



SACP

14th NATIONAL CONGRESS

10-15 July 2017

POLITICAL REPORT

**Defend, Advance, Deepen the National Democratic Revolution:
The Vanguard Role of the SACP**



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The SACP is calling for an official inquest into all circumstances surrounding Hani's assassination. The Party strongly believes the truth has not been fully disclosed.



Advance, Deepen and Defend the National Democratic Revolution! The Vanguard Role of the SACP

SACP 13th Congress Central Committee Political Report to the 14th Party Congress

This 14th SACP National Congress takes place at an exceptionally challenging time for our society, for the South African working class, and for the broad popular forces of our country. The major democratic and constitutional breakthrough of the early and mid-1990s, the first phase of our national democratic revolution, which had promised so much, is now under threat of erosion and reversal.

These challenges impose a significant responsibility on this 14th National Congress. We, the delegates to Congress are representing more than a quarter of a million SACP members – by far the largest membership ever in the 96-year history of our party. It is a membership that has grown by leaps and bounds over the past year. And this is no accident – it is testament to the public role the SACP has been playing over the past decade, and particularly in the recent period.

However, as delegates to this Congress we are not only representing the interests of the SACP. A wide array of non-communists in the ANC-SACP-COSATU-SANCO alliance, in trade union formations beyond COSATU as well, and many other patriotic South Africans who, perhaps in the past have been dismissive of, or even cynical about the Party, all are now looking with some hope and anticipation at our Congress. Why?

It is an open secret, admitted by itself, that our leading alliance partner, the ANC, is threatened with serious decline, buffeted as it is by factionalism, moneyed patronage networks, and corporate capture. The internal crises affecting the ANC have begun to impact on its electoral performance, with a very steep decline in support, much of it due to a voter stay-away in many of our core mass bases. If the current trajectory is not reversed, the ANC is unlikely to pass the 50 percent mark in the general elections scheduled for 2019. Its ruling party role will, therefore, be challenged by one or another opportunistic coalition of current opposition parties as has already happened in many of our major metros.

Much, but not all, of this popular decline, is related to the almost daily revelation of scandals involving highly-placed ANC politicians in government and particularly those who have been entangled within the notorious Gupta empire, including the president's own family. The phenomenon of "state capture" of critical and sensitive state organs and state-owned enterprises by a web of parasitic capitalists has created a parallel, shadow state, or even, as some leading academics have argued, a "silent coup".

Unfortunately, the perversions of parasitic-patronage networks are not confined to the national sphere alone. In many localities, moneyed factions gate-keep over ANC branch participation, and actively rig membership audits.

But we must balance this negative picture with the recognition that everywhere from within the ANC, whether it is from within the National Executive Committee, or the ANC Parliamentary caucus, or on



provincial and regional structures, or from veterans, stalwarts and many genuine (we underline genuine) MK veterans, or as a major under-current in last week's ANC National Policy Conference, there is resistance to these pathological developments. In many of these sites of struggle, it is communist ANC MPs, for instance, or former MK fighters who are Party members who have been in the forefront. But we have not been alone as SACP members in the fight against corruption, nepotism and state capture.

The resistance has grown both in its spread and boldness.

But is this growing wave of resistance from within the ANC and ANC-led structures against parasitic-patronage networks and state capture sufficient to enable the ANC itself, at its December 2017 national conference, for instance, to make a decisive break with the current trajectory? Will the parasitic network even allow the December ANC conference to take place if the signs are not propitious for their cause? All of this remains uncertain. And this fluid, uncertain, and frankly dangerous, reality presents key challenges for this Congress.

We now shoulder a major responsibility as the SACP for the advance, deepening and defence of the NDR. How do we play this role without over-reaching, without exaggerating our own strengths, but, equally without failing to rise to the demands and responsibilities of the situation?

Let me, on behalf of the outgoing Central Committee, right at the outset state that one of the responsibilities of this Congress will be to discuss the issue of SACP leadership renewal and succession. There is definitely a need for leadership renewal and that is a matter we need to handle with care and the necessary sensitivity.

Indeed, a critical sub-theme of our Congress, we suggest, needs to be: STRATEGIC CONSISTENCY, ANALYTICAL ALERTNESS, TACTICAL FLEXIBILITY.

What is the future of our Alliance? In asking this question we should bear in mind that the Alliance is not (or should not be) a market-place, not a transactional arrangement primarily concerned with wheeling and dealing over deployment, it is not even a coalition. This is an Alliance that was forged in struggle over many decades. It is an Alliance in which at different times the ANC has helped to rescue the SACP from narrow sectarian tendencies. At many other times, it is the SACP that has played a critical vanguard role in helping the ANC to overcome major crises.

Uniquely, in international terms, the alliance between the two political formations in the Alliance (the ANC and SACP) involves (and has involved since the late-1920s) overlapping, dual membership. This is not to suggest that this is a necessarily permanent reality, or that dual membership might not be abused to hem in and marginalise the independence of the SACP. Indeed, there have always been narrow nationalist tendencies within the ANC that have sought to do this.

So what posture must the SACP strike in the current fluid situation? The outgoing Central Committee has consistently expressed deep concern at the state of affairs within the ANC and uncertainty as to whether the ANC has the capacity to self-correct. We cannot depend on the ANC, we cannot simply hand over all responsibility for the NDR to the ANC, and then hope for the best.

At the same time, we have committed the Party to help to re-build the ANC on the basis of a principled shared programme of action. This is an ANC that does not belong to a faction. This is an ANC that we, as communists, have helped to build over generations. We will not push the ANC off the cliff, but nor will we allow the SACP to be pulled off the cliff by those in the ANC whose greed and recklessness are carrying the ANC, and indeed our country, headlong towards the edge.

It is difficult to predict with certainty what will happen over the coming six months.

Which is why we say that this will require of the SACP:

- STRATEGIC CONSISTENCY, not free-floating opportunism or short-term emotional responses;
- ANALYTICAL ALERTNESS, what Lenin described as the capacity to provide a “concrete analysis of the concrete situation” (and not be locked into mouthing timeless platitudes about the class struggle in general); and
- TACTICAL FLEXIBILITY (the ability not to be caught flat-footed while still being guided by strategic consistency).

There is an African proverb that “If you want to go quickly, you go alone. But if you want to go far, you go together.”

But together with whom? The fundamental question is not the SACP’s relationship to state power, or with the ANC, but the Party’s relationship to the working class and popular masses in general. Historically, this relationship has been considerably deepened by our alliance with the ANC. But whether this will persist is now, increasingly, an open question. We must be prepared for different eventualities.

These, then, are among the challenging intra-ANC Alliance dynamics that this Congress must help to analyse and to provide resolution on clear directions forward that must leave the SACP neither flat-footed, nor isolated in sectarian purity, nor strategically opportunist.

A vanguard of the workers and the poor

But as we address these critical intra-ANC Alliance issues, we must also be careful of not becoming over-preoccupied with them, at the expense of the wider reality.

Let us never forget the wider picture. These Alliance dynamics are occurring at a time when the lives of the working class, of the rural and urban poor, and of significant numbers of the middle strata have become increasingly precarious. Despite major redistributive efforts since the democratic breakthrough of 1994, including 17 million social grants, subsidised housing for the poor, close to 100% school enrolments, and major improvements in access to water and sanitation – the triple crisis of unemployment, poverty and inequality persists. In some respects it has worsened.

Statistics SA’s most recent data indicate that in the first quarter of 2017 a further 48,000 jobs were lost, adding to the 9-million unemployed. The narrow definition of unemployment is now 27.7 percent, and the unemployment rate among youth is at catastrophic levels. The household debt crisis is equally grave. It impacts upon the poor and the middle strata, not least, the much vaunted “new black middle classes”. The latter, without inherited assets, owe their precarious toe-hold in a suburban life-style to high levels of indebtedness. Home and vehicle repossessions are rife.

To the standard triple crisis list of unemployment, inequality and poverty, a fourth and related scourge must be added. Millions of South Africans live in a state of personal and household insecurity. The criminal justice system is failing poor communities, and particularly women and children.

While poverty and insecurity are the daily bread of the majority, a tiny capitalist elite live with excessive wealth. South Africa is notorious for being the most unequal society in terms of income inequality. A recent Deloitte survey of CEOs and CFOs at the top 100 JSE-listed companies found that on average they were getting a total pay package of R17.9-million a year, or about R69,000 a day! Thirty years ago, the ratio of an executive salary to that of a worker in South Africa was around 50 to 1. Now it is 500 to 1. And, remember, here the class comparison is between executives and those who are lucky to actually have employment.

Why, despite the democratic breakthrough and despite a major redistributive effort, have these obscene levels of class inequality (with strong racial, gendered and geographical overtones) worsened?

The documents tabled at Congress seek to provide answers to this question, while encouraging further debate and discussion. Above all, of course, we need not just to diagnose, but also to ask and answer the key question: What is to be Done?

At the broadest strategic level the answer is – a second radical phase of the national democratic revolution. But what do we mean by a national democratic revolution? Is this just a tired recitation of an old slogan, or does the concept of an NDR hold real and relevant meaning? We submit that the latter is absolutely the case.

Strategic consistency:

The continued relevance of a National Democratic Revolutionary strategy

After a prolonged revolutionary struggle, the 1994 democratic breakthrough in South Africa finally abolished the institutions of white minority rule with their origins in centuries of colonial domination. This radical rupture, a first radical phase of the NDR, laid the basis for a democratic dispensation within a progressive, non-racial constitutional order.

Since 1994, the SACP has been actively campaigning for a new push, a second radical phase of the struggle to advance and deepen the national democratic revolution (NDR), on the basis of the bridgehead of the 1994 democratic breakthrough.

We have consistently argued that without urgently opening up this new front of struggle, without an uninterrupted second radical advance, the gains of the first phase would be threatened; the liberation credentials of the ANC-led movement could be increasingly eroded as memory of the anti-apartheid struggle receded; popular power might be dissipated into passive expectation of state delivery, or individualistic consumerism, or, at best, fragmented into thousands of localised and sectoral protest actions. Any undue pause, we have further argued, would allow South African-based private monopoly capital, historically sheltered behind colonial and white minority rule, to re-group. All of these likely tendencies, we said, would leave the structural legacy of apartheid colonialism and the socio-economic crises affecting the majority of South Africans largely intact.

In 2017 it is obvious that these concerns have been substantially correct.

Does this mean that the strategic concept of an NDR is itself inherently flawed? Are national liberation movements inherently “bourgeois-democratic” in nature? Worse still, once in power after two decades or so, are national liberation movements bound to degenerate? Is the current fragmentation of our own liberation movement inevitable (and therefore irreversible)? These have long been the arguments of an anti-ANC left, as well as of liberal forces who regard the “national question” as irrelevant.

To help to answer these questions, one important step is to re-visit the historical roots of our strategic perspective of a radical NDR.

A brief re-visiting of the history behind the concept of an NDR is all the more relevant in this year of 2017, the centenary year of the Bolshevik October 1917 Revolution. Perhaps the greatest and most enduring legacy of the Bolshevik revolution on the South African struggle relates to the national question.

Moreover, this 14th Party Congress will elect a Central Committee that will take the SACP to the

centenary of our Party in 2021. It is therefore appropriate that we use the occasion of this 14th Congress of our Party to begin to reflect, briefly of course, once more on the long road we have taken building on a proud Bolshevik legacy.

The two tendencies within national liberation struggles – the origins of the strategy of a radical NDR

The Comintern and the National Question

The strategic concept of an NDR was developed within the international communist movement nearly a century ago.

Soon after the 1917 Bolshevik October Revolution in Russia, the question of the relationship between anti-colonial nationalist struggles and emerging Communist Parties in largely peasant-dominated societies arose. At the Second Congress of the Communist International in 1920, there was a “Commission on the National and the Colonial Question”, in which Lenin and the Indian communist, MN Roy, played leading roles. In his report back to the Congress on the commission’s work, Lenin wrote:

“We have discussed whether it would be right or wrong, in principle and in theory, to state that the Communist International and the Communist parties must support the bourgeois-democratic movement in backward countries. As a result of our discussion, we have arrived at the unanimous decision to speak of the national-revolutionary movement rather than of the ‘bourgeois-democratic’ movement.”

We can see here the origins of the communist strategy of supporting national democratic revolutionary struggles in colonial and semi-colonial conditions. As Lenin goes on to explain, the idea of a “national-revolutionary movement” was advanced to distinguish between two diverging tendencies within national liberation struggles – the one national-revolutionary, the other a “bourgeois-democratic” reformist tendency: “if we speak of the bourgeois-democratic movement, we shall be obliterating all distinctions between the reformist and the revolutionary movements. Yet that distinction has been very clearly revealed of late in the backward and colonial countries...”

The Comintern urged Communist Parties in countries like India and China to work closely with, and to help radicalise, the “national revolutionary” tendency in the anti-colonial and anti-imperialist national struggles.

Private monopoly capital and industrialisation in South Africa

When the SACP (the CPSA as it was then known) was launched in 1921, the socio-economic context was different to that prevailing in societies like India and China which had overwhelmingly peasant majority populations and strong feudal features.

At that point, for nearly half-a-century, much of the southern African region had already been plunged into a massive process of monopoly capitalist-driven transformation. Rapid industrialisation, centred on the diamond fields around Kimberley and then the gold fields of the Witwatersrand, drew huge flows of private monopoly capital from the imperialist centres. There were major investments in mines, and also in rail and port infrastructure connecting the mining hinterland to the colonial ports. The Anglo-Boer war, the largest armed conflict of its time, forcibly consolidated disparate states, establishing a single geographical political entity, the Union of South Africa, under British imperial hegemony. In 1910, the Union of South Africa became a semi-independent British dominion under local white minority rule.

Above all, this massive capitalist-driven industrial revolution transformed the hard-pressed African peasantry and traditional African societies within the borders of the new Union of South Africa,

and, indeed increasingly throughout the southern African region, into impoverished labour reserves. Earlier colonial wars of dispossession had laid the basis. Now an active and violent process of proletarianisation was launched – that is to say, the expropriation of independent means of production, forcing hundreds of thousands and eventually millions of rural migrants on to the capitalist labour market on extremely unfavourable terms.

The early Communist Party in South Africa

Inspired by the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution socialists in South Africa formed the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) in 1921 as an affiliate of the Communist International. The CPSA sought to build working class solidarity between white and black workers in a struggle against mining monopoly capital. Already by 1924 the majority of the CPSA's non-racial membership was African. However, at first the CPSA did not recognise the interconnection between the class struggle for socialism and the national question in South Africa.

It was the 6th Congress of the Communist International in 1928 that mandated the CPSA to pursue a national democratic struggle as a "stage" towards a "workers' and peasant republic". This mandate called for the recognition that mobilisation around the grievances and aspirations of the nationally oppressed majority of South Africans was the critical motive force in the struggle for socialism against a double colonial reality – the continued hegemony of British imperialist capital and emergent domestic private monopoly capital buttressed by an "internal colonialism" (white minority rule).

While acknowledging that the 1910 Union of South Africa had accorded a degree of political independence to South Africa under white minority rule, the Comintern correctly argued that South Africa remained an essentially COLONIAL reality. This is how the Executive Committee of the Comintern in its Resolution on South Africa put it:

"South Africa is a British Dominion of the colonial type. The development of relations of capitalist production has led to British imperialism carrying out the economic exploitation of the country with the participation of the white bourgeoisie of South Africa (British and Boer). Of course, this does not alter the general colonial character of the economy of South Africa, since British capital continues to occupy the principal economic positions in the country (banks, mining and industry), and since the South African bourgeoisie is equally interested in the merciless exploitation of the negro population."

The same Comintern resolution instructed South African communists to pay particular attention to the still small emergent black, nationalist formations, with the ANC (and also trade unions) specifically mentioned. This new strategic line was adopted by the CPSA in 1929. Today, the SACP is criticised in some ANC quarters for paying "too much attention" to the ANC, but we have been paying considerable attention to the ANC for many decades, and we do not apologise for it.

The two tendencies in the South African National Liberation Movement

Through much of the first half of the 20th century the ANC held a broadly progressive, but essentially liberal-reformist perspective on the nature of the national struggle. In the late-1940s and through the 1950s, with rising mass and working class struggles, the ANC increasingly moved towards a more radical approach. The Freedom Charter, adopted in 1955 by the Congress of the People, marked a decisive step in the radicalisation of the movement's strategic vision.

However, it is important to remember that within the ANC there have always been tensions between both more narrowly nationalist and more bourgeois reformist tendencies on the one hand, and more progressive left-leaning tendencies on the other. For these reasons, the ANC was, for instance, not at first able to formally adopt the Freedom Charter. Its eventual adoption by the ANC in 1956 (a year



after it was adopted by the Congress of the People) provoked a subsequent split in the shape of the PAC – which rejected both the non-racial (the inclusive African nationalist) vision of the Charter, as well as its commitment to the common ownership of the mineral resources of our country, arguing that this was a “foreign Communist” idea.

The 1962 SACP programme, “The Road to South African Freedom”, reaffirmed the revolutionary national-democratic nature of the South African struggle. In characterising apartheid South Africa, the SACP’s 1962 programme introduced the important concept of “colonialism of a special type”, (CST), referring to the fact that, while South Africa continued to be a semi-peripheral economy subordinated to the interests of imperialist capital, the dominant colonial power (exercised through white minority rule) occupied the same spatial reality as the nationally oppressed black majority.

The crucial ANC 1969 Morogoro Conference, which marked a critical turning point after the major strategic defeat suffered by our movement in the mid-1960s, in effect, reaffirmed Lenin’s distinction between national struggles that were bourgeois-democratic, and those that were national-revolutionary. The Morogoro “Strategy and Tactics” document clearly associated the ANC with the national-revolutionary line of march:

“our nationalism must not be confused with chauvinism or narrow nationalism of a previous epoch. It must not be confused with the classical drive by an elitist group among the oppressed people to gain ascendancy so that they can replace the oppressor in the exploitation of the mass.”

The Morogoro Conference argued that the viability of a radical NDR in South Africa was made possible by two factors:

1. A global conjuncture – “The struggle of the oppressed people of South Africa is taking place within an international context of transition to the Socialist system...”; and
2. The fact that in South Africa, compared to most other societies embarked on national liberation struggles, the working class here was the overwhelming majority – “The perspective of a speedy progression from formal liberation to genuine and lasting emancipation is made more real by the existence in our country of a large and growing working class whose class consciousness complements national consciousness.”

This strategic vision of “a speedy progression” from formal liberation to a radical NDR in many ways inspired the great rolling waves of semi-insurrectionary struggles from the mid-1970s, through the 1980s and into the early 1990s. It was a strategic vision that helped the ANC once more reclaim its hegemonic leadership role within the broader South African struggle.

These semi-insurrectionary mass struggles were the decisive factor in forcing the hand of the apartheid regime into finally engaging with the liberation movement in negotiations. However, the radical NDR vision was to be challenged from within the ANC itself at the very moment that the 1994 democratic breakthrough became imminent.

The collapse of the Soviet bloc played a major role in this revisionist turn. It was no longer easy to proclaim, as the ANC had done in 1969, that our struggle was taking place in a global context marked by an inexorable forward march, “within an international context of transition to the Socialist system”.

But if the global context had become less favourable for a radical national democratic revolution, this, surely did not negate the imperative of still pursuing that path. Nor did the global situation change the objective class realities in South Africa – in which the employed and unemployed proletariat constituted

the overwhelming majority, and in which the massive domination of private monopoly capital would make formal liberation relatively meaningless without a radical advance.

Indeed, notwithstanding its general optimism, the Morogoro Strategy and Tactics document introduced an important note of caution:

“We do not underestimate the complexities which will face a people’s government during the transformation period nor the enormity of the problems of meeting the economic needs of the mass of the oppressed people. But one thing is certain – in our land this cannot be effectively tackled unless the basic wealth and the basic resources are at the disposal of the people as a whole and are not manipulated by sections of individuals be they White or Black”.

(In our current reality it is important to note the “or Black”).

In short, Morogoro, while recognising likely difficulties, did not see these as reasons to abandon the strategy of a radical national democratic revolution.

The 1994 democratic breakthrough...what next?

But abandonment is exactly what started to happen within prominent circles within the ANC in the early 1990s.

It is interesting to contrast, as an example, the key messages that the SACP and the ANC respectively sought to advance in the immediate aftermath of the landslide ANC-led alliance electoral victory in April 1994. The message from the SACP’s Central Committee was clearly spelt out on the cover of the May 1994 issue of *The African Communist*: “A luta continua!” – “the Struggle Continues!”, accompanied with an editorial elaborating on this perspective along with photographs of the winding thousands-strong queues outside voting stations to make the point that the democratic breakthrough was itself mass-driven.

This was in contrast to the front cover of the ANC’s official publication at the time *Mayibuye*, which carried the relatively demobilising headline “Free at Last!”, and a cover photograph of the Union Buildings and an air-force jet formation flying overhead at the inauguration of President Mandela. The accompanying *Mayibuye* editorial begins: “The moment has arrived. Liberation. Real change. National Democratic Revolution. Call it what you may.” It then goes on to envisage a modest, largely state-driven, top-down process: “Now is the time to make good the election pledge... In June, allocations from the budget will be decided upon. A modest beginning can then be made...”

From the very outset of the post-apartheid period, then, there was a determined ideological and strategic thrust to reassert a revisionist, liberal-reformist vision of the NDR.

The first post-apartheid decade-and-a-half

The first phase of our NDR, we argued, was constituted by the radical breakthrough in the 1994-1996 period. This radical breakthrough saw the abolition of the institutions of white minority rule, the achievement of one-person one-vote representative democracy, and a progressive constitution drawn up through an elected constituent assembly.

Our position in the mid-1990s (a position we continue to believe was correct) was that a second radical phase of the NDR should have begun IMMEDIATELY, using the bridge-head of the 1994-1996 breakthrough.

In arguing for a radical approach in the mid-1990s, the SACP was well aware that an adventurist “great leap forward” was not possible. The rolling back and relative stagnation of liberation movement



advances within our own region; the 1989-1991 collapse of the former Soviet bloc; and the ensuing unchallenged US-led imperialist global domination had created an unfavourable correlation of forces internationally.

However, the landslide 1994 ANC electoral victory; the unextinguished popular and working class struggle traditions at the time that had made the negotiated transition possible in the first place; and the fact that South Africa-based private monopoly capital, given its deep complicity with white minority rule, was off-balance, created relatively favourable domestic conditions for radical advances.

These would necessarily include, as the SACP argued in 1995, a socialist orientation within an ongoing NDR – building capacity for, momentum towards, and elements of socialism in the present. This perspective was encapsulated in our strategic slogan: “Socialism is the future – Build it Now!” In other words, we understood the ongoing NDR and struggle for socialism in the new conditions to be essentially a struggle for “revolutionary-reforms”, of progressive transformational measures. This strategic position also meant that we understood that socialism was not a “second stage” to be pursued (that is to say, delayed) only “once the NDR was completed”. Neither the NDR nor socialism is an “event”. This was a strategic perspective of a relatively protracted struggle, a “war of position”, on the terrain of a constitutional, majority-rule democracy to contest and achieve radical transformation in all key sites of power. This required “going to the root” of the deep structural legacy of colonialism of a special type.

Unfortunately, after our 1994 democratic breakthrough an alternative strategic orientation was adopted, which the SACP characterised as the “1996 class project”. Despite contestation from within the ANC-led alliance, it became the dominant strategic line in the ANC and in government.

This strategic line, influenced strongly by a range of Western think-tanks, borrowed liberally from the perspectives of the first Bill Clinton administration (1993-1997), and later adopted by Tony Blair and most of Western Europe. This was essentially a drastically watered-down social democratic stance, calling itself the “Third Way”, and embracing neo-liberalism, financialised globalisation, a technocratic state, with “modernised” centre-left (often alternating electorally with more or less identical centre-right) political parties led by “electable” centrist politicians enjoying strong support from key sectors of capital. This is what some have described as “the extreme centre”. Barack Obama was possibly the last major representative of this current.

The ongoing global economic crisis that began in 2007/8 in the US as a financial crisis has shaken the assumptions of this project to the core. The economic crisis has now also become a crisis of political representation. Centrist, “Third Way” politics is now off-balance in many advanced capitalist societies, with the popular rejection of “establishment” politics in the US (the election of Trump), in the UK (Brexit), and across much of the EU.

The two decades of “Third Way” political hegemony has witnessed growing inequality both on a global scale as well as within dominant capitalist societies. Even within developed capitalist economies, trade union and welfare advances have been eroded, large sections of the working class, middle strata and professionals now find themselves unemployed or in precarious work.

Governing Third Way political parties (along with their centre-right colleagues) in the imperialist centres have typically supported NATO, and have been actively complicit in the military destabilisation of vast stretches of the Middle East and North Africa. War has been waging in Afghanistan since the 1980s, and in Somalia since the 1990s. Along with climate induced crises, and structural adjustment programmes resulting in economic collapse, imperialist military interventions have now produced the largest flow of internal displacements and of cross-border refugees since the end of the Second World War. By far the largest numbers of refugees and desperate economic migrants are located within third

world societies, including South Africa. However, there have also been major flows of migrants and refugees into Europe and the US.

De-industrialisation, growing employment precariousness, deepening inequality and the flow of migrants has been the terrain on which populist, rhetorically anti-establishment, right and extreme-right wing political parties and personalities have surged electorally within the US and many European countries on the basis of xenophobic, anti-immigrant demagoguery.

But there have also been important left-leaning regroupings either from inside of established centre-left parties, or through the formation of new movements, with the latter sometimes working with existing communist and radical left parties. Many of these movements take their direct inspiration from the diverse, anti-neoliberal, centre-left and radical left movements that swept through most of Latin America in the 2000s.

South Africa obviously has its own specific features, but it is possible to recognise many similar crises of representation dynamics at play that began to come to a head in the 2007-2009 period in our own country – the loss of credibility of the neo-liberal Third Way – “the 1996 class” - project; the emergence of a narrow populist nationalist right tendency; and the imperative of a regrouping of the left. However, in South Africa, these dynamics began to play themselves out largely WITHIN the ANC and ANC-led alliance.

How did we get here? The Polokwane moment

After 1994 there were consistent efforts from within the ANC and ANC-led movement to counter the neo-liberal Third Way project (or the “1996 class project” as the SACP dubbed it). These efforts came to a head in the “Polokwane” conjuncture of 2007/8. One of the organising perspectives of the upheaval that occurred at this point was the assertion that the “ANC (or the Alliance, in another version) is the strategic political centre” – and, not, therefore the state-presidency where Mbeki’s technicist approach had sought to locate it. At face value, and for many, this assertion of the strategic primacy of the ANC-led movement represented an attempt to reassert the democratic and mass-based, movement character of the ANC and its alliance.

However, in practice the Polokwane moment involved a marriage of convenience (or, perhaps, an unholy alliance) of the broad left, anti-neoliberal bloc with demagogic forces for whom the assertion of the ANC as the strategic political centre was a move to displace incumbents in the state with their own, in order to advance an even more aggressive parasitic, rent-seeking agenda. These latter forces identified patronage-based mobilisation within the ANC as the soft underbelly from which to capture strategic positions within the state to advance their parasitic agenda.

In other words, there were two very distinct understandings of what was meant by the “ANC as the strategic political centre”.

The first Zuma-led ANC administration (2009-14)

In the first Zuma-led ANC administration (2009-14) there was a relative balance of forces between the divergent agendas that had come together in a marriage of convenience at Polokwane. In some sectors (health with a major shift on AIDS, trade and industrial policy, state-led infrastructure spend, recalibrating competition policy as a means to leverage economic transformation, a greater emphasis on vocational training, etc.) space was opened up for progressive advances, including developing a better working relationship between the state and social movements (the social movement campaign for anti-retroviral treatment being the most obvious case).

However, in terms of sustaining and re-building the ANC-led movement's capacity to mobilise the key motive forces, these and other positives in state deployment, coincided with the weakening of COSATU, partly as a result of the global economic downturn and resultant retrenchments. There was also a loss of momentum on the SACP side in terms of active working class and popular mobilisation (a failure to sustain a very successful financial sector campaign for instance). Deployment advances in some sectors noted above, however, were always (and surely deliberately) held in check by other deployments in the 2009/14 administration.

These checks-and-balances involved transactional deployment trade-offs between three tendencies (putting it very schematically) – a more left-leaning tendency; a more narrow BEE tendency; and a more centrist grouping, including many from the Mbeki project who had remained in ANC/state leadership positions (the National Development Plan was essentially the product of this last-mentioned tendency). This last-mentioned tendency was cultivated as the business-friendly, outward-looking project seeking to appeal to investors, while the more left-leaning and narrow BEE tendencies competed for support within the movement and among popular strata. There was also considerable, largely tactical, instability within the two last-mentioned groupings, resulting in the NUMSA split from the alliance on the one hand; and the belated expulsion of Malema from the narrow nationalist parasitic tendency on the other.

Important advances were made in the 2009 administration, but the constraints noted above meant that the structural problems within the political economy were not radically and systemically addressed. Where there was significant massification of programmes – the 17-million social grants reaching some 10 million beneficiaries, for instance, or the largest roll-out of ARVs in the world - critical gains were achieved. The floor of poverty was lifted and there have been significant and rapid gains in life expectancy. While these were absolutely essential interventions they were not inherently transformative.

In other cases, where there were significant budgetary allocations – in the major state-led infrastructure build programme, for instance – much of it (in the outgoing Mbeki-led ANC administration) had been spent on non-transformative vanity projects (2010 FIFA World Cup stadia and other related infrastructure – the Gauteng Freeway Infrastructure Programme, the King Shaka International Airport and Dube Tradeport, the Gautrain). In the first Zuma-led ANC administration, with the establishment of a Presidential Infrastructure Coordinating Commission there was progress in re-orienting state-led infrastructure spending into a more coordinated and integrated approach. However, weaknesses and parasitic activities in key SOCs (notably, but not only, Eskom and Transnet), and in different spheres of government constrained the potential impact. The massive over-spending at Zuma's Nkandla homestead symbolised both the continuation as well as the personalisation of the vanity project phenomenon.

As for social infrastructure, the mass low-cost RDP and other subsidised housing programmes (some 4 million houses) have largely entrenched apartheid spatial patterns by building working class housing in peripheral locations far from work and other resources. This has served simply to reproduce working class marginalisation and black poverty – as well as a deeply skewed property market. The Gauteng signature housing project, the mixed-income Cosmo City development, was targeted at both subsidised housing for the working class and poor, and mortgaged houses for the emergent black professional and other middle strata. However, only a small percentage of the original beneficiaries/owners are still staying in their houses as a result of the enormous cost of transport because of its location. The subsidised houses are being sold at far below the cost to the state of their construction as the original beneficiaries move out. There are also wide-scale bank repossessions of mortgaged homes in Cosmo City, with auctioning-off sales on average fetching 30% less than nominal market value.

Other potentially critical pillars of a radical second phase of the NDR – like the state-led industrial action programme - have simply not received the scale of funding that would enable a qualitative step-

change. In some cases, the worst ravages of neoliberal-driven de-industrialisation and job losses have been halted, and some level of employment stabilisation has remarkably been achieved in a sector like clothing and textiles – indicating what could be achieved more widely if there was sufficient political will and resourcing.

Public employment programmes – the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) and the Community Work Programme – while achieving relative massification (at around one million work opportunities a year), are, given the extraordinary levels of unemployment, nowhere near the scale required and envisaged in Chapter 3 of the National Development Plan. The effective resourcing of these programmes should aim strategically to move us towards the objective of the universal right to work (as envisaged in the Freedom Charter) as well as a socialist de-commodification of the very notion of work.

As for Land Reform and Restitution, again the required financial and human resources allocated have been woefully inadequate, and, even worse, there has been a strategic muddle. At best land reform is little more than a handful of dispersed projects, many of which collapse within a matter of years as a result of the failure to follow up making land available with concerted state technical, market and financial support. There has also been a failure to appreciate that, while access to rural land is key, the most significant land crisis is now urban.

In short, none of the potentially radical, “game-changing” sectoral measures have been sufficiently resourced or championed politically, or effectively conceptualised strategically, to ensure the kind of mass-scale, transformative impact required. This is not to say that, for instance, a transformative infrastructure build programme, state-led re-industrialisation, public employment programmes, and land reform (all of which can and should be connected) could all have necessarily been scaled-up simultaneously and equally. The trouble is - none have been.

Constraining serious radical transformation has been the deliberate “balancing of forces” within cabinet and key departmental and SOC deployments. Throughout the first Zuma-led ANC administration, Treasury remained firmly in the grip of a neo-liberal orientation. The SACP’s partial policy victory at the ANC’s 2009 Polokwane conference for the establishment of a state planning organ was watered down into the National Planning Commission, basically outside of state structures. And, consistently, throughout the 2009-14 administration, the president kept a very close control over the key departments in the criminal-justice sector.

These factors, coupled with the impact of the global economic crisis, meant that popular discontent and a proliferation of township and other protests increased. It was in this context that the ANC at its 2011 Mangaung national conference resolved on the necessity of a “Second Radical Phase of the NDR”. Unfortunately, no attempt was made initially from the side of the ANC to give meaning and content to the idea of a “second radical phase” – an inability reflecting the ideological paralysis caused by different currents and tendencies within the movement.

Post-2014 – State Capture takes off on steroids as the bourgeois-democratic tendency degenerates into parasitism

The fifth democratic administration, and particularly since December 2015, has seen the dramatic disruption of the pre-existing, but always unstable, post-Polokwane relative correlation of forces within the ANC and government. Essentially this has been the result of a more determined, more reckless, but relatively well coordinated, and well-resourced drive by a networked parasitic-patronage faction connected to the narrow BEE tendency and actively supported from the highest echelons of the ANC and state.

Since 2014 we have seen a greater boldness and recklessness from this networked tendency, associated with:

1. Accelerated rent-seeking activities based on state capture
2. Increasing signs of a parallel shadow state and parallel movement
3. Creeping authoritarianism and ambitions for a more presidential system; and
4. An attempt at developing a pseudo-radical, populist ideological platform to cover for these activities.

Accelerated rent-seeking based on state capture

This networked parasitic patronage faction is held together by the plundering of public resources, rent-seeking activities that have focused considerably on parasitic relations with SOCs – not to privatise these entities, but to milk them and direct their billions of rands of procurement into private corporate and even individual pockets. Some of the current parasitism is directed at building war-chests to subvert the ANC's December 2017 national conference. The continued association with and defence of the Guptas, and the attempt to prolong the Cash Paymaster Services social grant contract are, in part, an aspect of the war-chest agenda.

A parallel shadow state and movement

In order to advance this agenda, but also to deal defensively with the growing exposure and popular outcry against it, there has been brazen abuse of the presidential deployment prerogative into sensitive institutions (SARS, SSA), and particularly into institutions involved in criminal investigation and prosecution – NPA, Hawks. However, while these deployments have delayed, or buried critical investigations and prosecutions, the calibre of those deployed and the resulting inner factional turmoil (for instance in SSA or SARS) has further deepened the crisis. With obvious presidential support, a parallel state has developed – SARS, the Hawks, the NPA are unleashed against Treasury; a rogue unit in SSA is launched as a factional arm within the ANC and ANC-led movement. Attempts to bypass cabinet are becoming more common – the Zwane bogus “cab memo” being the most obvious example. On the policy front, shadowy presidential and ministerial advisers from outside of the state and even the movement are brought in and act parallel to constitutional structures in the university crisis, on the SASSA matter, on nuclear policy, etc.

Growing authoritarianism

Linked to all of the above are growing inclinations to authoritarianism and presidentialism. Nostalgia for military-style, top-down command and control is openly expressed.

In July 2016 President Zuma said: “If it were up to me and I made the rules, I would ask for six months as a dictator. You would see wonders, South Africa would be straight. That’s why if you give me six months, and allow Zuma to be a dictator, you would be amazed. Absolutely. Everything would be straight. Right now to make a decision you need to consult. You need a resolution, decision, collective petition, Yoh! It’s a lot of work.”

If opposition to Mbeki at the 2007 Polokwane Conference was centred on the struggle against over-centralisation within the Presidency, we are clearly now in a much worse situation. “Imperialist conspiracies”, “regime change” threats are invoked in order to justify this dangerous drift – as if the accusers were not themselves involved in a “silent coup” against a democratically-elected government, and as if they were not actively betraying South Africa’s democratic national sovereignty.

Assassinations of ANC and alliance cadres often go unsolved, and an emerging pattern of intimidation is apparent, most recently the theft of sensitive personnel data from the Constitutional Court and now the Hawks offices. There is threatening behaviour directed at the former Social Development DG's private residence. There is the intimidation of journalists and particularly the disgraceful harassment of SABC journalist Suna Venter who was literally hounded into death at the young age of 32.

However, both the sometimes amateurish calibre of elements involved in these activities, as well as the broader socio-political-constitutional setting in our country (a strong independent media, growing judicial confidence in holding the line, a powerful monopoly capitalist sector, and still relatively strong trade unions) often result in the early exposure of these activities, which does not make them any less sinister. What it does underline is that South African "civil society" has a much greater depth and resilience, whether from the capitalist or popular sectors, than Mugabe's Zimbabwe or Putin's Russia.

The growing authoritarianism at the top has its complementary counterpart at the regional and local levels. Thuggish militias, funded by provincial grandees, operate in several provinces, including the North West (where they wear T-shirts branding themselves as "Bang Fökols"), in Mpumalanga, and KZN. They are used to break-up constitutional meetings of the ANC and its alliance partners, and may also be involved in more sinister activities. There also appears to be collusion between these forces and elements within the SAPS, with attacks on community leaders and activists going untouched.

A diversionary populist ideological platform

In the face of growing public exposure of their misdeeds, there have been a number of ideological interventions from the parasitic-patronage faction.

On the one hand, these have involved setting up (or attempting to suborn existing) ideological apparatuses – the SABC under its former CEO, Hlaudi; the Guptas' ANN7 and The New Age (whose "business models", like most Gupta-operations, consist in funding through parasitism on SOCs, the SABC, and endless advertorials from the premier league); and the recent Bell-Pottinger operation, using social media with "fake bloggers" and "Twitter bots", linked to pop-up "think tanks",... etc.

Other institutions with a popular base among the alienated and largely a-political have also become stop-overs. These are platforms that include evangelical sects, like the Incredible Happenings Church, and celebrity prophets who convey blessings upon factional personalities in deep trouble and a curse upon their "enemies" in events that are organised as "press conferences".

Much of the ideological content from this leading faction is purely demagogic, eclectically tailored to the presumed interests of the audience (the National House of Traditional Leaders was promised an improbable "pre-colonial land audit" ahead of any "radical land reform").

Generally, the stance of the parasitic-patronage network has been a populist anti-intellectualism ("clever blacks" are disparaged.) For the first time in many decades, the ANC no longer has a journal of ideological discussion and debate.

However, over the past several months there has been an attempt to craft a more coherent ideological platform, evoking black and particularly narrow nationalist (including ethnic nationalist tendencies) or chauvinist themes and the notion of "radical economic transformation" (in the process narrowing the until recently forgotten Mangaung resolution calling for a "radical second phase of the NDR").

This move seems in large part to have been motivated by the hugely negative impact on the parasitic-patronage network of the growing revelations of their subordination to and complicity with the Gupta-family. The Gupta connection clearly has zero positive resonance either with the mass base, or even



with the many local aspirant rentier factions who resent the favouritism bestowed upon (or extracted by?) the Guptas.

Ironically, given its attempt to cast itself in radical, pseudo-left Africanist terms, much of the content and narrative for this ideological platform was developed by the UK-based PR firm, Bell-Pottinger, working on behalf of the Guptas. Indeed, the recently leaked e-mails demonstrate that Bell-Pottinger was literally writing speeches for some leaders in the ANC Youth League and so-called MK Veterans Association. Adopting the same victimhood strategy used by Zuma in 2007, the Guptas' propagandist machinery has sought to portray the multiple revelations of wrong-doing on their part, and the belated closing of their banking accounts, as a conspiracy directed against them by "white monopoly capital" working in tandem with Treasury. (Of course, since this did not square with the narrative, there was silence from these quarters when in February 2017 the Chinese Central Bank also shut down the accounts of a Gupta-related company, VR Laser Asia involved in a dodgy deal with Denel. There has also been silence about the recent closing of Gupta accounts by the Venda Building Society, which could hardly be described as "white monopoly capital".)

Over the past several months this parasitic-patronage faction has sought to re-calibrate its public positioning somewhat. While the Gupta family (and the networks left behind by its erstwhile Bell-Pottinger PR agency) clearly lurk in the background in many cases, there has been an attempt to downplay links in this direction and adopt a more radical sounding, Africanist posture. However, "radical", in these quarters, is largely rhetorical and is almost entirely focused on advancing narrow black elite accumulation. This very narrow version of BEE evokes "blacks in general, and Africans in particular", but in effect, it's about "ME and MINE specifically". The reduction of "radical economic transformation" almost entirely to a question of private black corporate "ownership, control and management of the economy" side-lines any notion of SOCIAL OWNERSHIP, or of POPULAR control, or of WORKER management.

We are told that companies directly controlled by blacks only own 10% of the JSE, but what is left unexplained is: if individual blacks owned 80% of the JSE how would that impact on the triple (and racialised) crises of unemployment, poverty and inequality? The same applies to the constant references to "WHITE monopoly capital" – if it became black monopoly capital would that change the lives of the majority of South Africans? The fudging of class is carried through in the way in which correct statistics are presented but abbreviated – for instance, we are told "White households earn five times more than black households". Shamefully, that's true, but notice what is missing – the word "average". The StatsSA finding from which this is drawn says: "The AVERAGE white household earns five times more than the AVERAGE black household". That reality is, of course, absolutely scandalous and is the source of social instability. But when you omit the word "average", you omit CLASS and wilfully omit the growing class divisions and diverging class interests within the ANC itself. The top 10 percent of earners in South Africa earn as much as the remaining 90 percent, but half of that 10 percent is now black.

The major ideological counter-offensive that the parasitic-patronage network has attempted to deploy, thus far, has been the fig-leaf of a narrow Africanist, "black first, land first" variety. However, more recently, there have also been attempts to advance a more Marxist-flavoured narrative as an alibi for parasitic plundering – hence the evocation of "white monopoly capital" portrayed as the chief enemy of the NDR, as if aspirant "black monopoly capital" was the cutting edge of the struggle.

The SACP and others have come out, correctly, to criticise the manner in which "white monopoly capital" ('WMC') is being evoked and to expose the agenda that lies behind this sudden interest, from these narrow nationalistic right-wingers, in private monopoly capital. They have responded to us by pointing out that in the past (occasionally let it be said), the SACP has used the term "white monopoly

capital". We did so as a short-hand to refer to the obvious fact that overwhelmingly capital-ISTS in South Africa have been (and are) white (and male).

But that was a short-hand because, strictly speaking, capital (and therefore monopoly capital) is not a person or persons, nor is it even merely a "thing". Capital shifts its embodiment, as Marx exhaustively analysed in the volumes of *Capital*, sometimes assuming a money form, at other times it assumes the form of land, or machinery. Capital (privately accumulated) is, essentially, an exploitative process extracting surplus and profits from the exploitation of the direct producers. Capital, as such, has neither a colour, creed, nor gender – although capital-ISTS, persons, the principal agents and beneficiaries of capitalism of course do have colour, cultures, and gender. But whatever their colour, culture, gender – AND THIS IS THE CRITICAL POINT – they are, at the end of the day, bound by the inexorable laws of private capital accumulation, failing which, sooner or later, they cease to be capitalists. This is why Saki Macozoma, one of the early beneficiaries of BEE policies, quite correctly asked "Why do people expect black capitalists to behave any differently from white capitalists?"

None of this is to deny that genuinely broad-based black economic empowerment initiatives can have an important role to play in the NDR. The condition must be that these initiatives help to de-concentrate our excessively (privately) monopolised economy, that they help to foster job-creating, productive entrepreneurs who are not mere fronts for globalised monopoly capital, who, therefore, are objectively locked into local sustainability. So-called black economic empowerment that is simply looting public resources, that is involved in money laundering and massive illicit capital outflows to places like Dubai is something entirely different. Progressive broad-based black economic empowerment cannot be public investment in a dairy farm in Vrede that is laundromated through Dubai and morphs into a private wedding party hosted by newly minted, post-1994 dubiously naturalised South African citizens who have the audacity to arrive en masse at a national security key-point, the Waterkloof air-base. What an absolute insult to our democratic national sovereignty!

Of course the SACP does and should support using state procurement and targeted tendering to ensure re-industrialisation through localisation, beneficiation, de-concentration, and the promotion of PRODUCTIVE black industrialists, etc. (By the way the concept of the corporation is not the only form of the social organisation of industrialists). These are important pillars of any second radical phase. But the current Gupta-type dominant fractions of "tender-based capitalists" are NOT productive industrialists, they are a parasitic-patronage network supported from the highest echelons of the state and ANC. Key levers of radical transformation – Eskom, Transnet, Prasa, SAA, SASSA and even critical ideological/cultural institutions (the SABC) – have been massively weakened through parasitic robbery. And the post-Polokwane entry-point into these critical strategic sites of power has been through control over the ANC by way of whole-sale patronage networks that buy membership and rig internal ANC elections, which is actively leading to the demise of the ANC's popular support.

It is important that the imperative of a radical second phase of the NDR is rescued from the demagogic clutches of the parasitic-patronage network, and the SACP has a critical role to play in this regard by providing real content and a substantive programme of action that gives meaning to the call for a second radical phase of the NDR. This is precisely what the SACP's "Going to the Root" discussion document set out to do. Let us briefly outline, therefore, a shortened and updated version of the main points in this document.

A second radical phase of the NDR – Going to the Root

Despite major redistributive efforts on many fronts since the 1994 democratic breakthrough (including 4-million subsidised "RDP" houses; 17-million social grants; 7-million household electricity connections, etc.) crisis levels of unemployment, poverty and inequality persist. These crises are strongly marked by racial, gendered, and geographical factors – the poorest of the poor remain African rural women.

Why the persistence of these crises? Is it because of poor government “delivery”? There are certainly many weaknesses in government capacity, and there is a need for significant improvement – but in relative international terms we have carried out a major redistributive programme. Is it because of weak growth? If we “grow the cake” then can we do better? But even during the previous decade of sustained growth in the post-apartheid period, the triple crisis persisted.

Clearly the problems are STRUCTURAL, they are embedded within the systemic features of our political economy. Growth along the same trajectory simply reproduces all of the deep-seated problems. This is why any solution has to be “radical” – that is to say, we have to go to the root of the problem. There has to be a STRUCTURAL transformation.

So what are the origins of this problematic, deeply-rooted structural legacy?

The problematic, systemic features of our political economy are rooted in South Africa’s colonial and white minority-rule history

The capitalist industrial revolution in South Africa in the late 1800s did not emerge “organically” from within South Africa, but was built around the mining revolution, which combined:

- A high dependency on (and subordination to) foreign finance capital and technology; and
- A massive reserve army of “cheap labour” – drawn from “native reserves”, and, indeed from throughout southern Africa.

Although much has changed in South Africa since the late 19th and early 20th centuries, these core features of the capitalist industrial revolution in our country have produced (and re-produce) systemic features, what is sometimes called a “path dependency”, which still persist today:

- Extremely high levels of private monopoly capital domination, especially in the mining, banking and energy complex – and, therefore, a relatively weak manufacturing and SMME sector;
- The semi-peripheral subordination of SA within the global capitalist value chain – despite its very early industrialisation, SA has been locked into a growth trajectory as an exporter of low-value, un-beneficiated natural resources and as an importer of technology and capital goods;
- Spatial inequalities – Not only was the political formation that emerged in 1910 as the Union of South Africa a semi-peripheral political economy serving a distant imperialist core, but the massive reserve army of labour was sourced from and reproduced in local (and regional) rural peripheries – principally the “native reserves”, later Bantustans. This “internal colonial” relationship played out between peripheral labour reserves and industrial mining and port centres. With the advance of the 20th century, it was also (and increasingly) reproduced in the core/periphery relationship of urban African townships on the distant outskirts of South African towns and cities.
- Patriarchal oppression – patriarchal values and oppression are found in most societies, but these were acutely intensified for the majority of women in South Africa by the “indirect rule” system through which the mining houses and successive colonial and white minority regimes exerted control over labour reserves. This was done through the simultaneous conservation and perversion of a “traditional” patriarchal subordinate apparatus – kings, chiefs and headmen, appointed by colonial and white minority rule authorities. Pre-capitalist societies in South Africa had both regressive patriarchal and progressive communal, democratic features. The latter we still honour today, partly in words (izimbizo/makgotla; ubuntu; masakhane; communal land, etc.), but also in the many every-day practices of social solidarity and cooperation in working class

communities (like stokvels). Successive colonial and white minority administrations preserved the worst authoritarian features and entrenched these in a system of indirect rule which later morphed into Bantustan authorities. Still today one-third of South Africans, a majority women, live as quasi-citizen-subjects under one or another form of chiefly authority. It was through this indirect rule system that girls, young men acting as “herd-boys”, and especially women were forced into bearing the brunt of the reproduction of “cheap” (for the mining houses) migrant male labour – through child-rearing, care for the sick and injured, and the elderly, while scratching the barest of livelihoods from survivalist farming. On the mines themselves, the mining houses also reinforced labour discipline through an ethnic “boss-boy” system.

The lumpen patriarchy that is so much in evidence in contemporary South Africa, the extraordinarily high-levels of violence against women and children, male-based gangs, shack-lords, quasi-trade union formations like the Five Madoda, and, perhaps, we should now add the political militias and goon squads like the North West province’s “Bang Fokols” all have multiple origins. But the de-humanising impact of decades of colonially-distorted “traditional” patriarchy should not be underestimated. Nor should we forget that around one-third of South African citizens are also “subjects” of patriarchal authority in the former reserves. The majority of those affected are women.

- A segmented labour force – although the institutionalised segmentation of the labour force, with racially defined job reservation, labour preference areas and the like, has been abolished, the working class still remains stratified along racial lines. Artisanal and skilled positions are still disproportionately occupied by whites, and low skilled work almost entirely performed by blacks. A massive reserve army of labour has long been the core feature of South Africa’s capitalist economy and of its relationship to the rest of the southern African region. High levels of unemployment have been disguised in rural dumping grounds and in township “informality”, giving rise to migrancy by annual, seasonal and daily, contract labour, and the inhumane treatment and casual discarding of workers. These largely racialised patterns continue with over 9 million workers unemployed and many more in precarious work. In addition, economic crises and urban and rural poverty in our wider southern African region have effectively transformed countries like Zimbabwe, Swaziland and Lesotho into labour-exporting reserves (“Bantustans”) for post-apartheid South African capitalism by way of a huge flow of economic refugees.

- Education and training – the reproduction of both class and racial inequalities was deliberately perpetuated through decades of colonial and apartheid education and training policies and practices. In the pre-1948 (pre-apartheid) period, the reproduction of class and race inequalities in the education system was largely by way of neglect of the African majority. However, in response to growing capitalist labour market needs for a semi-skilled labour force, the apartheid regime introduced the Bantu Education system. While the inferior character of this education system is often and correctly criticised, the scale of the roll-out is sometimes forgotten. When the National Party took power in 1948, the average black child spent only four years in school, and only a quarter of black children of school-going age were enrolled as pupils. Under the Bantu Education system the number of places for black pupils increased rapidly. But the racial inequalities in terms of government spending were massive, and with the growing intake of black pupils the per capita inequality increased. In 1953 government spending per African pupil was 14 per cent of that for each white pupil, by 1968 it had declined to 6 per cent.

This significant expansion of education for blacks was not, of course, due to any enlightened philanthropy on the part of the apartheid regime. It was a strategic response to the growing



demand for more literate, more numerate semi-skilled labour, while professional training and qualifications in the expanding but limited black universities (“bush colleges”) was intended to be reserved for staffing “homeland” administrations in the Bantustans.

Since 1994, at a formal institutional level we now have a single, non-racial public education system and important progress has been made in terms of achieving near universal school enrolment. However, in practice, vast inequalities persist throughout the education system, and these serve to reproduce race and class inequalities.

- Unsustainable environmental destruction – Pre-colonial African societies lived in relative harmony with their natural environment. Everywhere, capitalism’s voracious need for ever-expanding growth has resulted in the destruction of the metabolic relation between societies and nature. Colonialism in the era of capitalism was particularly destructive of both human lives and wider nature as it embarked on an often genocidal process of primary accumulation. In South Africa, colonially-orchestrated, capitalist-driven industrialisation was based on an especially ruinous path - mineral extraction that has plundered our non-renewable national wealth at huge cost to human health, and to the environment, of which the current Acid Mine Drainage crisis is but one symptom. Formerly cheap and abundant coal resources have also locked our energy system and wider productive economy into an excessively carbon-intensive path.

All of these systemically-interlinked legacy features of our political economy point to key RADICAL STRUCTURAL TRANSFORMATION features that need to be the critical pillars of a second radical phase of the NDR.

They also point to why the National Question and therefore a NDR strategy remain central features of our struggle, not least our struggle for a socialist South Africa.

Key pillars of a second radical phase of the NDR

A key task of this Congress is to lay the basis for the updating of our core programme, “The South African Road to Socialism” (SARS), adopted at our 13th Congress. We propose that a draft updated programme must be presented for adoption at our next Augmented Central Committee, guided by the discussions and resolutions taken at this Congress. A key part of SARS was the outlining of the tasks of the SACP in all key sites of struggle. Obviously these different sites are ultimately all interconnected, but for the purposes of developing action strategies, SARS listed them as:

- The terrain of the state;
- The economy;
- The work-place;
- Communities; and
- The battle of ideas.

Five years on, and with a view to updating SARS, we will flag a few current issues regarding progress, setbacks and challenges in each of these key sites of struggle.

The SACP and State Power

At our 13th Congress we identified the consolidation of a strategically disciplined National Democratic developmental state as a key objective. We noted that the 1996 class project had undermined the developmental potential of the post-apartheid state through restructuring based on the neoliberal-

related “New Public Management” doctrine that transformed the state into a largely contractual state – what we sometimes referred to as “tenderisation” of the state. We also noted that our 2007 call for an effective state planning capacity was only partially achieved in the 2009-2014 administration with a National Planning Commission that was, effectively, a non-governmental body. We also noted the crisis of sustainability throughout much of the local government sphere.

Since 2012, generally these problematic features have persisted. Even more seriously, as we have noted at length earlier, the parasitic State Capture reality has further undermined the developmental capacity of the state. It is for these reasons that as immediate priorities the SACP has called for:

- An independent judicial commission of enquiry into state capture to be established immediately. The terms of reference of the commission must be based on the findings of the Public Protector, and must not be so broadened as to render the commission ineffective;
- The commission must not be a reason to delay the immediate investigation and early prosecution of those involved in corruption, money laundering, illegal sharing of top secret government information with private parties, and much else that has been exposed by, amongst other things, the Gupta-related e-mail leaks;
- The termination by the state of all dealings with Gupta-related businesses;
- Rapid interventions to ensure that good governance is restored to key State Owned Enterprises, notably Eskom, Transnet, Prasa, Denel, SAA, as well as at the public broadcaster, the SABC and SARS.
- Likewise, the disastrous mishandling of the whole Social Grant payment dispensation, and growing evidence of serious corruption in the water sector must be rigorously dealt with.
- Abuse and factionalising of the criminal justice system must be rooted out – notably in the Hawks, the NPA and the intelligence services; and
- The covert attempt at foisting on our country a costly nuclear procurement deal that we neither need, nor can afford must be halted.

What about SACP members serving in the executive and in legislatures, including in municipal councils? While these comrades serve under an ANC mandate in the first instance, over several recent congresses we have resolved to establish more effective Party accountability structures and Party Discussion Forums (PDFs) in legislatures. In practice there has been uneven and often weak implementation of these decisions. However, the outgoing Central Committee has ensured that all SACP members serving in the national executive as ministers and deputy ministers have reported on their work to the Central Committee. Generally, it is our view that overall SACP members serving in the national executive have acquitted themselves generally well, and some have been targeted and demoted for refusing to bow to illicit pressures.

Any assessment of the SACP and the class struggle on the terrain of the state must also take into account the role of key public sector unions and the ability of the SACP to play a supportive role. Again, generally speaking, the relationship between the SACP and POPCRU, SADTU and NEHAWU has been solid with important shared activities, including political education work. The organic links with SAMWU and workers in the municipal sector has been less effective.

In flagging some of the key issues relevant to the question of the SACP and State Power we have deliberately not reduced it to the (nonetheless important) question of the SACP’s approach to electoral politics.

Let us remind ourselves of what the 13th National Congress and “The South African Road to Socialism” (SARS) had to say on this issue:

“The modalities of the SACP’s participation in elections are not a matter of timeless principle. As an independent political party, the SACP has every right to contest elections in its own right – should it so choose. Whether the Party does this and how it does this are entirely subject to conjunctural realities and indeed to engagement with our strategic allies. There are, however, three fundamental principles that will continue to guide us in this matter:

- The SACP is not, and will never become, a narrowly electoralist formation;
- Our approach to elections will be guided in this phase of the struggle by our overall strategic commitment to advancing, deepening and defending the national democratic revolution – the South African road to socialism; and
- Our strategic objective in regard to state power is to secure not party political but working class hegemony over the state.”

There will, of course, be a separate session as well as discussions in commissions on the question of the Party and state and popular power. We believe that, as this Congress discusses the electoral modalities through which the SACP engages with future elections, the broad principles articulated in SARS remain valid. However, as we noted at length earlier in this Political Report, the current situation, not least within the ANC and the ANC-led alliance, is extremely fluid and uncertain. We need to assess the likely impact, for better or worse, on the ANC in its national conference, scheduled for December, of any decision that this SACP Congress takes now in July. We should not be opportunistic about this, but nor should we be blind to the impact of any SACP decision at this point.

What is clear is that the manner in which the Alliance is currently functioning is unsustainable. At the very least, and we are not just referring to election campaigning, a major reconfiguration of the Alliance is imperative. We absolutely cannot rule out the prospect of the SACP contesting elections in its own right, which will bring advantages but also many challenges. There are many other issues that need to be thought through strategically. When we say, as some do, that the Party must “go it alone” - do we mean LITERALLY “alone”, or do we mean at the core of, for instance, a reconfigured National Democratic movement, or a United Left Front?

Delegates will recall that in the opening sections of this political report we said that our challenges and our responsibilities in the present require of the SACP:

- STRATEGIC CONSISTENCY, not free-floating opportunism nor short-term emotional responses, that have long-term consequences;
- ANALYTICAL ALERTNESS, what Lenin described as the capacity to provide a “concrete analysis of the concrete situation” (and not be locked into mouthing timeless platitudes about the class struggle in general); and
- TACTICAL FLEXIBILITY (the ability not to be caught flat-footed while still being guided by strategic consistency).

These watch-words are, of course, generally applicable to all of our work in the present, but they certainly have a special relevance to the question of the Party’s positioning on the electoral front.

Economic transformation

As we gather at this Congress our economy is facing grim challenges. We are now in technical

recession. When we met in 2012, the state had succeeded in driving the single largest investment into economic and social infrastructure by government in any five-year period. The increase in infrastructure spending alone since 2008 had cumulatively boosted real GDP by 2.2% by 2016. Without this major, public sector led effort, South Africa would have long been in deep recession.

Countries like Nigeria, Russia and Brazil were plunged into recession much earlier than South Africa owing to the global commodity price crash. Appreciation of this reality needs to be a critical part of our understanding of why State Capture is so perilous.

There are already many clear and deeply concerning indications of the impact of parasitic corporate capture of key SOEs. These are SOEs that have been central to driving our major public-sector led infrastructure build programme. There are now signs that the infrastructure build pipe-line in energy, transport, and water is slowing down as a result of parasitic plundering.

Many sectors of our economy are facing a huge job loss bloodbath, such as the commercial sector, impacted by the increase in online shopping that is further replacing demands for local goods. COSATU affiliate, SACCAWU, has for instance informed the SACP that about 90% of furniture sold in South Africa is now sourced from outside the country. The big warehouses that are mushrooming in our major cities are a reflection of the fact that the world is fast becoming one global shopping centre.

While we now have a much more activist Competition Commission, the challenge of de-monopolisation still looms large. For instance whilst our financial sector campaign had notched some important victories over the last decade or so, these were largely consumer type victories (for example, the Mzansi account, regulation of the credit bureaus, etc) and did not in any significant way touch the core systemic structures of the banking and the financial architecture in our country.

Over the last five years the SACP also launched a campaign to focus on the de-monopolisation of the media space, especially the over-arching dominance of Naspers. This campaign has not yielded the results we need as yet, though it has helped to identify and mobilise potential allies in this regard. It is for instance unacceptable that pay TV in our country is dominated by one single monopoly, Multi-Choice. It is going to be important that we call on the Competition Commission to investigate monopoly in the pay TV industry, as part of taking our campaign to higher levels.

Since our 2012 Congress a new term “the Fourth Industrial Revolution” has come into vogue. While, of course, we should guard against fashionable tag-lines, it would also be a mistake to ignore the massive impact on economies and on the world of work of a series of advances in digitised technologies, including robotics, artificial intelligence, 3-D printing and the internet of things. These developments are set to bring about disruptive change, not just in productive sectors but also in service activities, including retailing, legal services, accounting and health services, among others.

In theory, these new technologies have the potential to significantly advance human welfare, liberate humanity from mind-numbing labour, and provide better solutions to a myriad of developmental challenges. In the current capitalist and imperialist context, however, these changes also have the more likely potential to significantly widen inequalities with negative “disruptive effects” on workers, with lower levels of skills especially in developing countries.

For instance, earlier this year Adidas moved production from low wage factories in Asia back to Germany – on the grounds that robotics and 3-D printers were cheaper than low paid workers. In Marxist terms we can see that what is underway is an effort by capital to surmount the continuing ongoing global crisis by raising relative surplus value.

What then could this so-called Fourth Industrial Revolution under current capitalist conditions mean? Among other things we are likely to see job losses across the world, particularly focussed on lower skilled workers, and the relocation of industries, as in the Adidas example.

Unless we are very vigilant, Africa's intended industrialisation programme, in which the South African government is playing a leading role, is likely to be frustrated and choked by the fourth industrial revolution technology. Unquestionably, the fourth industrial revolution is likely to exacerbate global inequalities.

However, there are also some potential positives, for instance the lowering of barriers to entry of more innovative small businesses using 3-D printing or other digitised technologies to compete more effectively against larger less dynamic transnational and local monopoly corporations.

Faced with the so-called Fourth Industrial Revolution, there are issues requiring immediate attention for the working class. They include:

1. The shortening of the working day. In the so-called First (the steam-powered) Industrial Revolution, worker struggles led to the introduction of the 8-hour working day. With the new technologies, a further shortening and the sharing of work across a larger number of people is both possible and necessary. But, of course, as in the 19th and 20th centuries, this will only happen as a result of intensified class and wider social struggles.
2. Linked to this, there is the need to advance the struggle to de-link income and work, at least partially. There is some resurgence of interest, for instance, in campaigns for basic income grants.
3. But we also need to de-commodify what we mean by work itself. While new technologies are even entering into many social spaces like health-care, education, early learning centres and the like – it is important to uphold the principle that many tasks, which might not be profitable for capitalist bosses, are inherently about human interaction. We must not reduce the notion of work to alienated and exploited work for a boss. Countering the capitalist understanding of what is "real work" is one of the core principles we should be aiming for with our public employment programmes – the EPWP and Community Work Programme. We should also be promoting more dynamically the idea of a solidarity or social economy, relatively de-linked from the exploitative value chains of the capitalist mainstream economy.

The Fourth Industrial Revolution also has implications for education and training, calling for closer attention to, for instance, what kind of graduates we should be producing from our universities as well as Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges.

The workplace

Linked to the job loss blood bath referred to above, the capitalist restructuring of the workplace continues apace. Generally, capital has, in many workplaces and economic sectors, mastered the art of circumventing and undermining our progressive labour laws. This is worsened by four interlinked factors: failure to curb labour brokerage and casualisation; weaknesses in the Department of Labour's inspectorate; weakening of industrial unions in the workplace; and increasing absorption of vulnerable workers from the SADC region into some sectors of our economy. In essence the SADC region has become a cheap labour reservoir for South African private capital, almost reminiscent of the role of the Bantustans in apartheid South Africa. Congress will have to discuss in some detail these four factors contributing to weaknesses in the workplace.

Since our last Congress, most of COSATU's industrial unions have become weaker, including the fragmentation in unions that organise in South Africa's industrial sector. The formation of the latest union federation, SAFTU, is unfortunately compounding the fragmentation of the labour movement at a time when we need to be working towards maximum unity and towards organising the millions of unorganised workers rather than cannibalising membership from each other.

It is therefore going to be absolutely important for the SACP to clearly define its role in supporting working class struggles in the workplace. It is absolutely necessary that we support and unite workers in common actions and struggles across federations. There are many issues that unite rather than divide workers. One of those is the mobilisation of the working class against corporate capture of the state and against corruption. This would be over and above the need to organise unorganised sectors, as well as struggles against labour brokers and casualisation.

South Africa also has a capitalist class that has historically been dependent on cheap labour and unwilling to train workers beyond the most minimal requirements. For instance in both the metal and mining industries, it is estimated there are more than 40 000 artisan aides. These are workers who perform the work of artisans and require upgrading to become full artisans. But employers are unwilling to provide them with further training so that they become fully qualified artisans, as this will cost the bosses more.

The workplace is also an important site for training new entrants and young workers to acquire basic skills. It is going to be important for the SACP to work closely with the labour movement in this regard.

The workplace continues to reproduce patriarchal forms of interaction between male and female workers, including the absence of facilities to look after children. These are struggles that the trade union movement should be supported to take up.

Community struggles

This is one area where we can say that, unfortunately, from the point of view of our organised formations, there is continued weakness if not regression. This is despite the fact that three of the alliance formations (ANC, SACP and SANCO) are supposed to be highly organised in communities, with branches and civic organisations, and even in the case of the Trade Union movement, the strong traditions of community-based shop steward councils have almost disappeared.

Most of our townships and villages are in distress mainly due to high levels of unemployment (especially youth unemployment). Manifestations of this problem include drug and substance abuse and increasing levels of gender based violence, violence against children, and generally very high levels of violence.

Despite these major problems, everywhere in working class and poor communities, there are social networks in which, somehow, households and communities survive, building social cohesion through voluntary work, and through traditions of solidarity in stokvels, burial societies, local sports associations, voluntary home based care activities, much of it organised around faith-based organisations. Sometimes these activities are reinforced by the numerous participatory democratic arrangements we have introduced post-1994 - school governing bodies, ward committees, community policing forums, etc. However these latter often become sites of factional battles. Generally, it is women who are in the lead of the extensive social economy activities that are happening in poor communities.

The question that faces this Congress is where are our branches and civic formations, and what is their role? For the SACP in particular the question is where are our Voting District (VD) based branches? Are they functioning? It looks like our branches are not acting as catalysers of community mobilisation,

building dynamic and organic relations between themselves and other community initiatives. Could it be that our branches are more consumed by matters of lists, AGMs, conferences and congresses and not dynamically rooted in our communities?

As the SACP we have generally embraced the idea of building vibrant township and village economies. We however need to study closely examples of attempts where these have been made, especially the evolving township economy models in a province like Gauteng. A lot of work and popular mobilisation is required on this front. For example, one of the most important tasks is to strengthen co-operatives and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in our townships and villages, without simply turning these social economy formations into cannon fodder for political aspirations.

The development of vibrant local economic and social activity that is more premised on providing socially useful services and goods to communities and less on maximising profit faces many obstacles. One of the biggest is that the four big monopoly retailers have carved out and identified most of our townships and villages as places to build malls that undermine local economic activity. Our municipalities for instance often do not undertake socio-economic assessments on the impact of malls on local economies. Why? The SACP can take up a campaign that no mall should be built without a proper socio-economic assessment and that many of our areas in our townships and villages must be deliberately set aside for co-operatives and SMEs. This is an important part of the vanguard role of the SACP.

A related matter in building and strengthening local economies in our community is to struggle for the enforcement of the implementation of what is known as 'set asides'. For example there has been much talk that the provision of school feeding should not be based on a competitive tender-based approach open to major players, but rather a 'set-aside' for local productive co-operatives in our communities.

The struggle to build co-operatives (including co-operative banks) must be one of the important struggles in building and strengthening our communities. We must, in the first instance, work to strengthen existing savings co-operatives like stokvels and burial societies. But we must support the organic, bottom-up emergence of new social economy initiatives as well. Without effective government support this will not be possible. For instance, in some countries every municipality is required by law to bank a percentage of its monies with local co-operative banks. It is mostly women who are active in these economic institutions of our communities. We must support their already existing self-organisation around these activities as part of building a progressive women's movement from below.

The organisational weaknesses of our Alliance formations in communities and the tendency to over-politicise (in the narrowest sense of the word "political") our local activities, seeking to hijack local community formations into narrow factional and electoral battles, does not mean that there has not been ongoing popular mobilisation in townships and rural villages. But much of this has taken the form of so-called "township service delivery protests", expressing the frustration of communities with real or alleged municipal, for instance, corruption.

Unfortunately, in the absence of effective leadership from Alliance formations, these protest actions are often inward turning – with backyard dwellers turning against informal settlement dwellers around who should be first in the housing queue; or one taxi formation fighting against another over access to routes. There have also been tragic flare-ups of xenophobic mobilisation. In many situations poorly trained, overwhelmed and demoralised policemen and –women, themselves from these communities, bear the brunt of community anger. There have even been attacks against emergency service workers. In all of these cases it is the poor attacking the poor in their ghetto spaces, while the wider struggles for the right of all to the resources and amenities of our towns and cities are largely neglected. The rich continue to live in their comfort zones.

Worse still, many community protest actions are characterised by violence and the destruction of public property. Legitimate frustration over, for instance, delays in the building of an access road, leads to the shut down and even destruction of schools. Community halls, clinics and libraries are sometimes destroyed by protestors who believe that this is the only way to get the attention of those higher up in government. We must, of course, condemn these self-defeating actions, while admitting that they are, in part, symptoms of our own failures.

What is radically absent in all of this is a sense of community ownership and control (and therefore responsibility for) local resources and amenities. There are many reasons for this, among them the top-down delivery paradigm that, in government, we have too often inculcated – turning communities and citizens into little more than voters, whose only responsibility is to vote for us every five years or so..

An important aspect of community mobilisation is that of rebuilding close relations between workplace and community struggles, including the mobilisation of communities to support worker struggles. We also need to ensure that we organise in all communities, also as part of building non-racialism, especially in the light of the emergence of very regressive and narrow Africanist views from inside the ranks of our movement. Particular attention will have to be paid to black communities, especially Africans and Coloureds.

Ideally all this work in communities should be the bedrock of joint alliance activities to ensure that our Alliance does not only work during elections, but on an ongoing basis in all our communities.

The battle of ideas

We believe that, on the terrain of the battle of ideas, the SACP has, indeed, played a vanguard role. We have already spoken at length about the ideological challenges surrounding the most immediate danger confronting our constitutional democracy – parasitic State Capture. It was the SACP that first introduced the now wide-spread idea of “corporate capture of the state” into public discourse, and it is the SACP that has consistently exposed the ideological agenda (led by Bell-Pottinger – PR firm now, ironically, with a major PR headache of its own) to divert our Alliance and our country from the struggle against parasitic Guptaisation. Given the fact that this dangerous and perverted demagoguery has sought to adopt Marxist-flavoured terminology, the SACP has a particular responsibility. By advancing popular slogans like: “Neither the Guptas, nor the Ruperts” we believe that the Party has generally played a significant ideological role in this space. The welcome broad back-lash against populist, pseudo-left demagoguery in last week’s ANC National Policy Conference is a welcome indication that our Party’s interventions on this terrain have played a real vanguard role across the broader ANC and alliance.

Of course, the immediate battle on this particular front is not the only ideological responsibility of the SACP. We need to continue our all-round ideological work, and particularly anti-capitalist agitation. We are the only Alliance component with a theoretical journal (‘The African Communist’) that we have produced regularly over the past 23 years, since the democratic breakthrough of 1994, not forgetting the AC’s consistent publication since 1959. This is something we should not take lightly. We also produce Umsebenzi and its weekly online version, and we need to continue with this. We also need to explore the new technologies to take this work forward. Let us harness our many activists, not least those from the YCLSA, active on social media to deepen our ideological work and the battle of ideas.

Let us also use this year, the centenary of the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia to intensify our work in promoting and debating the meaning and relevance of socialism in the 21st century.

Socialism in the 21st century

In the late-1980s and early-1990s the SACP played a relatively important international role in keeping the red flag of socialism flying. It was an internationalist responsibility that the SACP at the time well understood. With the Soviet bloc of countries rapidly unravelling, and with once mass-based communist parties in countries like Italy and France losing momentum, and with the historic communist party and trade union left in much of Latin America still reeling from decades of imperialist and military junta oppression, the ANC-led breakthrough in South Africa was one of the few radical popular developments of the time.

At the time, the SACP appreciated that this imposed an internationalist duty on the SACP to, as it were, keep the red flag (and our very name as a COMMUNIST party) flying. This meant neither being demoralised nor being in denial about the reasons for the major set-back that the collapse of the Soviet Union represented. As a Party that had from its outset been inspired by the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, and that had been closely associated with the Soviet legacy for many decades, we had a particular responsibility both to our own broader movement and to left forces internationally.

In the early 1990s two important interventions were made from the side of the SACP. Our General Secretary at the time, Cde Joe Slovo, published "Has Socialism Failed?" in 1990, and in 1995 the SACP at its Congress formally adopted a new strategic approach to the struggle for socialism – encapsulated in the slogan "Socialism is the Future – Build it Now!" This slogan, interestingly, has since been taken up in several Latin American countries.

The thrust of Slovo's intervention was that it was not socialism that had failed, but rather a socialist project, in the face of unremitting imperialist aggression, that suffered from a deficit of democracy. He argued that capitalism can survive with or without formal democracy, relying on the threatening whip of unemployment and the bait of consumerism to drive people into alienated and exploited work. However, in the Soviet Union an extensive social wage but without vibrant democracy, including democracy in the work-place itself, resulted in social stagnation and mass alienation. Slovo's conclusion was that without a vibrant popular and working class democracy, socialism could not thrive.

In further SACP discussions, and particularly in the light of immediate challenges the Party was facing in the post-1994 period, Slovo's critique of 20th-century "existing socialism" was taken forward. A strong "economistic" tendency in the Soviet system was identified, involving a forced march into industrialisation, and an over-emphasis on developing and "modernising" the forces of production to the detriment of thoroughly democratising the relations of production. This resulted in further problems, the harsh treatment of other popular classes, notably the peasantry, and the attempt to "catch-up" with the West at any cost, with a neglect of the devastation to the environment.

Socialism in the 21st century will need to place a premium on the socialisation of work itself, while ensuring food security for its people, on sustainable livelihoods, sustainable households and communities, and the sustainable use of natural resources.

The SACP's 9th Congress (1995) and 10th Congress (1998) built upon and took further Slovo's perspectives on socialism. In particular, these Congresses decisively broke with the "stage-ist" conception of the relationship between a radical National Democratic Revolution and the construction of Socialism. This break with "stage-ism" was particularly important at a time when the Mbeki-period "1996 class project", sought to strategically re-define the NDR as essentially about "completing" the capitalist revolution in South Africa, which meant "de-racialising" capitalist ownership and control – but not increasingly abolishing capitalist ownership. The "1996 class project", used "stage-ism" to argue that, yes, there was no problem with socialism (and therefore with the SACP), but socialism and the SACP belonged to a distant future.



While continuing to assert that in South African conditions a radical NDR is the most direct “route” to socialism, with the slogan “Socialism is the Future – Build it Now!”, the Party committed to injecting a socialist-orientation into present-day struggle. The argument was that defending, advancing and deepening the NDR requires building capacity for socialism (including, therefore, a class conscious working class), momentum towards socialism (through pursuing anti-capitalist struggles in the midst of the NDR), and even building elements of socialism in the present. Among the elements of socialism to be built in the midst of the NDR, are:

- The increasing de-commodification of basic needs – health-care, education, housing, the environment, culture and information, and work itself. In other words, taking basic needs out of the sphere of the market.
- Transforming the market – the decommodification of key areas of our society does not mean abolishing the market altogether, but rather the rolling back of its empire. To transform markets means intervening with collective social power to challenge and transform the capitalist dominated market-place using active labour market interventions; state procurement leverage; regulatory controls; and effective consumer negotiating forums.
- Socialising the ownership function – by building a strong, democratic public sector; fostering an extensive co-operative and social-solidarity economy sector; ensuring much more effective strategic worker control over social capital (like pension and provident funds).
- Socialising the management function – in the public sector by struggling against bureaucratic aloofness and ensuring greater levels of public participatory engagement; and, in the private sector, ensuring that the management function is not one-sidedly dominated by profit-maximising objectives – by using effective work-place forums, safety committees, etc.
- Democratic planning – both at the central level and in devolved locations where appropriate.

None of these measures in themselves, or in isolation, amount to socialism. All of them are open to being co-opted into the capitalist system. This is why on our terrain of revolutionary-reforms, in the context of contesting all sites of power, the question of momentum and transformative coordination are critical. We must seek constantly to build working class and popular confidence and power. We must seek constantly to advance transformational interventions that place our principal strategic opponent, private monopoly capital, off-balance. In short, we must build working class and popular hegemony in all sites of power.

This requires both a vanguard party of socialism and a broad national democratic movement. Which is why we say:

Defend, Advance, Deepen the National Democratic Revolution: The vanguard role of the SACP!!

