being used in this way. But, all too often, these retirement funds and investment arms have been the entry-point for a capitalist agenda to strike into the very heart of the union movement itself.

This is why as we celebrate Cosatu's 30th anniversary we must reinforce the historical necessity of a united Cosatu, united affiliates of Cosatu to launch a decisive battle primarily against monopoly capital and secondarily against the parasitic elements within our movement, masquerading as revolutionaries, who pursue an agenda of monopoly capital. We must be clear tactically not to confuse the two, although the second one is even more dangerous in the current phase of our revolution. We must not be in denial about some of our strategic errors in our early years in government for which we continue to pay today. But we must unite and articulate a proper working class agenda to take us forward. This is not the time to play into an agenda of wedge-drivers.

We need a united Cosatu to fend off the parasitic bourgeoisie and the looters who when we campaign for an overwhelming victory of the ANC in the forthcoming election will be with us albeit on a different mission – to capture the state, talk in our language against outsourcing, talk our language about the strategic role of SOEs and so on, only to mean these must be vehicles for brazen corruption and self-enrichment. Service to our people comes last in their minds. When we talk about defending our national sovereignty they are talking about defending their right to steal from the public purse. Such recklessness plays into the hands of regime-change agendas funded from abroad.

We must deal with corruption not just in theory but practically. While the scourge of corruption is not by any measure the main cause of the economic crises we are confronting as a country, corruption fragments the democratic state and our movement, and opens up space for regime-change agendas. If we are to respond effectively to the economic challenges, then it is absolutely essential that as a movement we deal decisively with corruption and corrupt individuals. We

must call for the full implementation of the ANC NGC resolutions – far-reaching resolutions that explain how organisational processes have been corrupted by some within the movement to pursue an agenda that stands opposed to the NDR, that of self-enrichment.

We need a united Cosatu to deal with the problematic question of financialisation in our economy. In our townships evictions have become a daily norm. The banks, with Nedbank the biggest culprit, are leading in this: working with corrupt court officials to abuse the system of issuing garnishee orders and eviction orders.

Our financial sector is concentrated in a few hands and it is time we break up this oligopolistic feature which strangely even worries the IMF. The problem is not what the Treasury and the Reserve Bank call “too big to fail”. Rather it is “too big to



Cde Bheki Ntshalintshali, elected Cosatu General Secretary at the 12th Congress

exist”. The trade union movement must be in the forefront of this campaign to call for proper regulations that differentiate among financial institutions so we can create a proper state bank, license the Post Bank with a different model of business and mandate, create co-operative banks that will be supported by the state and not be subjected to the logic of profit maximisation, as embedded in some laws currently governing the financial sector.

We need workers to use their resources wisely to transform the financial sector – why do we keep on relying on Old Mutual, Metropolitan and so forth to manage our money, and often use it to divide us? Let us create what is ours, in the logic of solidarity and not profit maximisation. The SACP calls for the trade union movement to have a proper discussion about how the investment arms are vehicles

that allow for workers to have democratic control and increase their ownership in the economy and how these vehicles can be used to build a counter against monopoly capital and not just conform to the norm.

We must rebuild worker control and worker democracy in the trade union movement.

We must make sure that Cosatu is in the forefront of workplace struggles and that the workers are at the forefront of community struggles for a National Health Insurance, free education for the poor, public transport, basic services (access to safe electricity, clean water etc.), safe streets – free of drugs and gangsterism – and the struggle against evictions and backward patriarchal practices in our communities.

We need to build the capacity of our comrades. Our shop stewards and our organisers must be steeped in the theory of Marxism and Leninism if they are to be our true representatives and a reliable core to fight for socialism. Most importantly our members must be trained politically. Unless we do this then they will be taken for granted by aboMafikizolo who will lie to them and promise them this and that which they cannot deliver. The basics of trade unionism are important bearing in mind the kind of worker we now have. We take it for granted that everyone understands why he or she should join a progressive trade union. We always talk mutedly about how people we know are not in progressive trade unions because they are not being serviced by organisers and shop stewards. We talk mutedly about how organisers and shop stewards are co-opted at the expense of workers. Unless we openly confront these tendencies we might not see this federation celebrate its 60 years. But a conscious worker will not be co-opted easily. The development of political consciousness among our members is absolutely critical. As always, the SACP is ready to work with Cosatu to achieve these mutually reinforcing tasks.

We also wish to leave you with the SACP Special Congress theme of focusing on uniting the working class, our communities and our movement. At the heart of this must also be to intensify an internal struggle to defeat all forms of factionalism in all of our organisations, as the basis upon which to unite the Alliance as a whole. ●

This is a shortened and edited version of Cde Nzimande's speech

COSATU CONGRESS

Side-by-side in the trenches of the struggle

We must build Cosatu and the SACP as the socialist axis of the Alliance, cde Blade Nzimande told the Cosatu Congress last month



The Cosatu leadership and SACP General Secretary Cde Blade Nzimande after his address to the 12th Congress

At your 11th National Congress the SACP emphasised that it is important for the working class to take responsibility for the national democratic revolution. Indeed that was at the time when the offensive against the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) had reared its ugly head. It was an offensive that was directed at Cosatu itself and ultimately at the ANC-led Alliance as a whole.

But it is clear now that the same offensive that was directed at the Cosatu aimed at the left inside our Alliance, as we now see in the intensified attacks on the SACP. That is why your theme for this congress is absolutely important,

that of uniting the federation to play its proper role in the national democratic revolution.

Perhaps the problem of circulation of money in our conferences and the dangers of corporate capture reflect a deeper problem – an intensification of

The threat of corporate capture faces not only the ANC ... but all our formations, including the trade union movement

class struggles in society, parts of which aim to replace our Alliance. Our Alliance is principally based on the working class as its anchor. But there is now a new attempt to replace this Alliance with a new one between sections of our own movement and the capitalist class, where the capitalist class will be a new anchor.

For instance, when some of our comrades begin to say the SACP and Cosatu add no value to our Alliance they are in fact beginning to say the working class is of no value to the political direction they are pursuing.

The question then becomes: if the working class, according to them, is of no value any more, then which class is now

of value to them?

The problem and threat of corporate capture face not only the ANC or those in government, but all our formations, not least the trade union movement. We know that for a long time the capitalist financial sector has been targeting the trade union movement for its debit orders for insurance, funeral and other financial products. This behaviour of finance capital is the foundation of the business unionism that we have been talking about. The SACP hopes this congress will discuss and face head-on these challenges to the trade union movement.

Also, as the SACP we feel very strongly that it is time that just over 20 years into a democratic South Africa there are some serious reflections we need to make. We must reflect on some of the problems and challenges that have faced many other liberation movements after ascending to power. This is a debate and a reflection that is important if we are to avoid the mistakes made in many other revolutions.

We made a decisive advance in 2007, but that advance has partly been frustrated by the global capitalist crisis. On the eve of the 2009 elections, when the leadership elected in Polokwane took the formal reins of government, the world went into a global capitalist crisis that started the preceding year. The crisis has since become an albatross on the economic objectives and goals of the fourth administration, led by Cde President Jacob Zuma.

Our document *Going to the root* explains these challenges comprehensively and argues for an economic trajectory that is based on a partial de-linking from the main centres of imperialist economic power.

Significant shifts underway in global economic (and political and even military – see Ukraine and Syria/Iraq) power since the dramatic setback of 1989/1990 with the collapse of the Soviet bloc are also now creating some conditions for greater multi-polarity and therefore space for the advancing of progressive, democratic national sovereignty based on majority-rule in countries like South Africa. The Brics formation, with its own internal contradictions but also many possibilities, needs to be appreciated in this context.

All of these developments – political, military and diplomatic – have caused a substantial setback to US imperialist geo-political regime-change strategies that were honed in Yugoslavia in the

1990s, and repeated in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya.

Domestically we are faced with the persisting realities of unemployment, poverty and inequality. While the SACP welcomes the very impressive government R1-trillion investment in infrastructure, this has served largely to cushion us from what could have been a far worse situation given the continuing impact of the global capitalist crises occasioned by the 2008 global economic meltdown.

National liberation movements, trade unions & their allied communist parties after independence

What we have sometimes appropriately referred to as the ‘sins of incumbency’ is relevant here. We must admit that these sins of incumbency have not only affected the ANC as the governing party. Most of our formations, albeit unevenly, have suffered from this – also in the trade union movement and the mass democratic movement.

It is under these circumstances that a reflection on the experiences of liberation movements, and with them trade union movements and communist parties, after independence or ascendance to state power, is absolutely necessary. There are four key challenges, whatever advances are made, facing these movements:

Failure to transform the (post-colonial) state: Scholars like Frantz Fanon, Mahmood Mamdani and Ibbo Mandaza highlight the fact that after ascendancy to power liberation movements tend to be absorbed by the (untransformed) post-colonial state, where the only change is the colour of those who occupy senior political and bureaucratic positions, without any fundamental change to the state as an instrument of the imperialist or former colonial bourgeoisie. Mandaza particularly bemoans the lack of an emergence of a truly independent national bourgeoisie that is able to make its imprint on the state outside of the patronage of the national liberation

movement. He gives as an example the Zimbabwean state: the vast majority of Zanu-PF elites will not survive after Mugabe. Their very means of continued accumulation and preservation is directly dependent on continued control of the state by Zanu-PF.

Inability to address the national question: For all national liberation movements, addressing the national question is often at the heart of the national liberation struggles or the national democratic revolution. Mamdani in particular points to what he refers to as a bifurcated state, where the urban centres reflect the colonial past and the ‘grazing land’ of the new national domestic bourgeoisie, while the rural population remains under the iron grip of traditional leaders. Sometimes the political elites in post-colonial states regress to tribalism in their fight to retain both political and economic power.

Failure to transform the colonial and imperialist-based domestic economy: Guy Mhone, from Zambia, developed the concept of an enclave economy to describe both the colonial and post-colonial economies on the continent, with a particular focus on the SADC region. Mhone was preoccupied with how neo-liberalism in sub-Saharan Africa reproduced dual economies: one modernised urban, the other underdeveloped survivalist in the hinterland. Mhone criticized the inability of the post-liberation state in the SADC region to eradicate what he calls the enclave nature of the economy, a dual economy characterised by a modernised and advanced formal economy in the city and a survivalist economy at the fringes of the urban economy and in the rural hinterland.

It is interesting to note how the 1996 class project characterisation of the first and second economies was in some ways reproducing the idea of an enclave economy without understanding how the systemic features of the so-called “first economy” were, precisely the engine that was driving chronic underdevelopment (poverty, inequality, unemployment) that the 1996 class project conveniently labelled as a separate “second economy”. This led the 1996 class project to advocate one-off measures (BEE, micro-loans, taxi-recap, EPWP “work opportunities”) to “graduate” those in the “second economy” into what was portrayed as a fundamentally “good” (ie neo-liberal capitalist) “first economy”.

Mhone characterised the formal economy as an enclave because it is exclusive,

The sins of incumbency have not only affected the ANC as the governing party, but most of our formations



WFTU General Secretary Cde George Mavrikos calls on Cosatu Congress delegates to continue their struggles against monopolies and capitalism

only accessible to the colonial and post-colonial elites, while the majority of the people struggled on the periphery. But while there are clearly enclaves in South Africa, is Mhone right to imagine that these are just about the exclusion of the majority? The majority of South Africans were/are proletarianised and were/are therefore **not** excluded from the formal economy. The periphery (reserves and later the peri-urban townships and informal settlements) were/are the zones of social reproduction of an active reserve army of labour.

These forms of marginalisation in South Africa are not only about exclusion, but also about **inferior** (racially, gendered, and spatially determined) inclusion within the circuits of a relative modern capitalist accumulation process. Our own South African economy still reflects these realities of colonialism of a special type.

In many instances the post-colonial state becomes a site for looting, not because Africans are thieves, but given the political economy of many post-colonial states on the continent. A number of factors contribute to this in developing countries where there are few opportunities for capital accumulation due to a small private sector. The neo-liberalisation of

the state – where the state increasingly becomes dependent on and hostage to the private sector for delivery of many of its services, becomes a tendering state. A tendering state is further weakened by lack of adequate capacity to effectively monitor these tenders, thus increasing chances of corruption, as weak states are more vulnerable to corruption. It is clear from both the 1996 global financial meltdown and the current global capitalist crisis that during crises opportunities for private capitalist accumulation decrease, making the state more of a target for a quick buck.

Betrayal of the principal motive forces of the national liberation struggle: Much of the critique of liberation movements after independence is about

how, in the light of all the weaknesses just highlighted, the leadership of these movements finally betray the principal motive forces of the national liberation movement, the working class, the peasantry, and the poor. As these motive forces begin to rise or protest against the elites in power, these former liberation movements begin to turn against them. Fundamentally, the challenge becomes that of being a mass based movement that is simultaneously leading the government!

Often underpinning this is the emergence of what has often been referred to as a parasitic bourgeoisie that is highly dependent on control of the state for purposes of capital accumulation.

However it is also important to reflect on how, in a number of instances, the trade union movement has been mobilised to become a platform for regime change agendas against former liberation movements in power. One classic example close to home is that of Zambia where the trade union movement was used to dislodge Kaunda, only to see the new leaders quickly embrace the worst of neo-liberal policies and preside over a government that ultimately turned against the trade union movement in that country.

No political party in our country has a similar record to the SACP in building and defending the trade union movement

These aberrations in many post-colonial states are not inherent in the nature of such political dispensations but are a product of the location of developing states in the broader political economy of the global capitalist economy, as well as class and other related struggles in such countries.

It is important that in our case, we also reflect on experiences of communist parties and trade union movements that have been or are part of the national liberation movements after ascendancy to power by such movements.

Part of the difficulty of doing an analysis is that in the current period there are very few communist parties (or even trade union movements), if any, that are in a similar position to that of the SACP (and Cosatu) today. Frankly, there are hardly any examples we can fully learn from, other than an open and frank examination and critical self-reflection on our own experiences over the past 94 years as the SACP in particular, but especially since 1994. This is an analysis and exercise we have committed to undertake as part of our own discussions on the SACP's relationship to state power.

The SACP and Cosatu: the socialist axis of the Alliance

We are pleased to observe that Cosatu is overcoming one of its most serious challenges since it was formed. We would like to use this opportunity to also salute you as you approach your 30th anniversary next month.

Driving a second, more radical phase of our transition requires a strong working class, and especially a strong, larger but quality SACP. This task also requires a strong, independent and militant Cosatu. We do not want a Cosatu that is an extension of the ANC or government. Also as the SACP we do not want a Cosatu that is our extension. Given the

challenges we have just outlined, South Africa needs a militant Cosatu just as our dry weather now needs rain.

The principal tasks of our two formations is to intensify the struggle to place the working class as the principal motive force in driving the second, more radical phase, of our revolution and to intensify the struggle for socialism. At the centre of such a struggle must be the struggle against corruption in the public and the private sectors.

Between now and our 14th Congress in 2017 we need to build a larger SACP and a much larger Cosatu! As the SACP we are inviting you to come and swell the ranks of the SACP. Our primary focus is to build a larger SACP through the recruitment of workers, especially those workers organised in the trade union movement, with members of Cosatu affiliates being a priority focus. Recruiting more workers from the organised trade union movement will also serve to deepen and strengthen the relationship and historical ties between our two working class formations.

In uniting ourselves we must also wage a relentless struggle against factionalism, and seek to always focus on the programmatic priorities that we are facing.

We must intensify mass activism and campaigning on a whole range of fronts, with the most immediate task being that of deepening our financial sector

campaign, strengthening mobilisation on campuses, and township and village struggles for socio-economic development. Cosatu campaigns on transformation of the workplace, the living wage campaign and progressive trade unionism to improve service to workers are crucial.

We wish to urge Cosatu to once more join with the SACP as we intensify our financial sector campaign. Through the financial sector campaign we are pushing for a new financial architecture in our country – a financial sector whose resources must increasingly be invested to support our productive economy.

We are pushing for an end to private monopoly domination of the banking sector. We are also calling for diversity and a greater enabling environment for the development of workers' and people's co-operative banks. In fact we are calling upon Cosatu affiliates to consider channelling some of their financial resources into building workers' co-operatives and co-operative banks. We are calling for the Post Bank to be transformed and supported to become a state bank serving a developmental agenda.

We wish once more to dismiss the claims that the SACP is trying to divide and weaken Cosatu. No political party in this country has a similar record to the SACP in building and defending the trade union movement in the entire 94 years of its existence. This claim is an attempt to drive a wedge between our Party and trade union organisation. Similarly we have no negative attitude towards any of the Cosatu affiliates. Instead we are not only calling for unity in Cosatu, we have been working achieve it, and waging our struggles side by side with Cosatu in the trenches, the real theatre of struggle. ●

This is a shortened version of Cde Nzimande's speech.

We invite you, as organised workers in the trade unions, to join us to swell ranks of the SACP

Umsebenzi

EDITORIAL BOARD

Editor-in-Chief:
Blade Nzimande

Deputy Editor-in-Chief:
Jeremy Cronin

Editor:
Yunus Carrim

Joyce Moloi-Moropa

Solly Mapaila

Mluleki Dlelanga

Chris Matlhako

Malesela Maleka

Mark Waller

David Niddrie (sub-editor)

Alex Mohubetswane Mashilo

AUGMENTED CC STATEMENT

Build the unity of the Alliance and mass democratic formation

The SACP's Augmented CC of 20-22 November issued this statement on the challenges facing the working class, the Alliance and the global anti-imperialist struggle



Campaigning against corruption: Led by the SACP, members of Tripartite Alliance formations and clerics prepare to march against corruption down East London's Oxford Street

The annual Augmented Central Committee meeting includes a wider representation of provincial officials, SACP district leadership, and representatives from SACP-associated institutes. It is convened primarily to review the past period and to plan actively

for the coming year.

The organisational report recorded the continued and unprecedented membership growth of the SACP, with an audited membership of 234 900. We are committed to continuing to build this membership – both in numbers and in activism

and quality. The growth of organised SACP membership is not accidental. It occurs in a context in which the ongoing global capitalist crisis and its knock-on impact on South Africa is aggravating the plight of the working class and urban and rural poor, and large sectors of the mid-



Fees must fall: The SACP Augmented Central Committee last month noted the widespread, radical mobilisation of students

dle strata. It is in this context that there is the imperative for maximum unity of our Alliance formations and of the working class and poor in general – in defence of our democratic advances; in defence of democratic national sovereignty; and in defence of the national democratic revolution in the face of looters and regime change agendas funded from abroad.

In discussing the political report, the CC noted that parts of the media have once more resurrected old headlines predicting the forever-imminent demise of the ANC-led Alliance. None of this is new. Over many decades the SACP has grown accustomed to periodic spasms of wishful thinking of this kind from the capitalist media. The present obituaries have been occasioned by the statements and posture of a factionalist group that is simply taking up (with less skill it should be said), where Julius Malema was forced to leave off by his belated expulsion from the ANC.

Once more, the anti-communist rhetoric is grounded in the realisation in these circles that the SACP stands in the way of their ambitions to loot public resources. The SACP has no intention of abandoning its resolute and principled stand against political parasitism, cults of personality, and the plundering of state and SOC resources. Equally the SACP has no intention of breaking with the ANC and the Alliance it leads. The Alliance needs to be reconfigured, not abandoned. We know

that our stand against corruption and factionalism is shared by the great majority of ANC members and an even wider spectrum of ANC supporters who fervently hope that our liberation movement will not lose its bearings. In this regard, the CC warmly welcomed important resolutions of the ANC's National General Council, including the outright condemnation of slate politics funded by money that simply reproduces an endless factional churn.

In early December, the SACP's senior leadership in the Politburo will meet our counterparts in the Alliance Political Council. The Augmented CC mandated the SACP PB to firmly encourage the practical implementation of these important NGC resolutions.

Together, let us build on the momentum of the student struggles!

The CC saluted the widespread, radical mobilisation of students over the past several weeks. We fully associate ourselves with the demand to advance towards free access to higher education for the work-

ing class and poor. No qualifying student should be excluded from post-school education and training on financial grounds.

In the course of the student mobilisation the liberal smugness of many university administrations has been exposed. At Stellenbosch and the University of North West, student mobilisation with academic support has exposed language policies that have been used to perpetuate exclusion and frustrate transformation. In many cases, the student mobilisation has also achieved important non-racial unity. The student mobilisation has also added fresh impetus to the long-standing struggle of the SACP and the union movement against outsourcing of campus workers. These are important advances that must be consolidated and strengthened as part of the wider national democratic struggle.

It now becomes imperative that we build on the energies, aspirations and concerns of students, many of whom have become politically active for the first time. To take this momentum forward we need to expose a small minority of externally-funded, anarchistic forces who are seeking to use the legitimate demands of students for entirely other agendas. Indeed, over the past weeks in particular, these forces have exposed themselves. The destruction of university property, and criminal actions are not the work of those who genuinely seek to transform the higher education and training terrain.

The SACP's stand against corruption and factionalism is shared by most ANC members and an even wider spectrum of ANC supporters

On the UWC (University of Western Cape) campus, 300-odd, misguided anarchists associated with the EFF (Economic Freedom Fighters) and Pasmu (Pan African Students' Movement) have tried to disrupt examinations, holding 30 000 students hostage. In one case at UWC, a Pasmu ringleader wrote his own engineering exams and then opportunistically led the disruption of other exams.

What is the way forward? The ANC-led Alliance and particularly the Progressive Youth Alliance formations and Nehawu and Sadtu have a critical responsibility in this situation. We must speak with one voice, and we must listen patiently to the many issues confronting students. We must provide concrete leadership on the ground, campus by campus, addressing the specific issues in different localities. We must not provide leadership arrogantly or by proclamation, but on the basis of a common radical programme for the transformation of the entire post-school education and training system.

In the immediate short-term, resources must be found to meet the commitment to a zero fee increase for 2016, as well as to address the debt crisis confronting returning students in the new year. As we move forward, a comprehensive review must be undertaken to ensure that the government's budgetary processes are aligned with the key strategic priorities of our country, including how to achieve the appropriate balance in funding universities, on the one hand, and vocational technical training, on the other. While upholding the constitutional principle of academic freedom, the modalities of university autonomy when the evocation of autonomy blocks progressive transformation must be addressed. In an extremely unequal society, simply implementing free university education for all will actually reproduce class, racial, gendered and geographical inequalities. As long as South Africa remains grossly unequal, there needs to be a graduated, means-tested application of fees. Those who can pay must pay.

The funding of post-school education and training needs also to be integrated into a more general struggle for the transformation of the financial sector. Consideration should be given to an income tax add-on dedicated to post-school education and training. The SACP's campaign to enhance community re-investment obligations on the financial sector needs also to be included in the funding challenges. Monopoly capital is the principal beneficiary of the public funding that goes into post-school education and train-

ing, so greater mobilised pressure must be directed there.

Transform the Financial Sector!

The Financial Sector Campaign (FSC) this past week succeeded in securing agreement that National Economic Development and Labour Council (Nedlac) will convene a Financial Sector Summit in the first half of 2016. The Summit will be an important milestone in the SACP's ongoing financial sector campaign. Working with a broad alliance of forces within the FSC, we will use the summit to assess the implementation of the resolutions emerging from the first Nedlac-convened Financial Sector Summit, a key outcome of the SACP's Red October campaign launched 15 years ago.

The National Credit Act, a National Credit Regulator which recently has been showing much greater determination in protecting consumers against predatory behaviour by credit providers, and much greater transparency in the conduct of the credit bureaux are some of the key outcomes of the original financial sector summit. Local-based and social movement campaigns against financial sector abuse have also gathered important momentum – including the exposure of systemic abuses in emolument attachment (“garnishee”) orders. In Gauteng, SACP structures working with communities have been active in anti-eviction campaigns.

But a great deal more still needs to be done. The IMF itself has identified the high levels of oligopoly in the South African banking sector and the interpenetration of banking and short- and long-term insurance as a significant risk factor. The levels of household debt and student debt are of great concern. Since the first financial sector summit, the degree to which the non-banking sector itself has become excessively financialised is another source for concern. Much of the retail sector, for instance, now depends for profits less on selling groceries, furniture, or clothes, and more on selling credit at exorbitant interest with all manner of fine-print add-ons like unemployment and multiple life in-

urance included. The growth of a casino economy has far outpaced the growth of the rest of our economy while an effective productive investment strike persists.

In this connection, and as part of the CC's regular policy discussion slot, the CC received an input from the Minister of Finance, Cde Nhlanhla Nene, on the Financial Sector Regulation Bill recently tabled in Parliament. In the context of the 2008 global financial sector crisis, and the local collapse of African Bank, the Bill seeks to introduce more effective regulation of the financial sector via a “Twin Peaks” approach, regulating, on the one hand, prudential behaviour and, on the other, market conduct. In welcoming in principle the move to introduce a more effective regulatory regime the SACP and its broader alliance within the Financial Sector Campaign will engage with the Parliamentary process. Among other things, the CC flagged concern that the National Credit Regulator's current powers should not be diluted, and that the approach to prudential behaviour should not compromise the important task of consolidating public and cooperative banking. Nor should prudential requirements hamper the leveraging of financial sector resources for productive investment, and for community reinvestment requirements into social housing, or vocational training, for instance. The SACP will also continue to advance the call for more effective capital control and capital account management to defend national resources from speculative capital flight.

We condemn terrorism; we condemn imperialism

The CC expressed condolences to the communities who have been victims of recent terror attacks in Mali, Nigeria, Lebanon, Turkey, Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan and France. In condemning these atrocities, the CC notes that without exception, the origins of these despicable acts can be traced back to the social turmoil provoked by US-Nato regime-change interventions, particularly in Iraq and Libya and the current regime change strategy in Syria.

Over the past year and indeed even in the past weeks there have been important geo-political developments that underline that, while the US undoubtedly remains the dominant global hegemon, its ability to unilaterally achieve its strategic objectives has suffered significant decline. The importance of the re-opening of diplomatic relations between the US and Cuba should, of course, not be unduly exaggerated – the US will continue to attempt to

**The SACP has won Nedlac's
agreement to convene
a second Financial Sector
Summit in 2016**



The Augmented CC noted the Western media's "lukewarm concern" at this ISIS suicide bombing that killed 37 Lebanese civilians in Beirut

erode Cuban socialism and sovereignty now much more through "soft" power (i.e. economic leverage and consumerist ideological power). Nonetheless, the re-opening of diplomatic relations marks a strategic defeat and reversal of five-and-half decades of US imperialist policy directed against Cuba and indeed the Latin America region. US-imposed sanctions against Cuba must now be lifted.

In the course of 2015, US/Nato politico-military strategic agendas in the Ukraine and now in Syria have also suffered humiliating setbacks. In the past weeks, the Russian air campaign against ISIS and other terrorist groups has caught the US and its allies off-balance in the region, with Russia succeeding in forging a strategic alliance not just with the Syrian government, but also the Iranian government, along with operational collaboration with Hezbollah and Kurdish forces. There is also now intelligence sharing between Russia and the Iraqi government (installed originally by US intervention!). The Vienna Declaration marks an important diplomatic victory in which the US and its allies were forced (at least in words) to abandon the strategy of territorial fragmentation (along "ethnic/religious" lines) of Syria and the removal of Assad as a pre-condition for a political settlement, as opposed to a principled line that the future of Syria must be determined by the Syrian people themselves in

conditions of peace.

All of these developments – political, military and diplomatic – have caused a substantial setback to US imperialist geopolitical regime-change strategies that were honed in Yugoslavia in the 1990s, and repeated in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya. Among other things, the Russian air campaign in Syria deliberately preempted the US-Nato plans for a Syrian "no-fly zone" – which, as we know from Libya and before it Yugoslavia, means a US-Nato bombing campaign to effect regime change.

Losing ground in Syria and Iraq, ISIS has now launched terror attacks in Paris. The events in Paris have been widely condemned in the Western media (as opposed to the somewhat lukewarm concern about the ISIS bombing of a Russian civilian plane, or the ISIS slaughter of thousands of Azidis in Northern Iraq, or ISIS bombs in Beirut, or the ISIS-aligned Boko Haram in Nigeria and neighbouring countries). Domestic public outrage has now forced France and the US into greater action in dealing with ISIS in Iraq

US imperialist geopolitical strategies first honed in Yugoslavia in the '90s, have suffered a major setback

and Syria, after years of half-hearted intervention in which ISIS was seen as a useful counter-balance to Iran, Assad, and the Kurdish PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party) and its allied YPG (Yekîneyên Parastina Gel – Kurdish "people's defence units") forces in Northern Syria. Western public outrage has forced Western governments to work more closely with Russia and its allies to counter the ISIS threat. Despite its feigned opposition to ISIS, it is inconceivable that the US was ignorant of the thousands of trucks involved in the road-based pipe-line from ISIS-controlled Syrian oil-fields that have been the principal source of funding for this terrorist group.

Forward to a unifying Cosatu national congress!

The SACP wishes Cosatu well in its important National Congress starting tomorrow. In the recent period there have been important indications of consolidation of unity within the federation and we trust that the National Congress will consolidate the unity of the federation around a radical programme of socio-economic transformation to address the triple crisis of unemployment, poverty and inequality within our society. Such a programme needs to be consolidated on the bedrock of worker-democracy, service to members, and collective leadership. The revitalisation of the ANC-led Alliance requires an independent, militant Cosatu. ●

FSCC

Transform the financial sector to tackle exploitation

Cde Reneva Fourie reports on the consultative conference held to revitalise the Financial Sector Campaign



As the global economic recession persists, the financial sector in South Africa continues to grow unabated. This growth is due to a number of factors, including that the sector remains untransformed and service costs remain high.

The Financial Sector Campaign Coalition (FSCC), in collaboration with the SACP, held a consultative conference on 27 November to revitalise the Financial Sector Campaign and encourage the Campaign Coalition members to focus on agreements made at the last Financial Sector Summit, which are contained in the Financial Services Transformation Charter. The conference also sought to build on the historical gains of the SACP Financial Sector Campaign, such as the regulation of credit bureaus, the initiation of credit regulator legislation, the introduction of the Mzansi bank account and the delisting of black-listed people.

The event was attended by members of the Coalition representing the youth sector, the women's sector, cooperative and apex movements, other non-governmental organisations and traditional leaders, as well as representatives of the SACP Central Committee and SACP Provinces. The tone for engagement was set by four speakers: Jeremy Cronin, Trevor Chandler, Luzuko Buku and Katherine Gibson.

Financialisation

The 1st Deputy General Secretary of the SACP, Cde Jeremy Cronin, located the



These ostentatious bank 'castles' (FNB's above, and Standard Bank's below) reflect the growing economic dominance of the financial sector



key features of financialisation within an overview of the evolution of capitalism, explaining the genesis of the structural characteristics of profitability and its inherent systemic contradictions. Cde Cronin identified the major problem of the burgeoning size and influence of the financial sector relative to the overall economy (300% growth over three decades), or financialisation. He viewed it as a problem due to its impact on rising household debt. Some 45% of credit-active South Africans, or 10,4-million consumers, are in arrears of three months or more. Much of the credit is not used for fixed assets but for immediate consumption (such as food, clothing and airtime). About 90% of consumers of non-mortgaged loans earn less than R12 000 per month.

This growing personal debt is exacerbated by the fact that many people self-finance public services like health care and education. Indebtedness forces consumers to turn to loan sharks and/or put up their homes as security for bank loans, both of which charge high interest rates. Some consumers eventually lose their homes because they are unable to repay the loans.

While South Africans become increasingly indebted, the financial sector is failing to invest in the real economy. Instead of contributing to the development of infrastructure, manufacturing and other job creating ventures, they engage in speculative investments such as trading in commodities that are yet to be produced (futures markets), or selling debt (securitisation), or trading in derivatives or specific financial risks. In South Africa, this practice is a particular anomaly as speculative inflows into the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) relative to the gross domestic product (GDP) has been ten times the norm for middle-income economies for the period 1994 to 2002. Banking monopolisation is extreme with four banks holding 84% of banking assets, 50% of which reside in foreign hands.

Cde Cronin emphasised the need to ensure popular mobilisation against garnishee orders, abuses by mashonisais, social grant abuses, evictions, and credit bureaus. He also encouraged conference to assess progress with regards to the first Financial Sector Summit agreements and to contribute to emerging policy debates.

Trevor Chandler, an investor, responded to the paper on behalf of the financial services sector. Being from the sector, he was of the opinion that a balanced view of financialisation was required and that the positive impact of financialisation should also be explored. Chandler stated that financialisation was the cornerstone of globalisation; that it aided the sharing of knowledge and the ease of business and financial transactions. Chandler highlighted that government owned R1,2-trillion worth of stocks on the JSE and that forty per cent of JSE stocks were pension funds. He placed the responsibility for ensuring the prudent conduct of the financial sector in the hands of the audience, emphasising that public oversight should extend to investments and social lending.

To attest to the practical manifestation of financialisation, the Secretary General of the South African Students' Congress



Mashonisais like that advertising on this poster are among the many financial predators abusing South Africa's working class and poor people

(Sasco), Cde Luzuko Buku, outlined its impact on education. Cde Buku stated that neoliberal thinking was hegemonic both in terms of the ideology and the funding of higher education. From an ideological perspective, higher education is presented as elitist and a luxury. He argued that this is false as higher education is fundamental to development and to knowledge production. It is however presented as elitist to justify the quest for institutional autonomy, the exorbitant costs associated with higher education and the relegation of financing thereof to individuals. Consequently, students or their parents, are forced to take loans to finance their studies. Financial institutions also view students as a credit market, providing credit facilities based on potential future income. After graduation, students start their working lives in debt, forced to repay their loans with accumulated interest. This also places an unfair burden on students should they fail to find work after graduation.

Twin peaks of regulatory reform

Katherine Gibson of the National Treasury spoke on current legislative initiatives by the government, in response to the call for improved regulation. She said current legislation by the National Treasury aimed to make the financial sector safer and better for customers. The legislation is aimed at addressing poor market conduct, financial exclusion, prudential concerns, and integrity issues and assisting in maintaining financial stability. Furthermore, the legislation seeks to overcome fragmentation in the regulatory system, enhance coordination, stop regulatory arbitrage and

forum shopping, and remove systemic vulnerabilities.

Two core pillars or 'peaks' underpin the legislation, namely prudential authority and financial sector conduct authority. With the former, the legislation seeks to promote and enhance the safety and soundness of financial institutions and market infrastructures and to protect financial customers against the risk that those financial institutions may fail to meet their obligations. Concerning financial sector conduct, the legislation seeks to support the efficiency and integrity of the financial system and ensure fair, informed treatment of customers. The enactment and implementation of the legislation will result in a single policy framework and law, the levelling of the regulatory playing field, and a risk-based approach to supervision.

The meeting however responded to the legislation with much scepticism as it failed to address the glaring dangers within the market structure. Many felt that a superficial reform of an undiversified, monopolistic sector, which is so tightly integrated with international finance, was inadequate, and that National Treasury should go back to the drawing board. It was agreed that formal submissions be made to the parliamentary public hearings.

The consultative conference met its objectives. It gave impetus to a campaign that had gone silent, and the organisations present re-committed to working towards a second Financial Sector Summit within the first quarter of 2016. ●

Cde Fourie is an SACP Central Committee member

IN MEMORIAM

Sarah Carneson: an activist forever

*Jeremy Cronin pays tribute to a hero of the
amazing struggle journey*



Sarah Carneson was tiny. Deep into her nineties she still had an impish smile and a cheeky glint in her eye that told you she was no push-over. She wasn't afraid to speak her mind but never in an aggressive or bombastic manner.

To friends she would raise critical concerns over the direction of today's ANC-led Alliance. But her criticism was not that of an outside observer, nor was it ever tinged with the bitterness of former members turned apostates. She simply believed in her practical, down-to-earth way that the Communist Party, to which she still belonged, could and should be doing better. She was right.

Born Sarah Rubin in Johannesburg in 1916, her parents were immigrants. Her father Zelic was from Lithuania and her mother Anna from Russia. Zelic worked as a tailor and, unusually for the time, he employed coloureds and Africans along with whites as apprentices in the workshop in the backyard of the family home at 297 Bree Street. In later years Sarah recounted how "the house was always open. Everyday there would be about 15 of us at the dinner table, comrades of my parents, students, artists, and unemployed." She would also recall how in her school years she wrestled with the ambivalence of two worlds, the world of her family home where, later, regular visitors included Moses Kotane, and a very different whites-only, often bigoted, world of school friends and their families.

When the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) launched in 1921, Zelic and Anna were founder members. Aged 15, Sarah joined the Young Communist League and at 18 she became a member of the CPSA. Later she would insist that she had thought twice about this, determined to make up her own mind and not simply follow her parents. Once she had decided, however, it was to be a life-time commitment. Sarah was thrown directly into practical work, teaching adult literacy classes to workers at the party night school.

For the next three and a half decades Sarah was involved in a whirl of organisational activity. She worked full-time for the League Against Fascism and War in Johannesburg, and then full-time in the CPSA Johannesburg office. In the late 1930s she moved to Durban where she was involved with the National Union of Distributive Workers, she was secretary of the Tobacco Workers Union, helped organise the largely In-



An impish smile: Sarah Carneson at 98

dian Sugar Workers Union, and served on the Durban CPSA district committee. Then in 1940 it was back to Johannesburg with another full-time stint in the CPSA office, followed by work in the People's Bookshop.

In 1943 she married Fred Carneson, a fellow communist party member with whom she had worked in Natal. At the time Fred was a serviceman on leave from the North African campaign. With the war over, Sarah and Fred moved to Cape Town in 1945 with their first-born, Lynn. Fred was secretary of the Communist Party in Cape Town and in 1946 he was elected as a Native Representative to the Cape Provincial Council. In 1949 Sarah became secretary of the South African Railways and Harbour Workers' Union with a majority African membership. Activism for the Carnesons had never been without harassment, but things were about to get a whole lot worse.

In 1950 the recently elected National Party government enacted its first piece of repressive legislation – the Suppression of Communism Act. Sarah and Fred were both listed as communists and in 1953 Sarah was served with banning orders. She was forced to resign from the Railways and Harbour Workers' Union. Indeed, the banning order, as she remembered "listed a large number of organisations that I couldn't be an office bearer or member of." The list included



Fred and Sarah Carneson at the time of their marriage in 1943

the Peace Council, the Federation of South Africa Women, the Congress of Democrats, and the Guardian Cooperative. Even the South African Institute of Race Relations and The Christmas Club were listed. In 1956 Fred was one of the 156 arrested in the Treason Trial, and Sarah put her energies into a fund-raising committee for the families affected. The Carnesons now had three children, with John and Ruth being born in 1950 and 1952.

Things became tougher and tougher. Fred was to be detained no fewer than 60 times over the years. In 1960 Sarah was detained for six months during the state of emergency and was forced, as she put it, to “foster the children out”. In 1965 Fred who had been on the run was arrested, badly tortured, held in isolation for 13 months and finally sentenced to five years and nine months. Sarah was now under house-arrest in the family home in Oranjezicht. The family savings were frozen, the house was bugged and there were constant raids. Sarah tried to make a living by running the home as a guest house. The security branch bribed and threatened guests and staff to inform on Sarah. At one point shots were fired at the house, narrowly missing John’s head.

In 1967 Sarah was again arrested for a breach of her banning order. With the threat of a 10-year jail term if she breached the banning order again, and with the pressures of social isolation and the effects of stress on the children, Sarah finally went into exile in the UK in 1968. There she worked in the trade union movement and in the financial department of the Morning Star newspaper. On his release in 1972 from prison, Fred joined the family in London.

Sarah and Fred returned to Cape Town in 1991 and

remained active in their local ANC and SACP structures. Fred died in 2000.

Earlier this year at the ANC’s 103rd anniversary rally I was seated near to Sarah up in the stands of the Cape Town Stadium. Sarah must have known she was probably attending her last ever public rally. The venue was overflowing with some 50 000 ANC supporters from all over the country, most of whom, I imagine, would never have heard of Sarah Carneson. As I watched Sarah, I was thinking about the dominant version of the so-called South African rainbow miracle, the fable that South Africa’s breakthrough to a non-racial democracy in 1994 was the work of two or three individuals. Someone got a message down to the podium on the field. The loudspeakers announced that a 98-year old veteran of the struggle, a Sarah Carneson, was in attendance. “If not for her and people like her, we would not have a non-racial society”, the loudspeakers said. The live TV coverage cameras scanned the crowd but couldn’t find Sarah. It didn’t matter. She was content to be among generations and generations of South Africans, young and less young, black and white. Things might not be perfect in the new South Africa, but an amazing struggle journey had nonetheless been waged. And not in vain.

Sarah Carneson, born Rubin, died in Cape Town aged 99. ●

Cde Cronin is SACP 1st Deputy General Secretary and Deputy Minister of Public Works

This article first appeared in The Cape Times on 4 November 2015

KURDISTAN

Forging a stateless nation

The heroic, decades-long Kurdish struggle in four distinct countries is a unique effort for a democratic confederalist arrangement

BY YUNUS CARRIM

You can tell that SACP 2nd Deputy General Secretary, Solly Mapaila's, 10-day visit to Kurdish regions of Iraq and Iran made a huge impact.

He talks earnestly, a passionate gleam in his eye. "The Kurds suffer huge oppression in all four neighbouring countries – Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria – in which they live. More than 50-million people without their own country, yet they've been living there for thousands of years, and have been waging a struggle for national independence for decades. Thousands of them have been killed, including through chemical warfare."

At its 13th National Congress in 2012, the SACP gave Abdullah Ocalan, the imprisoned leader of the Marxist Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), a Special Recognition Award for his commitment to democracy and socialism. Mapaila visited the liberated zones of Kurdistan to "express our solidarity and get first-hand experience of the Kurdish liberation struggle".

Mapaila was struck by the commitment of the Kurds to their liberation. "Their dedication, their willingness to sacrifice amazed me! The guerrillas of the PKK have to go through a long process of induction before qualifying. They have to meet very rigorous, very onerous standards. Those who are accepted see it as an honour.

"And they must be prepared to sacrifice everything, give their lives from the start if they want to join the armed struggle. They're not allowed to marry! They can't have children! No personal property! Their needs are very basic



SACP Second Deputy General Secretary Cde Solly Mapaila with PKK combatants in the Kurdish liberated zone in Iraq

– and the movement provides these. When I met the President of the KCK (Kurdistan Communities' Union), Cuma (Cemil Beyik) I learnt that the only clothes he had was what he was wearing then.

"I was also very moved by the way the PKK respects their dead. I visited the cemetery of the martyrs. I was sur-

prised how they are meticulously cared for. There's also a monument in the cemetery, in which they have the few personal belongings of the deceased – the combat outfits in which they died, their boots, combs brushes, spectacles, notebooks. And they have the photos of the comrades, with a brief history of each of them.

"One of the leaders explained that since they demand so much from their comrades, they respect their dead. I think there's a lot we can learn from them about respecting our fallen heroes and heroines."

"I also visited the torture chambers in Sulaymaniyah in Iraq where those fighting for Kurdish freedom were brutalised. The comrades have converted this into a museum. A bit like our Con-

'PKK guerrillas have to go through a long process of induction. Those who are accepted see it as an honour'

stitution Hill.”

That this sense of sacrifice so resonates with Mapaila is hardly surprising. He’s known to lead a relatively spartan life. He refused to accept salary increases for several years and had to be forced by the SACP Politburo to take a better car after his own had several breakdowns during provincial visits.

Mapaila explained that the PKK works within the KCK, which is “a broad front of organisations committed to democratic confederalism, a social system they practice mainly in the liberated zones, which together is larger than the size of France.

“The PKK,” he says, “is Marxist, but not Leninist. They don’t believe in pursuing state power anymore. Their approach is shaped by the unique conditions and experiences of the Kurds who are scattered across four countries. A nation-state is not an option for them, as it’ll mean changes to the borders of four countries hostile to them.

“The nation-state, they feel, tends towards a single national culture and language and an intolerance of minorities. The nation-state, they say, is associated with the Industrial Revolution, but it now hinders development, and has been outgrown by globalisation. For them, the collapse of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries also points to the failures of the state.

“So they want a decentralised political system, with popular self-government, with full respect for cultural and linguistic rights. They refer to it as a democratic system of a people without a State. They place huge emphasis on gender equality, and environmental



The SACP’s Cde Mapaila meets officials of the KCK and (below) formally communicates the SACP’s solidary and support to KCK President Cuma Cemil Beyik



issues. They have a co-presidential system with all structures having both a male and female leader.”

Their democratic confederalist approach has been strongly influenced by Ocalan who drew on the ideas of

American anarchist philosopher Murray Bookchin.

Mapaila was very struck by the extent of popular democracy in the liberated areas and the sense of community. While they must have their unique social tensions in these areas, they seemed to lack a materialistic ethos. He was surprised too by the ease with which the guerrillas interacted with the civilians. And he was bemused at the lack of borders. “You couldn’t really tell where the liberated zones begin and end.”

Mapaila believes that not just the SACP, but the entire ANC Alliance has to support the struggle of the Kurds. “Cuma told me that they are very inspired by Mandela and his commitment to negotiations. He said there are many values that came out of our struggle that they have emulated. But, I think, there are many things we can learn from their struggle, many values we can emulate from them. By identifying with their struggle we can also reinvigorate our own.”

Interesting, that! The view that we can revitalise the struggle in this country through learning from other struggles, including one that drew some of its inspiration from our own. This much though is clear: we certainly need to rekindle our spirit and sense of struggle in this country. ●

Cde Carrim is an SACP Politburo member and Editor of Umsebenzi and African Communist

This article first appeared in City Press on 18 October 2015



Cde Mapaila in the mountainous terrain dominated by the PPK fighters

FEES MUST FALL

Debunking the myth of political apathy

The #FeesMustFall campaign has not only advanced the process towards free, quality university education for all: it has also provided organisational lessons for the Alliance, writes cde Joyce Tsipa

The actions by university students and workers on campuses have shaken the walls of power and brought to the fore one of the most pressing issues South Africa has ever faced: free, quality, public university education.

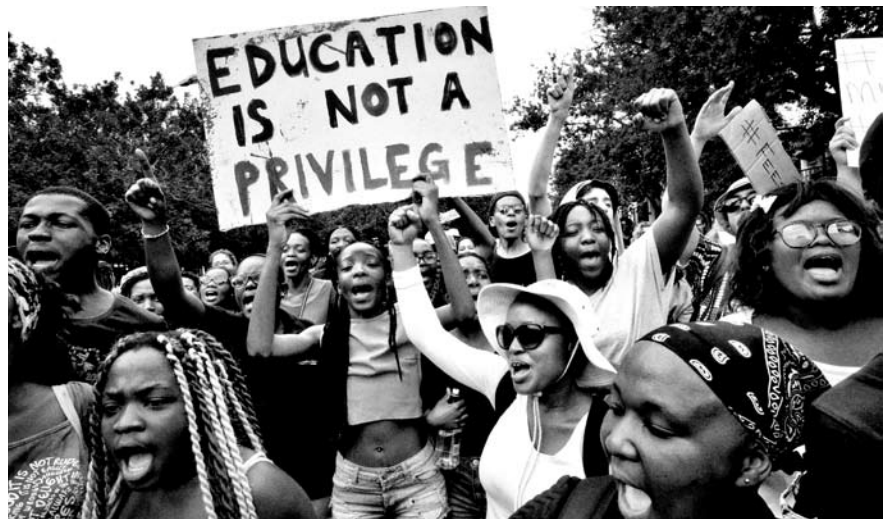
The Young Communist League of South Africa has openly supported these actions as they take forward one of our most fundamental campaigns: to pressure the state and universities to ensure that there is access to education in all our institutions.

The protests have also disproved some of the myths about our generation – of youth as apathetic and uninterested in the politics of the day.

In a short space of time, students occupied the spaces which they are in and sent a collective, united national message that the fees must fall (hashtagged #Fees-MustFall). This followed a huge campaign targeted at Stellenbosch (#Luister) and #RhodesMustFall earlier in the year. It is our view that all these campaigns are linked, and deal with the transformation and democratisation of universities so they truly become public institutions for all who live in this country, not solely for those who can afford them.

But what are the underlying issues behind the recent protests and how do we suggest they are dealt with?

Firstly, the rate at which universities have used their autonomy to raise fees to ridiculous levels have brought us to where we are. Fees in historically white universities have been used to exclude black students rather than to improve the quality of education in those institutions. Black working class students have been pushed



West Cape students protesting proposed fee increases

to under-resourced universities such as Walter Sisulu or Venda, while those who went to Wits University or the University of Johannesburg remained indebted after completion of their studies or were financially excluded and could not complete. It is time for the government to regulate university fees and channel more resources to historically black universities to deal with issues of equity.

Secondly, the private sector has disinvested from funding what they deem 'black institutions' and have moved the

funding to their preferences, the predominantly 'white' institutions. This has deprived 'black universities' of the funding they need to catch up with 'English' and 'Afrikaner' universities. They have therefore been entirely reliant on government support and students fees as the sources of funds.

Thirdly, our universities have been short on knowledge production and tall on churning out undergraduates to join the labour market. This has led to them spending a fortune on 'buying' knowledge from Europe and the US. Although funding to universities is structured to favour knowledge production, it is mostly 'white' privileged universities that have been benefitting from these funds. The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) needs to ensure that they put this as a stringent target for universities in exchange for their funding,

It is time for the government to regulate university fees and channel resources to historically black universities



Marching to Pretoria: Students on the national march to the Union Buildings

and that technically skilled individuals should be directed to FETs and universities of technology.

The ANC should not have cut funding for university education in 1996, guided by its macro-economic policy, Gear. Government policy must now be geared towards higher expenditure (as a proportion of GDP) on university education, with the progressive introduction of free education for poor students. University funding should also be linked to incentives that reward universities that produce more graduates and post-graduates.

The role of the university management in this period has also been appalling, arrogant and constituted a shifting of blame from themselves to the government. The reality is that there are pressing transformative issues facing our universities, and the challenge is for the movement for change to take these issues further so that they are not addressed in an ad hoc fashion.

The YCLSA fully endorses the call by the DHET for a graduate tax and the process that is underway to reform the National Students Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS). However, we strongly believe that we can achieve higher education as it is undertaken in countries such as Germany, Mexico, Sweden and Brazil if we increase tax to expand the national fis-

cus. The crises of unemployment, poverty and inequality will continue if the wealth of the country remains concentrated in a mere 1% of the population. The ANC NGC resolution on a wealth tax is an essential first step in the right direction.

To try to personalise the struggle as being about Blade Nzimande, the Minister of Higher Education, so that we score cheap political points – as was the case with Colleen Maine of the ANCYL – is petty and will only further divide the youth movement and the #FeesMustFall campaign. It is time for the Progressive Youth Alliance to take leadership and engage students at their level and on issues that materially concern them.

Preoccupation with the ANC succession battle will further isolate us from student struggle and can only serve us to be embedded with our masters in the 'premier league'.

It is time for the Progressive Youth Alliance to take leadership – preoccupation with the ANC succession battle will further isolate us from student struggle

That they have peacefully marched on Luthuli House and to the Union buildings is evidence of the trust that students have in the ANC leadership and government to ultimately ensure that education is free. This was also clear in their dismissal of both Mmusi Maimane of the DA and Floyd Shivambu of the EFF, and the rantings of his Commander in Thief on Twitter about the student actions being hijacked. The ANC should use this opportunity to reflect on the many other issues that have been a cause for disaffection among young people, and begin to look at things from their perspective.

As the YCLSA, we have drawn serious organisational lessons from these protests. We will be going back to the drawing board to look at the issues we have focused on in the past and the strategies we have implemented to strengthen our presence among students and young workers as the drivers for socialism and change.

What has now become apparent is that the war for a total break with the apartheid past is underway, and we are in it to win it as the current generation. The doors of learning and teaching shall be opened, with or without our tears and blood. ●

Cde Tsipa is the YCLSA Deputy National Chairperson