

The Thinker

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A PAN - AFRICAN QUARTERLY FOR THOUGHT LEADERS

ANVER SALOOJEE ON THE ANC, THE FORM OF
DEMOCRACY & THE DEVELOPMENTAL STATE:
**SOME PROPOSITIONS
FOR CONSIDERATION**



FRANCIS A KORNEGAY ON POST-OBAMA CRISIS IN BLACK:
**THE UNCERTAIN FUTURE OF
AMERICAN DEMOCRACY**



SOUTH AFRICA R29.90



Michael Prior **Mongane Wally Serote** Ademola Araoye **Marthe Muller**
Declan Kearney **Eric Blanco Niyitunga** Anton M Pillay **Gerson Uaripi Tjhenuna**
Olufemi Táiwò Tshepiso Mphehlo Charter Modise **David Makhura**
Clyde N S Ramalaine **Mandisi Nkomo Govan Pahad**

SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



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On the Cover:

The ANC won the elections in 1994. Can it win in 2019?

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Walk On! You'll never walk alone!

This is the anthem of the Liverpool Football Club. With Liverpool scarves held above the head, it is sung with gusto and passion in the cauldron of Anfield stadium. To hear the voices of thousands singing in union is deeply moving and inspiring. That song should also be our message to our Palestinian sisters and brothers who are engaging in a life and death struggle for national liberation, freedom and democracy.

At the beginning of this year the Israeli apartheid regime approved the building of almost 3000 illegal units in occupied West Bank. Furthermore, the reactionary Israeli regime has given permission for 153 additional settler homes in East Jerusalem, the proposed capital of an independent Palestinian State.

This outrageous theft of Palestinian land is an affront to humanity and a violation of international law and UN resolutions. It is a gross violation of UN Security Council resolution of December 2016, which unanimously condemned Israeli expansionism in occupied territories.

In this context the visit by a DA delegation, led by its leader Mmusi Maimane, to apartheid Israel in January 2017 was shameful and contrary to its professed defense of human rights, freedom and democracy. To add insult to injury the delegation included Alan Fischer, a die-hard supporter of apartheid Israel. Those who support the DA across race, class, gender and religious divides should reconsider voting for a party that is devoid of international scruples.

Progressive forces in South Africa must intensify the Boycott Divestments

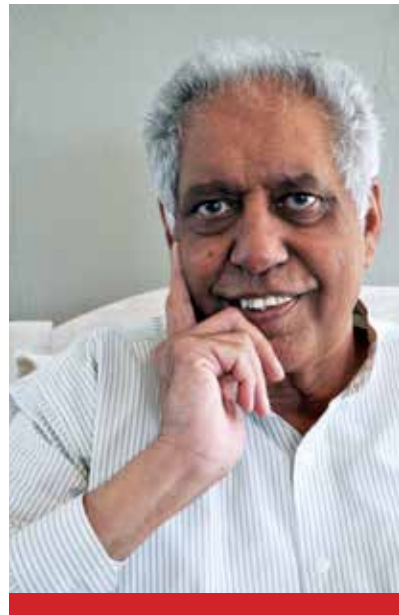
and Sanctions (BDS) campaign in our country, region and continent. It is defeatist to claim that a two-state solution is no longer viable. This plays into the hands of conservative and reactionary forces in our country and the world.

In this issue we publish a factual and well documented article by Anton M Pillay. He points out that since 1982 the US vetoed 32 Security Council resolutions critical of Israel. In addition the US gives Israel \$US 10.2 million in military aid per day. Furthermore

Israel receives about \$3 billion in direct foreign assistance each year, which is roughly one-fifth of America's entire foreign aid budget.

“Now is the time for progressive forces to walk through the rain, the wind and the storm in support of the just cause and struggle of the Palestinians. A Luta continua! The struggle continues!”

In per capita terms, the United States gives each Israeli a direct subsidy worth about \$500 per year even though Israel comprises just 0.001 percent of the world's population and already has one of the world's higher per capita incomes on par with Spain or South Korea. Indeed, Israel's GNP is higher than the



combined GNP of Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, the West Bank and Gaza. With a per capita income of about \$14,000, Israel ranks as the sixteen wealthiest country in the world; Israelis enjoy a higher per capita income than Saudi Arabia and are only slightly less well-off than most Western European countries.

The Palestinian resistance movement is locked in a titanic struggle against both apartheid Israel and its main bulwark the US administration. In this scenario the international BDS movement should do all it can to strengthen and consolidate the BDS and other pro-Palestinian forces in the belly of the beast – the US. Apartheid Israel cannot survive without US support.

A verse of the song *You'll never walk alone* says:

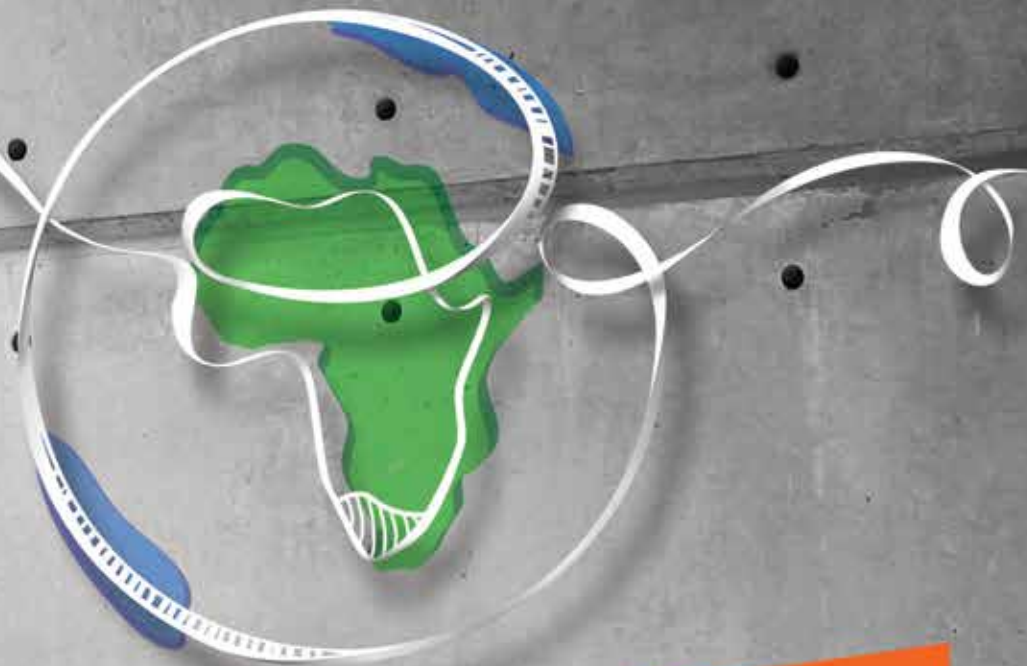
Walk on, through the wind
Walk on, through the rain
Though your dreams be tossed and blown
Walk on, walk on, with hope in your heart
And you'll never walk alone
You'll never walk alone...
Never walk alone...

Now is the time for progressive forces to walk through the rain, the wind and the storm in support of the just cause and struggle of the Palestinians. A Luta continua! The struggle continues! ■

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TWO FUNDAMENTAL DRIVERS OF RETIREMENT

Over the long term, the two fundamental drivers of retirement savings behaviour are our ability to save and our willingness to save. While the first factor depends on whether we earn an income that could plausibly exceed our essential household expenses, the second depends primarily on whether those of us with sufficient income are able to incorporate a certain level of discipline into our household expenditure plans.

In South Africa, the reality is that there are a large number of people who do not have a great ability to save. The 17 million social grants beneficiaries, for example, often do not have alternative sources of income which can be used to build up any significant financial wealth over time. Furthermore, within the labour force the unemployment rate is above 26%, which suggests that a huge proportion of our working age population may be prevented from incorporating a constructive savings regime into their lives.

That being said, the South African savings problem runs deeper than what can be explained by the problems of unemployment and poverty. In fact, even within the average middle to upper income households, there is often either an unwillingness to save or a failure to recognise that we need to save more for a sustainable retirement.

In this regard, a common mistake people make during their careers is to cash in their retirement savings when changing jobs. In this scenario, we believe that a far more sustainable and tax efficient way to save for retirement is to utilise a preservation fund, which is the ideal vehicle to safeguard the assets that have been accumulated in the form of retirement savings that are associated with tax relief.

A low savings rate and a lack of preservation means that only a fraction of South Africans begin retirement with sufficient capital that will comfortably last the rest of their lives. In fact, data from Association for Savings and Investment SA (Asisa) shows that the average pensioner receiving an income from a living annuity is drawing down approximately 6.4% of their retirement savings per year, leaving little more than 10 years before their capital is likely to begin depleting rapidly. This is unsustainable, and requires more vigilance in our pre- and post-retirement savings plans. At Oasis, this fact remains central to our advisory service, where we aim to ensure that our clients receive the best possible advice for a secure and comfortable retirement period.

A Word on Financial Matters

During March, Oasis will launch a new and improved annuity calculator on our website. This application is a very useful tool for understanding the fundamental challenges which we all face when considering retirement. In practice, when you retire you need to draw an income from existing wealth, and to sustain a certain standard of living, this income needs to grow by the rate of inflation for the duration of your life. But how much should you draw from your savings each year? This seems like a simple enough question, however there are three unknown variables which will be crucial to ensuring that your drawdown rate is sustainable and does not deplete your wealth completely during retirement. Firstly, **how long will you live after retiring?** Secondly, **what will inflation be during the rest of your life?** And finally, **what will the return on your savings be?**

The Oasis Annuity Calculator captures these uncertainties by incorporating thousands of different scenarios into a comprehensive retirement model. It then guides you in the right direction based on a probability assessment of your life expectancy, investment returns and inflation. Generally, we want to be at least 98% sure that your initial drawdown rate is sustainable, and that you will have sufficient money during retirement. The primary benefit of the calculator is that it enables users to test a certain drawdown rate against their own demographic and investment characteristics, nudging them in the right direction to ensure a sustainable, happy retirement. We encourage our readers to visit our website or call Oasis on 0860 100 786 to find out how this powerful tool can benefit you.

In the News

On 1 March 2017, Oasis welcomed 25 new students to its Bursary Programme; bringing the total number of students who benefit from the organisation's educational empowerment initiatives to 56. These students represent the largest group of learners admitted by the Programme which together with Oasis projects and partnerships with tertiary institutions increases Oasis investment into education from R6.9 Million to R21 Million. The Programme, now in its fourth year, continues to recognise young learners with strong academic prowess, who have a progressive outlook towards their education and are using it to further the growth and development of South Africa.

Oasis Bursary recipients were inducted to the Programme at a special event where government and academic leaders, the community, their parents and the Oasis team were present. This gathering was symbolic in that it encapsulated the sectors of society which need to work in unison to address the systemic pressures faced by students and the educational landscape today. The creation of a new social compact amongst the role players involved in advancing education is a priority for Oasis, and as a business we will continue to champion solutions that allow for access to quality education and cultivates an appreciation and drive towards lifelong learning.



Oasis 2017 Bursary Students, pictured with Oasis Executives, Members of the Ebrahim Family, UCT Executives & Academic Staff

Applications for the 2018 intake of students to the Oasis Bursary Programme have opened, along with similar programmes for Chartered Accountants and final year students who are keen to be considered for Graduate Training, are requested to contact our recruitment team via email: recruitment@oasiscrest.com.

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All contributing analysts write in their personal capacity

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Declan Kearney was elected as a Member of Legislative Assembly for South Antrim in May 2016. Declan has been active in republican politics since 1980, and is a former Sinn Féin County Antrim organiser. He has been a key member of Sinn Féin's national leadership since 2003, and has previously served as the Party's northern Chairperson and Deputy General Secretary. Currently he is the Sinn Féin National Chairperson and has been central to the Party's all-Ireland development, and its negotiations and reconciliation strategies.

Francis A Kornegay, Jr is the lead co-editor of the first major edited volume on BRICS, *Laying the BRICS of a New Global Order: From Yekaterinburg 2009 to eThekwinini 2013*. Kornegay led the first South African think tank delegation to a BRICS summit in Beijing in 2011. He is a permanent resident in South Africa and a senior

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Marthe Muller spent 13 years exposed to the wisdom of the collective voices of South African women between 2003 and 2016, most recently as COO of South African Women in Dialogue, (SAWID). She holds an Honours degree in Philosophy (Cum Laude) from the University of Stellenbosch and she completed all

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Dr Mongane Wally Serote is a South African poet and writer. In 1973 he won the Ingrid Jonker Poetry prize. As a Fulbright Scholar, he obtained a Fine Arts Degree at Columbia University in 1979. In 1993, he won the "Noma" Award for publishing in Africa. He served as Chair of the Parliamentary Select Committee for Arts and Culture and was formerly the CEO of Freedom Park, a national heritage site. His written works include several acclaimed novels, volumes of poetry and a collection of essays. In August 2012, he was awarded the prestigious Golden Wreath Award.

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RETHINK. REINVENT.



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© Shutterstock.com **THE ANC, THE FORM OF DEMOCRACY & THE DEVELOPMENTAL STATE**

Some Propositions for Consideration

What is most readily apparent is the yawning gap between the left rhetoric of the ANC and the reality of a movement increasingly disconnected from its mass base.

By Anver Saloojee

In the past few years the democratic deficit has increased in countries around the world and the electorate in many countries are turning away from the dominant established political parties and are looking to alternative avenues to express their political discontent. South Africa has not been immune to this trend. The democratic deficit in South Africa has been made worse by the inability of the dominant political party, the ANC, to deal

with issues of corruption, nepotism, tenderpreneurship, state and party capture, malaise and dysfunction. Thus, democracy in post-apartheid South Africa, while not under threat, is facing serious and severe stresses and strains. These deep rips at the very fabric of South African democracy began in December 2007 with the triumphalism of the anti-Mbeki forces at the ANC Polokwane conference and the subsequent forced removal

of President Mbeki as President of the Republic of South Africa.

The threats to democracy in South Africa can now be seen at the level of the economy, society, state-party relations, state-society relations, party-constituency relations, disregard for the Constitution of the country, the deterioration of the gravitas of Parliament, the relative capture of party and state by private interests and an ANC that is increasingly losing its

moral high ground and its credibility among all sectors and strata of South Africans.

This is tantamount to an economic crisis, a social crisis, a crisis of legitimacy, authority, morality and hegemony which is amply demonstrated in the increase in popular protests around the country, the withdrawal of the consent of large portions of the black urban voters – including the middle strata – and of course the results of the 2016 local government elections.

These crises can be directly traced first to the 2008 great economic crisis of hyper neo-liberal globalisation that wreaked havoc on the domestic economy; and second to the failures of the post-Polokwane ANC as the governing party, whose leftist rhetoric is incredibly far removed from the reality of the ANC as a party bereft of progressive leadership capable of challenging political and bureaucratic elites who use both the party and state resources for private gain.

In the current conjuncture, space has been opened to engage in a genuine dialogue about what, at a minimum, needs to be done in at least the following three domains:

- Rethink the nature of democracy and formal political representation in South Africa and reform electoral politics in the three spheres of governance;
- Reclaim, reframe and reinvigorate the ANC as a progressive political force in South Africa, the continent and the world;
- Rethink the uncritical commitment to the role of the developmental state.

In the last ten years, there have been significant shifts in the global and national socio-political and economic landscape. Hyper neoliberal globalisation, and contextual hyper neoliberal globalisation (the national manifestations of neoliberal globalisation) have had profound implications for people and their quality of life. In short, the current conjuncture is marked by many factors including but not limited to (i) the political after effects of the 2007-12 global financial crisis including the rise of both progressive and regressive forms of populism; (ii) the socio-political and

military crisis in the Middle East which has led to the displacement of millions of people to the surrounding regions and to Europe; (iii) growing inequality globally, regionally and nationally; (iv) the increased concentration of wealth in the hands of a few; (v) the rise of authoritarian populism in various parts of Europe; (vi) electoral victories for right wing populist parties; (vii) the political and electoral expressions of conservatism and xenophobia – Brexit, the victory of Donald Trump; Le Pen etc.; (viii) the emergence of regressive forms of both political and economic nationalism and the growing calls for protectionism; (ix) the emergence of the counter hegemonic bloc of a

“Common and everyday are internecine warfare within the ANC and between the ANC and members of the Tripartite Alliance; an ANC unwilling or unable to hold accountable its senior leadership and others who have brought the movement into disrepute.”

different kind (the protests against the 1%; Black Lives Matter; protests by Indigenous communities; the anti-G20 protests; the resurgence of political environmentalism; the anti-Trump protests).

There are many profound changes taking place in the world today – changes in trade, technology, communications, migration flows, globalised patterns of production and consumption, a global division of labour, globalised movements of capital flows, and changes within countries of the global South as well as the global North. Many of these changes are linked to the contemporary phase of globalisation.

Hyper neoliberal globalisation, however, has generated successive crises since the 1980s and in 2008 it generated a fiscal crisis that began in the heart of the global North and rapidly spread around the world resulting in the Great Recession. Hyper neoliberal globalisation as marketisation, privatisation and deregulation was unable to resolve the contradictions of the Keynesian welfare state and instead it propelled the world into the deepest recession since the 1930s Great Depression.

Hyper neoliberal globalisation is about intensified worldwide social relations of production and consumption, and increased interconnectedness between nations, societies and even communities where economic and socio-political events in one region of the world can have huge and often unintended devastating effects on people in other parts of the world. For example, the global economic crisis which began in the heart of capitalism, the USA, in 2008 began as a national financial crisis associated with “toxic” financial assets (primarily in the banking sector where subprime lending markets were totally unregulated) and very quickly morphed into a global economic crisis that reached into every corner of the world. For the very first time globalisation in its hyper neoliberal form was equated with the global economic and fiscal crisis.

Almost a decade later, the political effects of the Great Recession are still being felt.

The era of hyper neoliberal globalisation is being undercut by its own record of spotty somewhat weak economic growth and since the crisis we have witnessed a stock market recovery but no global growth recovery. In fact growth in the global north has been anaemic, and the immediate future is for continued “secular stagnation”. This is likely the future for South Africa as well. Secular stagnation, slow growth and the financial instability associated with it have serious socio-political and economic consequences – particularly for the middle classes (around the world) whose standards of living are stagnant or declining and this in turn makes them politically volatile. So,

dealing with and offsetting secular stagnation is vital to socio-political stability.

In his most recent budget speech the South African Minister of Finance argued that:

1. Income growth remains a challenge and there are serious questions related to the middle class – the bottom 20% having benefited from social grants and better access to services while the top 20% had benefited from the rising demand for skills and pay increases while the standards of living of the middle class are being eroded.
2. Wealth is concentrated in the hands of a few – 95% of the wealth is in the hands of 10% of the population;
3. Unemployment is high – 35% of the labour force was unemployed or has given up hope on finding work.
4. Poverty and unemployment are most prevalent in townships, speaking volumes about the continued racialisation of poverty in South Africa.
5. And economic growth has been very slow – 1% a year in real per capita terms over the past 25 years – below that of the BRICS countries, Turkey, Indonesia and other middle income countries.

It is no surprise therefore that the challenges of poverty, unemployment, underemployment, inequality and wealth concentration, all exacerbated by hyper neoliberal globalisation, have created significant democratic deficits in localised political environments where the electorate are disenchanted with the politics of the dominant parties and are turning to alternative forms of political engagement. Thus we see the rise of populism (both regressive and progressive), the turn to politicians who express the discontent and speak directly to the issues affecting the dispossessed, and we see the rise of protest politics.

In South Africa this has found expression in the 2016 local government elections where many in the traditional support base of the ANC stayed away from voting for the ANC or in some cases voted for opposition parties.

The South African economy, which has lost swaths of its manufacturing

sector and is still heavily dependent on extractive industries, has yet to recover from the effects of the global collapse in commodity prices. There has been rising inflation and interest rates; significantly slowed economic growth; the growth of poverty, unemployment, underemployment, and inequality. Add to this the political effects of the crisis which include a huge growth in popular protests around the country; periodic spikes in xenophobia; a fraying and tearing of the fabric of social cohesion.

Interneccine warfare is common and everyday within the ANC and between the ANC and members of the Tripartite Alliance; an ANC unwilling or unable to hold accountable its senior leadership and others who have brought the movement into disrepute. The post-Polokwane ANC government has become increasingly fractious; there is an open willingness of those in senior positions in government and the bureaucracy to engage in corruption, nepotism; abuse of the resources of the state resources for private gain; to accumulate state resources in private hands; and to openly abrogate elements of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. And there is a widespread belief that the state and the party have been captured by the political and economic elites of South Africa.

The most effective set of policy measures to eliminate poverty have to do with a coherent sustainable employment strategy related to good governance, accountability, working in the public good, creating an enabling investment climate, building investor confidence in the state and the party in power, working with the opposition (particularly where they control a metro or a province). The ANC as the ruling party and the state both have a responsibility to create an environment in which trust and good governance are complemented by a deep and concerted effort to root out and deal with corruption, tenderpreneurship, state and party capture. Much can be accomplished by the setting of annual realistic and achievable goals in all Departments in all three spheres of government.

Rethinking the Party, Electoral Politics and Democracy in South Africa

The Marikana massacre, and the way in which service delivery protests are dealt with point to a potential rupture of state-society relations. This is compounded by other challenges – lack of service delivery to the poorest in many areas, the rise of “tenderpreneurship”, the interpenetration of economic and political elites, corruption including

The Table points to the growth in popular protests in South Africa since 2004:

Community based protests in South Africa 2004-05 to 2012-13			
Year	Peaceful	Unrest	Total
2004/05	7,382	622	8,004
2005/06	9,809	954	10,763
2006/07	8,703	743	9,446
2007/08	6,431	705	7,136
2008/09	6,125	718	6,843
2009/10	7,897	1,008	8,905
2010/11	11,681	973	12,654
2011/12	9,942	1,091	11,033
April 2012 to March 2013	10,517	1,882	12,399
April 2013-March 2014	11,668	1,907	13,575

(Duncan & Royeppen, 2013, and Makinana, 2014)

that of bureaucratic and political elites by big capital.

Add to this the ruling by the Constitutional Court that the President failed in his duty to uphold the Constitution when he refused to abide by an order of the Public Protector to repay a portion of public funds used to upgrade his private residence. The ruling found that the President had “substantial disregard” for the constitutional power of the Public Protector. And the Chief Justice, Mogoeng Mogoeng, said “The president is the head of state, his is the calling to the highest office in the land, he is the first citizen of this country....The nation pins its hopes on him to steer the country in the right direction...In failing to comply with the remedial action, the president thus failed to uphold, comply and respect the constitution. The president may have been acting on wrong legal advice, in good faith. But the illegality still stands.” The ruling also found that parliament had failed in its obligations by not holding Zuma to account – a parliament dominated by the ruling party, the ANC.

The protests outside parliament, #fees must fall, and daily public protests across the country all suggest that trust in electoral politics and in political parties including the ANC, and in the institutions of governance and administration is fragile and there is clearly an absence of the strong state-society relations which are essential to building national cohesion. It is important to understand the nature of political protests in South Africa and to not dismiss them as the work of a third force.

In a previous article I have argued these protests are about more than what Professor Alexander calls a “rebellion of the poor” (Alexander, 2010). The protests are not simply a rebellion by the poor, or about service delivery, “... they are important expressions of politics in a democracy, they are about agency, empowerment and active substantive citizenship by those who are disenchanted with formal electoral politics and the limits of accountability in electoral politics. They are fundamentally about the exercise of democratic citizenship and

a clear rejection of passive citizenship.” (Saloojee, 2016)

A 2014 report on service delivery noted that the top five grievances by protestors were about service delivery in general: housing, water and sanitation, political representation and electricity. The researchers (who based their research on over 250 interviews and drew data from four media sources, covering more than 2,000 protests since 2004), found: (i) no evidence of a third force directed at destabilising the government orchestrating service delivery protests; and (ii) little correlation between the upcoming 2014 elections and the

“Trust in electoral politics and in political parties including the ANC, and in the institutions of governance and administration is fragile; and there is clearly an absence of the strong state-society relations which are essential to building national cohesion.”

number of protests (Grant, 2014). The primary reasons for the protests centre on unaccountable and corrupt local government, issues of community safety, lack of affordable housing, sanitation, water supply and electricity. In a world of intersecting inequities, the way in which the state through service delivery seeks to distribute valued goods and services, should raise serious questions not only about efficiency and effectiveness but also about alternate service delivery models.

Protestors in South Africa clearly see protests as an important form of political engagement and as a legitimate alternative to electoral politics, which is viewed as a formal, albeit non substantial form of political

participation that occurs every few years. Protests are an expression of democratic rights in action; they are about agency, empowerment and social transformation. Protestors identify the spaces where they challenge the status quo and the prevailing order. Protests are simultaneously about human agency and constitute a political response to exclusion and marginalisation and the lack of accountability of the elected officials. However, it is exactly at the point when the disadvantaged and marginalised in society demand equality, representation, access and power sharing, that there is a backlash in the form of repression of community protests.

The ANC has now governed South Africa for twenty-three years and the issue of national cohesion in the face of ongoing inequality, poverty and unemployment, challenges to service delivery to improve the socio-economic conditions of the indigent and the poor is still being debated. The protestors have developed a measure of cohesion around agency and their opposition to the current status quo. It is interesting then, to note how the post-apartheid developmental state argues it is the central factor in national cohesion, while there exists an active, engaged citizenry, defining and claiming political spaces for protests and strikes.

In this context, the state and the party would do well to heed the voices of the people and improve their material conditions of life by engaging the state in the monumental task of improving service delivery to those in need in the townships and rural areas of South Africa. All the talk of a democratic developmental state and a National Democratic Revolution will be irrelevant without a renewed Social Compact between the ANC and the people of South Africa.

Reclaiming and reframing the ANC as a progressive political force

What is most readily apparent is the yawning gap between the left rhetoric of the ANC and the reality of a movement increasingly disconnected from its mass base. The ANC is facing crises at multiple levels – crises of

legitimacy, authority and morality, the issues (amongst others) of party and state capture (by capital and fractions of capital), arrogance of power, power and the proximity to capital, the rise of a parasitic/comprador/bureaucratic bourgeoisie, and the social distance of the ANC from its mass base. In addition, the NEC needs to hold the “big 6” and the NWC accountable and not be passive bystanders when the movement is being brought into disrepute.

It is important to distinguish between an ANC that contests elections and ANC that governs as this is about democracy and the separation of powers in the Constitution of South Africa. All political parties (the ANC included) contest the election in order to secure a majority of seats in parliament, secure a mandate from the electorate and govern legitimately. Once in power the ruling party exercises state power through control of government. The exercise of political power in turn, requires being accountable to both the electorate and the party. And the party in power has to adhere to the Constitution. Upon assuming political power the ruling party has to judiciously exercise that power derived from the Constitution in the name of all the citizenry. And in a one party dominant system like South Africa has experienced for the past two decades, the ruling party has to, through the committee structures, hold itself and the executive branch accountable. In short in the case of South Africa the ANC has to be both the governing party and the party that holds the executive accountable.

The 2001 ANC document “Through the Eye of the Needle” identified the twin evils of corruption and factionalism; careerism and opportunism:

48 Because leadership in structures of the ANC affords opportunities to assume positions of authority in government, some individuals then compete for ANC leadership positions in order to get into government. Many such members view positions in government as a source of material riches for themselves. Thus resources, prestige and authority

of government positions become the driving force in competition for leadership positions in the ANC.

49 Government positions also go hand-in-hand with the possibility to issue contracts to commercial companies. Some of these companies identify ANC members that they can promote in ANC structures and into government, so that they can get contracts by hook or by crook. This is done through media networks to discredit other leaders, or even by buying membership cards to set up branches that are ANC only in name.

50 Positions in government also mean the possibility to appoint individuals in all kinds of capacities. As such, some members make promises to friends, that once elected and ensconced in government, they would return the favour. Cliques

“It is important to understand the nature of political protests in South Africa and to not dismiss them as the work of a third force.”

and factions then emerge within the movement, around personal loyalties driven by corrupt intentions. Members become voting fodder to serve individuals' self-interest.

It is time for the ANC to undertake an open, transparent and honest look at itself to determine if the warnings of 2001 have come to pass. It is time for the ANC to reinvent itself. In this reinvention, the ANC needs to take a serious look at itself as a political party. In particular, the ANC needs to:

- Recognise that it is a political party like other political parties where there will be cliques, factions, opportunists, political careerists, rent seekers and those seeking proximity to both political and state power in order to advance their own self-interest.
- Understand that there is a huge gap between its progressive rhetoric and the reality of corruption,

tenderpreneurship, nepotism etc. that is a part of its current reality.

- Undertake an analysis of the contradiction that has emerged as a result of policies pursued over the past two decades. Conscious public policy has resulted in the creation of a black middle class and an emerging black bourgeoisie and both classes/strata are dependent on their proximity to the state and the party. The unresolved contradiction (one that plagues every social democratic society where the social relation of production are fundamentally capitalist relations of production), is to what extent, if any, the ANC is captured by the middle strata and the emerging black bourgeoisie that its policies have promoted? And further have the policies of the ANC, particularly in the last decade, created a parasitic bureaucratic and political elite that will thwart the National Democratic Revolution? These are hard questions to ask and harder questions to answer.
- Realise that as a political party there will be significant contestations for leadership positions in the party – that is a hallmark of all political parties. It is a myth that ANC leaders constrain and restrain themselves waiting for branches to nominate them. The notion that leaders must be nominated and should not declare their candidacy should be completely shed. The ANC is like any other party and people who feel they want to contest positions, including for the positions of President and Deputy President, should be free to do so; and it is healthier for the party if they openly declare their intentions.
- Provide for a lead up period where the leaders (particularly for President and Deputy President) have public debates with each other. Then the members to the party convention can vote for the delegates of choice.
- Require all leaders seeking positions to engage in open debate about the movement and why they are fit to lead the ANC;
- Declare slates as unacceptable and divisive, and take action against those who promote them; and argue instead that individuals

seeking leadership positions should be held to high standards and be judged on their own merits;

- Ensure that factionalism is avoided;
- Declare a formal policy of “zero tolerance of corruption” for both appointed and elected public officials that is enforceable, monitored and implemented. A “lifestyle audit” is only one step in the direction of open transparent accountability.
- Ensure all members and leaders of the ANC are held to the highest standard of morality and those who bring the ANC into disrepute need to be held accountable for their behaviour.
- Address the policy of “deployment” to determine if it leads to optimal deployment of personnel in state and party structures or whether the reality of deployment actually creates a cadre of individuals beholden to the leadership which deploys them.
- Go back to the core principles articulated in the “Eye of the Needle”.
- Be fair and consistent when dealing with violations of the ANC code of conduct. Justice should be meted out regardless of rank or position, and justice must be seen to be done without fear or favour.
- Develop a social compact with the people of South Africa.

At a minimum, this is what is required for the ANC to emerge from under the multiple crises affecting and afflicting the organisation.

Rethink the nature of democracy and formal political representation in South Africa and reform electoral politics in the three spheres of governance

Are the people of South Africa well served by the current form of electoral politics in South Africa? The electorate is both mature and highly sophisticated and should be consulted on whether the current form of constitutional democracy is working. A multiparty, multi constituency committee should be established to start a national dialogue on the following issues:

1. Does the system of proportional representation currently in existence

make Parliamentarians accountable to the people or does it breed subservience to the party leadership that draws up the lists?

2. The system of proportional representation does lead to greater gender representation (because of the “zippered lists”) and it does reflect in parliament greater representation of smaller parties than the “first past the post” system, where parties can have a large proportion of the overall votes but still gain few – or even no – seats. But on the other hand is it inherently unstable as it has a greater tendency to create coalition governments?
3. Is there a better system where constituents can hold individual members of Parliament accountable?

“Protests are simultaneously about human agency and constitute a political response to exclusion and marginalisation and the lack of accountability of the elected officials.”

4. There should be a separate election for the President of the country.
5. The elections for Premiers as well as mayors of the metros should also be separate.

At the same time serious attention should be given to the call by Oscar van Heerden for out-of-the-box thinking (*The Thinker*, Quarter 4, 2016):

For example, the top six officials of the ANC could be elected by the entire membership of the ANC throughout the country before an elective conference; that way the focus of conference would not be on leadership elections but on substantive policy, where members could concentrate on discussing the serious social and economic matters plaguing the country. Another possibility could be that the ANC have a reduced National

Executive Committee, returning to the 40 members directly elected and perhaps they too can be elected by the entire ANC membership. This would go a long way towards ensuring efficiency and cogent discussions at the various conferences. Also, there must be a quota on how many of the NEC members can be in the Executive branch of government because currently, when you want to express a serious point which could be contrary to that of the President of the organisation, you would be reluctant to express it fully without fear or favour because he or she may also be your boss in government. And as much as comrades say that this will not negatively impact on you as an NEC member it does demand maturity and strength of personality in the incumbent.

This is not about the ANC attempting to bolster its vote count ahead of the 2019 national elections after its less than favourable showing in the last local government elections. This is about democracy and the accountability of elected officials and the accountability of political parties to the electorate. It is about the people of South Africa being fully engaged in determining the kind of political system they believe best meets their needs in the third decade of democracy.

Some of the recommendations above would require changes to the Constitution of South Africa. And some would require changes to the Constitutions and by-laws as well as of the culture of all political parties in South Africa. However, as South Africa enters the third decade of democracy these are important issues to consider – particularly in a country where voter distemper is increasing and people are turning to alternate forms of non-formal political participation to express their dissatisfaction.

Rethinking the uncritical commitment to the role of the developmental state

In 2009 the ANC election manifesto promised “the developmental state will play a central and strategic role in the economy. We will ensure a more effective government”. However post-Polokwane South Africa’s

nascent developmental state has failed the people on three counts – reshaping the economy, running an effective corruption free government and improving service delivery. The 2008 global financial collapse notwithstanding, the gains made by the poor and the marginalised in the first 14 years of democracy have slowed in the last 9 years and inequality has actually increased.

The time has come to take a long hard look at the developmental state which is fundamentally a capitalist state. The primary difference between developmental states and liberal and neo-liberal states is the extent to which they concentrate power in a bureaucracy, intervene in the market, seek to regulate/guide the market and the active support they provide to capital as the state pursues its economic growth and development objectives almost to the exclusion of other objectives. Like all capitalist states the developmental state, as a capitalist state, has a degree of autonomy from the dominant class but in the last instance serves the interests of the dominant class.

Saloojee and Pahad have argued elsewhere that the major components of the developmental state include:

1. A small, coherent, capable highly trained bureaucratic elite located in a pilot Ministry that is insulated from outside pressure;
2. Movement, and circulation between the political, bureaucratic and economic elites;
3. Weak civil society;
4. An ideological impetus to overcome late and uneven development;
5. Clear articulation of economic objectives;
6. Political structures that enable the insulated bureaucrats to pursue clearly articulated national development objectives;
7. Political mobilisation of nationalism towards realising the objectives (the use of repression if necessary);
8. Intervention in the market, but not controlling it and using it to promote economic transformation; and
9. The use of state resources

to (i) build up the economic infrastructure of society, and raise the levels of education and training so as to provide the country with a significant competitive advantage; (ii) promote social cohesion (and if necessary as in the case of Korea, use repression to deal with labour and other forms of unrest); (iii) promote macro-economic stability as a precondition for growth; and (iv) use state resources to create competitive advantages for certain target certain industries. This close relationship between state/bureaucratic elites and fractions of capital is initially a source of strength of the developmental state but eventually becomes a source of contradiction in the social formation;

“All the talk of a democratic developmental state and a National Democratic Revolution will be irrelevant without a renewed Social Compact between the ANC and the people of South Africa.”

10. An ability to coexist with a variety of political forms of governance – from authoritarian to democratic.

They identify a number of issues and challenges with respect to the developmental state which need to be recognised – namely:

- The interpenetration of the senior levels of the bureaucracy and high political office and fractions of capital opening up huge opportunities for corruption and grand corruption to occur;
- There is significant movement and circulation between the bureaucratic and economic elites.
- The extent that the politics of development find expression in policy initiatives that privilege certain economic goals, the potential

for increased interpenetration of the bureaucratic and economic elites (along with the political elites) is greatly enhanced and in the process increases the potential for corruption of public officials. This means that the economic elite will look for ways to bind and bond the political and bureaucratic elites through, for example, complex webs of interlocking directorships, hiding shares etc., to secure advantages. This points to one of the contradictions of the developmental state – that the very strength it exhibits (an efficient, goal oriented bureaucracy interacting with the economic elite to advance a developmental agenda) is also one of its most critical weaknesses.

In South Africa the developmental state is essential to the NDR and to protecting democracy. It should be realised that precisely because of its interventionist impulses, the developmental state brings into close proximity bureaucratic and political elites with fractions of capital and at these points of intersection there are opened avenues for corruption and capture of state (and party) by fractions of capital.

The developmental state in South Africa is suffused with its own tensions and internal contradictions – advancing the interests of capital through Black Economic Empowerment; wage inequalities and increasing inequality in general; inter and intra state elite competition; political elite-bureaucratic elite competition and strife; weakening social cohesion especially with increasing labour strife; integration into a global economy that brings with it the challenges of external competition for domestic capital.

Between 1995 and 2008, successive ANC governments repeatedly sought to come to terms with some of the challenges inherent in the developmental state because of the close interface between and among elites: (i) dealing with the close relationship between elected political elites and the economically dominant group including the nascent black bourgeoisie – this relationship can take many forms (hidden shares, shares held by non-elected family members,

loans that are not disclosed, courting access to senior politicians through providing perks and through hiring their family members or through co-opting them onto Boards of companies; (ii) dealing with the revolving door of senior bureaucrats leaving the employment of the state and immediately being employed by the private sector where their access to information and their access to political power make them invaluable; (iii) dealing with political and bureaucratic abuses with respect to insider knowledge of the lucrative area of state tenders, (iv) dealing with senior political party officials whose very position in the party provides them with access to both state official (elected and appointed) and the business elites. These are the same kind of issues that faced all developmental states including Japan, South Korea, Singapore and Taiwan.

The democratic developmental state in South Africa faces all the contradictions and crises that both bureaucratic and flexible developmental states face because it is a capitalist state operating in a neoliberal global economy that has to mediate class conflict. It has to mediate the conflict between labour and capital, between fractions of capital, between domestic and international capital, between protectionists and proponents of structural adjustment; and the state needs to mediate conflict between different strands of the bureaucratic elite. At another level the state has to guard against the "circulation of elites" that can result in state institutions and state power being used to fetter private interests. Success in dealing with the contradictions generated by internal and external social forces will depend on its degree of multiple "embeddedness" and its insularity from powerful economic interests.

The achievements of the democratic developmental state in South Africa must always be measured by its capacity to promote pro-poor, people-centered, shared, sustainable (employment generating) development and growth in an environment which respects and nurtures democracy and the institutions of democracy and respects the constitution and the rule of

law. At the other end of the spectrum the party has to be vigilant about the proximity of political and bureaucratic elites to private capital which opens spaces for the corruption of party and state officials and for the capture of party and state by fractions of capital.

Conclusion

The fight to eradicate poverty, enhance sustainable employment, and create greater states of equality including gender equality, and to close the gap between the two economies is negatively impacted upon by an unresponsive untransformed ANC.

Weak state structures, poor service delivery, a morally suspect ANC, do not serve the people of South Africa well, nor do they aid in the strengthening of social cohesion in South Africa.

This article has suggested that (i) the ANC needs to be reclaimed and a new social compact with the people of South Africa has to be developed; (ii) a multi-party multi constituency committee needs to be tasked with engaging in a national dialogue about whether the current nature and form of electoral politics and parliamentary democracy in a federated system in South Africa serves the people of South Africa and (iii) the developmental state has to be understood for what it is – a capitalist state that brings elites in close proximity to each other and creates spaces where this confraternity of elites under the watchful eye of the state actually creates opportunities for corruption and capture of both party and state by private interests and fractions of capital.

These three areas are not the only ones that should be up for robust discussion and debate. Rather they should be seen as the way in which to re-engage the citizenry with both the party and the state and in the realisation of the NDP. They are the entry point to a national dialogue on a new social compact.

The people of South Africa deserve nothing less than the active unfettered pursuit of pro-poor ecologically sensitive economic growth and development which requires an accountable democratic developmental state that is carefully aligned, carefully staffed and with a developmental and service

delivery ethos capable of delivering on all elements of the NDP (and this requires a strengthened organisational capacity, enhanced strategic thinking, prioritisation, enhanced delivery and strong accountability mechanisms).

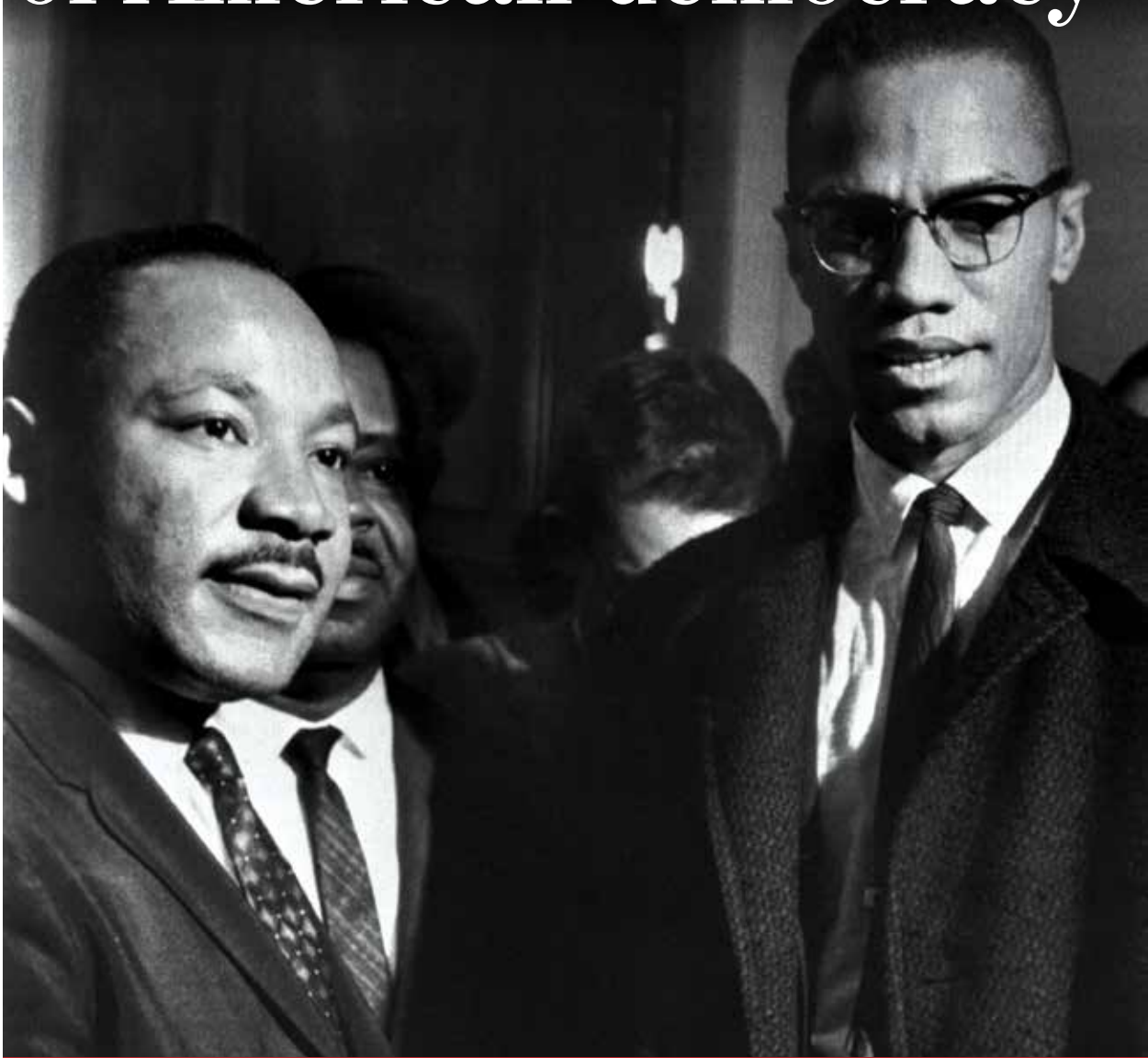
The national dialogue should lead to the emergence of a new social compact where the strategic goal of creating a National Democratic South Africa mobilises all sectors in South African society in an effort to eradicate poverty, create sustainable employment and grow the economy so that all benefit from growth and development. The call for a national dialogue by the Thabo Mbeki foundation and some others needs to be supported. The realisation of this strategic goal has to be a united effort engaging all sectors of South African society. In the lead up to the national dialogues conference in December 2017 the ANC should encourage wider civil society participation in the discussions of its policy documents as well as the strategy and tactics document. If that does not happen the social distance between the ANC and its mass base will increase and the ANC will have lost an important opportunity to engage all sectors of society in a meaningful dialogue about the party, the state, society and national democracy and its institutional character in South Africa. ■

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POST-OBAMA CRISIS IN BLACK

The Uncertain Future of American democracy



Rev. Martin Luther King and Malcolm X

Demography does not translate automatically into electoral and political destiny, certainly not in America's constitutionally rigged system.

By Francis A Kornegay, Jr

The United States of America is undergoing a major multi-dimensional conjunctural transition, one affecting the politics of its domestic and foreign relations with global implications. As such, the role and future of Black America as a pivotal nation within the African Diaspora caught up in this transition deserves critical analysis in the wake of the election of 2016.¹ This article was initially drafted in January 2016 and went unpublished. It was motivated by unease about the state of black political consciousness, focus and sense of urgency in relation to mobilising for the election year that was unfolding.

The outcome of the election more than justified unease as it ushered in Donald J Trump as the 45th president of the United States of America in what proved to be a heavily tainted election, unprecedented in US political history. It was accompanied by Republican control of both houses of the US Congress, promising, in turn, continued rightwing control of the Supreme Court.

This article focused on the state of Black America as the election approached, expressing concern that the Black Lives Matter movement, justified though it was due to the police epidemic of murdering unarmed black citizens might, nevertheless, result in distracting attention from electoral task at hand.

In the event, Trump's victory revealed even deeper fault-lines interacting with those of race, class and ideology: the electoral disadvantage of major big city, mega-metropolitan regions of multicultural concentration compared to sparsely populated, mainly rural states, small-town counties and the regions of the Old South and plains states. This disparity between the most and least populated regions of the US in the outcome of the 2016 election was underlined in Trump's Electoral College victory against Hillary Clinton even though, in the popular vote, she received nearly three million more votes

Many factors, on the margin, contributed to Clinton's loss in the Electoral College. This included unprecedented skullduggery and external intervention by the Moscow-Wikileaks alliance (that, at the time

of writing, was also trying for an ultra-right nationalist Marine Le Pen victory in France's presidential election). Though Clinton has been deservedly criticised as a flawed candidate with a very complacently flawed strategy, major responsibility must be shouldered by President Barack Obama and his team as well. They grievously neglected the Democratic Party at all levels throughout Obama's eight years in the White House, even though black voter support for Obama was of unprecedentedly nationalistic magnitude.

Yet failures in voter turnout in the Midwest so-called 'Rustbelt' states (especially Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin), especially amongst black voters constituting the most loyal core of the Democratic Party, proved decisive. Turnout in Philadelphia's

“ The ‘knife edge’ stakes of the 2016 elections had never been higher or more dangerous, given the reactionary extremism of the GOP candidate field during the primaries. ”

black wards dropped by 8 percent.² There was a 14 percent drop in Detroit along with drops in other industrial centers with large black populations like Milwaukee, Wisconsin and Flint, Michigan.³ “Taken in totality, it appears that black turnout dropped somewhere between 5 percent and 10 percent – with few exceptions.”⁴ No wonder Trump issued this racist taunt: “They didn't come out to vote for Hillary. They didn't come out. And that was a big – so thank you to the African-American community.”⁵ (italics added) Again, this at least partially reflects back on Obama. But it implicates African-American political and activist weaknesses more broadly. Obama, inspirational as he was, was not the messiah!

There is now an administration

in the White House likely to actively pursue voter suppression against blacks and Hispanics; this will challenge those unimaginatively contemplating a new civil rights movement in Black Lives Matter as they confront more urgent circumstances: the need for something considerably more progressively political in a nationalistic Black Votes Matter movement interacting with an interracial, multicultural electoral reform movement for constitutional change. In other words: a *Black Votes for Black Lives Matter* movement.

The forgoing is all by way of introducing an updated version of the original concerns raised at the beginning of 2016.

2016 in historical perspective: at the 'knife-edge' of dictatorship?

Harold Cruse, in his seminal *Crisis of the Negro Intellectual: A Historical Analysis of the Failure of Black Leadership* (1967, Morrow) presciently warned that “if the Negro leadership is hampered by deficient conceptualizing of American group reality, then the Negro movement will defeat itself in the long run.” That was in 1967. Today, in 2015, the extent of lost momentum in ‘the Negro movement,’ reflected in understandable but misdirected Black Lives Matter activism, was never so apparent as America's first black-led presidency entered its final year in 2016. As such, the stakes in the 2016 general election could not have been higher in its implications for the African-American future and that of the United States as a whole. This had both to do with the health of American democracy and the credibility of US global leadership during an era of rapid, multi-dimensional change.

These stakes essentially are a function of the polarising and precarious balance of partisan forces between Democrats and Republicans; given the absence of any moderating centre within a GOP internally in disarray, if Democrats as the only existing ‘centrist’ party were not going to prevail at the presidential level in Election '16, the US would be facing deepening ungovernability at home and a discrediting of its global standing abroad under what was effectively going to amount to a right-wing

dictatorship.

The historically unresolved issues of race and regionalism rooted in the nation's founding and in its unresolved post-civil war and aborted Reconstruction legacies are at the heart of the 'knife edge' America found itself on, in 2015 going into the 2016 election. While the election of Barack Obama as America's first black president was widely perceived as heralding the dawn of a new post-racial progressive American future, in fact, it dialectically threw up yet another 'white backlash' after-shock of reaction from the upheavals of the 1960s.

This propelled the Republican Party further away from the bipartisan centre of gravity, making precarious the governing stability of the two-party system. Under Obama, at the federal level of the executive, the US was effectively a one-party dominant state whereas, in a decisive majority of states and GOP-gerrymandered congressional districts, one-party dominance in opposition to Obama prevailed.

Why this partisan divergence (now uniformly one-party at all levels!) in federal-state dominance was so significant can be attributed to what it reflects in the socio-racial and ethnic terms of a continuing 'Union-Confederacy' power-struggle over the role of government in American society and polity: "an outright political war along racial and ethnic lines over the distribution of resources and opportunities" according to the *New York Times* 'economic scene' reporter, Eduardo Porter. According to Porter, "62 percent of white Americans would like government to be smaller and provide fewer services" whereas only 32 percent of blacks and 26 percent of Hispanics back this proposition. Moreover, "racial animosity has long fostered a *unique mistrust of government among white Americans*" which, in turn accounts for an historically minimalist state; in effect, this reflects a nationalising of the southern confederate vision of an America shaped by the original sin of its founding: 'have slave, have free.'

In essence, American democracy has, from its 18th century beginnings, reflected a highly qualified project with

constitutionally embedded obstacles to majority rule and to a concentrating of state power at the centre, a tension ultimately leading to civil war over the issue of abolishing slavery, followed by reassertion of southern regional autonomy on matters of race in the aftermath of a collapsed Reconstruction. In 21st Century America, this intersection between race and regionalism with opposing visions of the role of government and its partisan reflection in the balance of forces between Washington and the states assumes a new dimension; it is one that raised the stakes in the outcome of the 2016 presidential and national elections to historic proportions due to the eroding white electoral base for imposing the confederate version of American federalism.

“This has left all branches of the US government at all levels – local, state and federal – in right-wing Republican hands buttressed by what will become a GOP-dominated Supreme Court!”

The federal-state predicament in partisan polarisation under Obama was a function of what had become a demographically bifurcated electorate: Democrats, ascendant nationally, propelled by a multiracial, multicultural demographic; one that is inclusive of urban and suburban educated whites, youth and women; Republicans, moving further and further to the anti-federalist extreme right prevailing in state elections, propelled by an older, whiter and more reactionary electorate dominating mid-term elections. Reflected here is the comparative advantage Republicans have held since the days of Barry Goldwater in ideologically-motivated voter mobilisation compared to an essentially unmotivated, disengaged and demobilised Democratic base.

But, as the results of 2016 rudely demonstrated, demography is not *automatically* destiny!

Thus, the electoral dynamic between the two parties tends to even out, making national elections far from forgone conclusions in spite of the Democrats' demographic advantage – which is why the 'knife edge' stakes of the 2016 elections had never been higher or more dangerous, given the reactionary extremism of the GOP candidate field during the primaries. *The nightmare outcome in November: a virtual right-wing federal-state, executive-legislative branch Republican dictatorship.* This is what came to pass.

Meanwhile, the 'black leadership,' such as it is (since, de facto, many in the black community assume wrongly that President Obama should have filled that role – and, in fact, out-of-office, will be forced to!), seems devoid of a threat perception posed by this state of affairs even now, post-election 2017 with segregationist Jess Sessions as US Attorney General. What we could be staring at is the 'black hole' of a black political vacuum.

BLM and the protest vs politics conundrum: In search of synthesis

Into the gap emerged the Black Lives Matter (BLM) protest-cum-'civil rights' movement. What would have been more to the political point of 2016 would have been a resuscitated black consciousness movement centered on voter mobilising civic education. This should extend across the entire Democratic Party base, black and nonblack alike. BLM, however, in its essentially apolitical activism (including a separatist faction), threatened further to distract and demobilise what was a virtually nationalistic black voter turnout benefiting Obama in 2008 and 2012 to the possible detriment of his Democratic successor in 2016. Here, research is urgently needed to assess BLM's political impact on voter turnout, especially amongst black millennials.

White liberals, perennially intimidated by any kind of militancy from left or right, threatened to fund BLM, thereby setting themselves up as accomplices in what could turn out to be a disastrous Democratic Party

defeat in 2016 – as came to pass. This has left all branches of the US government at all levels – local, state and federal – in right-wing Republican hands buttressed by what will become a GOP-dominated Supreme Court!

Why then did there seem to be no apparent black leadership and activist sense of urgency to the implications minority voter suppression posed to the outcome of the 2016 election? Bernie Sanders-aligned Minnesota Congressman Keith Ellison of both the Black and Progressive Caucuses could potentially make a major difference about which more will be said later. Otherwise, the answer to the question posed perhaps lies in the difficulty in mounting a long-overdue but admittedly uphill pro-democracy struggle for major structural reform in the nation's electoral system. This would require constitutional change as opposed to mounting yet another black protest movement. Duplicating the southern civil rights movement is essentially a lost cause in today's America.

Black movement leadership in the '60s and '70s was never able to transition from a heavily church-influenced protest mode of political action emphasising 'racial integration' toward a more secular approach to what Harvard Professor Martin Kilson once interpreted as the 'politicization of black ethnicity.' This undomesticated strain emerging out of the Black Power revival of cultural nationalist sentiment held out potential for arriving at an assimilation-nationalist synthesis.

It might have informed a more coherently balanced struggle strategy of black community empowerment within the dynamics of Cruse's 'American group reality' linked to a long-overdue national (rather than 'racial') integrationist reforming of America's political system. But this synthesis never happened; amid assassinations of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King (who was alienating much of the white establishment with his anti-Vietnam war campaigning and broadening of 'civil rights' into the class-struggle of a multiracial poor peoples' movement), COINTELPRO (counter-intelligence programme of the FBI) decimation of militant black activism interacting with

Justice Department investigations into leading members of the Congressional Black Caucus, black struggle culture became impoverished into a sterile politics of non-ideological transactional pragmatism.

The upshot: repetitive and unimaginative deliberations on a rehashed 'shopping list' of unthreatening (in power terms) 'worthy causes.' The usual 'equal opportunity' litany: education, housing, minority business enterprise, jobs, youth programs, police-community relations, etc., etc. – all critically important to black individual and community development, social cohesion and security. Yet the entirety of this 'equal opportunity' menu has been detached from any integrative visioning in an up-scaling of political and electoral reform in the American system required to package such an agenda and to equip black America with the capacity to chart a coherent national integration strategy within the wider society and

“What we could be staring at is the ‘black hole’ of a black political vacuum.”

polity of the nation as a whole.

Basically, as the 1980s rolled around, black leadership had capitulated under repressive onslaughts by local, state and federal law enforcement and political and economic establishments. This was a situation wherein all black movement tendencies reached a cul-de-sac. On the one hand, racial integrationist civil rights activism came up short in delivering anything in terms of genuine national integration in socio-racial terms beyond ameliorative nominalism in the public sphere. On the other, the dead-end separatist and escapist brand of racial solidarity, in its neo-Garveyite utopianism and unstrategic distancing from non-black allies coupled with indulgence in intra-racial politics of 'blacker than thou' one-upmanship, undermined a workable cultural nationalist complement to interracial cooperation on all fronts in fashioning a credible and coherently progressive movement in American politics.

Between pragmatically unstrategic interracial assimilationism and a totally misconceived separatism (which should never be conflated with nationalism!), a workable black political synthesis for advancing the African-American national interest within a broader progressive American agenda has never threatened to materialise. Indeed, whenever there has been even a hint of such a prospect, the interracial establishment governing the race relations status-quo comes down like a 'ton of bricks' in stamping out any prospect of such an empowering strategic synthesis.

Obama and the black leadership vacuum

All one has to do is revisit the crumbling of the attempted alliance between the Reverend Ben Chavis and the Nation of Islam's Louis Farrakhan amid internal contradictions and external anti-nationalist reaction to appreciate challenges facing a nationalist-integrationist black advancement strategy. Couple that with the lack of momentum generated by Farrakhan's historic Million Man March interacting with the futile symbolism of Jesse Jacksonian 'rainbowism' and by the time Obama emerges on the presidential scene, he has no interlocutor to work with in carrying forward a black national agenda within the context (not disconnected from) of his national public policy political imperative which necessarily has had to be race (but not class)-neutral. But isn't it ironic that President Obama's fixation on the internal cohesion of the black community reflected in initiatives like 'My Brother's Keeper' and any number of his oratorical exhortations espousing themes of responsibility have an intra-racial social cohesion resonance of cultural nationalist potential?

Yet there seems no dearth of celebrity intellectuals (Rev Dr Cornel West comes to mind) peddling political analysis who have allowed themselves to become disillusioned with Obama, the inevitably fallible politician, whom they had mistaken as the coming of the black messiah! Somehow, Obama was going to liberate black America – which they had failed to do! – and attend to

America and its national interest as a whole. They are thus disillusioned that he failed to do that – when the joke is on them for allowing themselves to be disillusioned by a politician in the first place!

By the dawn of the 21st century, the residual black political class (those who had not been crippled by one or another form of investigation) and intelligentsia had essentially abdicated any sense of leadership vision and responsibility. This became depressingly apparent during the electoral crisis culminating in the judicial coup ending what could have been a Democratic party follow-up to eight years of the Bill Clinton presidency, possibly forcing Republicans into a centre-right reset instead of the reactionary extremist momentum continuing to grip today's GOP.

Indeed, here is an intriguing 'what if': What if Colin Powell, an Ed Brookes-type 'Rockefeller Republican' had decided to vie for the White House in 2000 and had become the GOP standard bearer instead of George W. Bush? We would see a different Republican party from the extremist cabal we have today. Powell, whether winning against Gore or not, would have split the black vote down the middle, opening the way for a 'rainbow' Republicanism the party struggles to attain today, stuck as it is in a 'Dixiecratic' evangelical Christian nationalist nativism it cannot extricate itself from.

Yet the demise of Al Gore, robbed as he was of the presidency in spite of garnering a popular vote majority, should have resonated as a message to all America, blacks especially, that our two-party electoral house was crumbling into a potential right-wing dictatorship and that something more compelling than another civil rights protest movement was needed to resist such a threat.

From a black perspective, this should have been picked up as a dire warning of things to come. Initially, very briefly, it appeared the message had gotten through. Black leadership competitors, reverends Al Sharpton and Jesse Jackson began making noises about the need to reform an Electoral College weighted in favour of small

population southwestern and Rocky Mountain states and those situated in the Deep South and Middle American border regions – essentially the 'Sun Belt' geography that propelled and sustained the Ronald Reagan presidential era. Only recently, beginning with the Election 2000 Bush-Gore stalemate, had it begun to register that a pro-Democratic Party demographic shift was underway; one that would eventually elect America's first black president. But to reiterate: demography does not translate automatically into electoral and political destiny, certainly not in America's constitutionally rigged system.

Only sustained political mobilisation within this emerging but unconsolidated centre-left demographic will offset

“The Supreme Court upheld the establishment of an independent redistricting commission to take the drawing up of district boundaries out of the partisan hands of the state legislature”

the prevailing though shrinking advantages of a right wing in American politics that never demobilises but constitutes an 'empire' continually striking back with a vengeance. It seems that neither Sharpton nor Jesse foresaw or sufficiently understood the stakes introduced into US electoral equations by the Electoral College crisis bequeathing the George W Bush presidency; a regime that went on to decimate the Clintonian budget surplus and produce the multi-dimensional mess that Obama's presidency has been preoccupied with cleaning up both abroad as well as at home amid unremittingly racist GOP resistance.

Nationalising the Confederacy?

It may not be appreciated how

close, but for the growing unpopularity of the Iraq quagmire, Washington came to descending into a virtual right-wing executive-legislative dictatorship during the tenure of GOP House Majority Leader Tom Delay of Texas. This could happen yet again and with more devastating effect if Democrats fail to retain the White House in 2016 and/or make significant gains in House and especially Senate elections.

On this note, *Financial Times* observer of things American, Edward Luce's caution needs to be taken to heart: "...the advance of liberal America is no longer viewed as inevitable. It may not even be likely. Two-thirds of US state legislatures and governorships are controlled by Republicans as are both chambers of Congress. Depending on the day, the same is true of a majority of the Supreme Court. *All it would take is one upset presidential election for Republicans to assume control of all three branches of federal government.* To say the least, that would put Mr Obama's legacy in jeopardy. *The advance of Republicans under Mr Obama also boosts their ability to redraw district boundaries after the next census in 2020 thus cementing another decade of control.* For all the talk of Mr Trump's people being left behind, this would be their gain."

The incumbent black political class has been complicit in this knife-edge of a polarised partisan predicament threatening right-wing hegemony. They, by and large, over-subscribed to Republican gerrymandering strategies guaranteeing safe black congressional seats at the expense of more partisanly competitive congressional districts. Given predictable Democratic base demobilisation during mid-term elections favouring an older and whiter electorate, the GOP has parleyed gerrymandering at the state level into controlling the majority of state legislatures. This happens under an essentially confederate constitutional dispensation allowing 'state's rights' in controlling state and local elections. The Federal Election Commission has no control over state and local elections. Neither did the black leadership nor the Democratic Party more broadly appear to connect the dots of this predicament to the partisan

dimension of the US Supreme Court in incentivising mobilisation as an imperative.

Given the ideological extremism of the Republican Party generally (the ‘establishment’ as well as the Tea-Party ‘base’, apart from Trump who really has no ideology), an incipient rightwing dictatorship via gerrymandered state and congressional elections backed up by the plutocratic friendly Roberts Court is not something to be dismissed lightly. The agenda: to manipulatively ride on the backs of an insecure white working-middle class into a class-based oligarchic caste regime committed to decimating the safety net on route to installing a deregulated global ‘Casino’ capitalism; one that would disregard national security interest in an internally strong America as a pre-condition to sustaining US global primacy.

This plutocracy, after all, is transnational. It transcends national boundaries and defies anyone’s notion of a so-called ‘patriotic bourgeoisie’! As far as this 1% is concerned, the US and its social and physical infrastructure can go to pot – and obviously black America along with it! Yet, this scenario is not a given in what amounts to a race against time with Democrats holding a putative electoral advantage in presidential politics at national level. It was crucial that the oligarchs capture the White House in order to entrench a rightwing American plutocracy; they must accomplish this before Democrats consolidate favorable electoral demographics sufficiently at state as well as national level to place this goal politically out of reach. And of course they have lots of running room, as Democrats, post-2016, are facing an uphill struggle to reverse Republican gerrymandered hegemony.

The questions as originally raised in January 2016: would Democrats manage to consolidate the Obama Demographic of 2008-2012 into continued Democratic Party control of the White House in 2017 and, hopefully, begin rolling back what amounts to a gerrymandered GOP lock on Congress intertwined with Republican dominance of state-level politics? Would the black political class among Democrats become sufficiently exercised by the magnitude of the

stakes the 2016 outcome held for black America to mobilise a proto-nationalist voter turnout comparable to 2008 and 2012 – and against greater odds given the ‘southernising’ voter suppression advances Republicans had made in several ‘battle ground’ states? As the world turned, these questions were not answered in the affirmative.

These questions remain compelling given widespread observations such as those by Alec MacGillis in *Who Turned My Blue State Red?* that rather than poor whites voting against their interests, they simply don’t vote. This in turn reinforces non-voting among blacks and Hispanics and other pro-Democratic constituencies in off-year, mid-term elections. According to MacGillis these constituencies, based on voting data and surveys have “become profoundly disconnected from the political process.” The success of sustained Republican anti-Washington, anti-federal government propaganda feeds this disconnect. It is rooted in the confederate underpinnings of southern white antebellum thinking that sustained slavery and led to civil war – and, in 2016, served the interest of a 1 percent craving ‘freedom’ from governmental regulation over the economy, including an evisceration of social safety nets in the anti-Obamacare movement.

Coupled with the fact that Democrats seem only to get mobilised during presidential elections and the apparent failure of Obama’s much vaunted ‘ground-game’ to register as a factor in the 2010 and 2014 mid-term disasters, pro-Democratic single-issue advocacy activists are so fickle that if they fail to receive satisfaction on any of their pet issues, they are more likely than not to take it out on the Democrats. These activist constituencies are unwitting allies of rightist hegemony – as BLM could have been. The idea that there is a larger strategic agenda at stake and that the name of the game is shifting ‘balances of forces’ in a progressive electoral direction irrespective of how any given issue is affected seems irrelevant in the left activist-lobby calculus. Then there is the vapid false equivalency reporting and commentaries in mainstream media giving Republican and rightwing

lunacies a free ride in shaping popular perceptions – reinforced by talk radio and other ‘echo chamber’ outlets along with social media.

In the absence of sustained centre-left pro-Democratic media strategy and agitprop initiatives linked to public policies in the interest of the white working class as well as minorities and other Democratic constituencies, the disconnect described by MacGillis is a constant and present danger to the kind of level playing field fundamental to a well-functioning democracy. The Democratic left is devoid of any cohering discipline in the face of this predicament. Something (which may be nothing!) is not working. Democrats tend to avoid educating voters on a mass scale, keeping them informed on issues close to their economic security interests and mobilising them as a constantly engaged constituency – a political ‘standing army’!

Black ‘conjunctural’ moment?

Meanwhile, the emergence of BLM protest potency, in all its distracting potential, reflected how this disconnect resonated in an African-American community devoid of dynamic political and intellectual leadership; that is, apart from profiling ‘celebrities’ in some quarters enthusing over the emergence of a ‘black digital intelligentsia’ (Rev Dr Michael Eric Dyson) while elevating prophesy as the cultural exemplar of black leadership when black America is sorely in need of a politically conscious public policy elite. Given the foundational role of the ministry in the lives of black people and in shaping the leadership culture of black America in and outside the pulpit, the prophetic certainly cannot be discounted as a driving force in political mobilisation.

But prophesy, disconnected intellectually and operationally from a secular power-politics-policy triad courts failure in advancing the black national interest at a crucial historical conjuncture in America’s future, one that could either propel the black agenda to new heights of fulfillment or usher in a new nadir of marginalisation and isolation as other actors in the American group reality advance their interests.

Hence the ‘Conjunctural Question’: where is the Black Political Imagination at a moment when Republican campaigns of voter suppression mocked the 50th anniversary of a Robert’s Court-eroded Voting Rights Act accompanied by that same Court facilitating the ascendancy of plutocracy via Citizens United which aims to defuse the demographic ascendancy of a progressive coalition of forces in American politics? Answering this question by embarking on a constitutional electoral reform platform would appear to be a precondition to advancing a comprehensive BLM agenda. Without a drastically reformed political landscape at state and local levels, BLM is a lost cause. This would most surely usher in a descent into the powerlessness of despair and marginalisation feeding the disconnect from political processes, making progressive politics an uphill struggle.

Protest without political action is an expression of powerlessness at the grassroots. As such, BLM reflects a ‘bottom-up’ expression of popular ‘enough is enough’ in black communities in need of black leadership ‘top-down’ intervention of convergence linking BLM to a broader constitutional democratisation agenda focused on reforming the electoral system. This is where black America at leadership levels interacting with grassroots community-based action could, for the first time, coordinate a socio-racial ‘nationalist’ agenda linked to a broader interracial coalition for progressive political change via electoral reform, advancing genuine American national (as opposed to ‘racial’) integration as the country transitions into a majority-minority future.

The question: what role for black leadership? It is not as if nothing is happening on the electoral reform front. In fact, much is happening at many a state and local levels throughout the country, including widespread protest over the GOP-dominated Supreme Court’s upholding of Citizens United by defining corporations as ‘persons’ eligible for ‘free speech’ in the unlimited financing of political campaigns: SCOTUS-sanctioned corruption of democracy in America. Amid this nakedly partisan-influenced power-play at the highest

judicial level, the electoral reform landscape is dynamic; *except there appears no sign of major black political engagement and an incorporation of electoral reform at the very top of the black agenda.* This is where BLM could potentially be transformed into a more politically relevant Black Vote Matters (BVM) force for democratising the electoral system, consolidating current reform initiatives into a movement for comprehensive constitutional change.

The electoral reform landscape includes many a promising initiative, some that have been enacted at state levels throughout the country. Most notable in ‘battleground’ Ohio was the winning ballot initiative banning partisan gerrymandering and calling for the establishment of a bipartisan redistricting commission to redraw legislative districts promoting competitive elections. This victory in such a strategically important state goes to the heart of what needs fixing on a national scale in an increasingly undemocratic electoral system propelled by white backlash-driven partisan polarisation benefiting the right. In Arizona, after the Supreme Court upheld the establishment of an independent redistricting commission (since the Robert’s Court leans toward ‘state rights’!) to take the drawing up of district boundaries out of the partisan hands of the state legislature, movement is underway to enact nonpartisan ‘open primary’ voting like that enacted in Nebraska.

Other initiatives include voter-turnout motivational undertakings like ‘mail voting’ making it easier for individuals to vote instead of restricting it. Also included are legal challenges to over-turn Republican ‘voter fraud’ efforts to suppress turnout through eliminating or cutting back ‘early voting,’ requiring voter ID combined with placing polling places out of reach of minority voters.

These efforts are made all the harder since the Robert’s Court gutted the Voting Rights Act (VRA) provision requiring states with a history of voter discrimination from seeking permission for changing voter rules and regulations in their states. The GOP-controlled Congress is unlikely to buy into efforts underway to restore this

provision underlining the confederate fundamentals of elections in America. Thus, democracy for African-Americans is always reversible, not just in the South but nation-wide. The irony that this was actually happening during the 50th anniversary of VRA highlights a major post-civil war concession to southern ‘states rights’ urgently in need of correction: an interventionist *National Independent Elections Commission* that can oversee local, state and national elections in the US as a safeguard against partisan bids at voter suppression as has currently gained momentum in Republican-controlled state legislatures in the aftermath of stripping VRA of its enforcement provisions.

The concept of ‘states rights’ in overseeing elections highlights a recent insight into the extent of the post-civil war reconstruction political victory of the defeated Confederacy. In a *Financial Times* review of *Liberty and Coercion: The Paradox of American Government from the Founding to the Present* by Gary Gerstle, it is observed that: “Despite federal victory in the civil war, the exemptions accorded to individual states were reinstated by the Supreme Court in the 1870s and the 1880s as de jure and de facto racial segregation replaced slavery”, with Gerstle arguing that a century later “were it not for the cold war ... the federal government might have lacked the necessary strength to back civil rights: it ‘gave the central state the confidence to take on the states’.”

Supreme Court decisions ratified the Tilden-Hays Compromise that sealed the fate of W E B Du Bois’ *Black Reconstruction*, paving the way for almost a century of southern regional autonomy at the expense of black freedom until the cold war-facilitated civil rights movement of the 1960s. It is this seminal social movement that has inspired reactionary aftershocks of white backlash underpinning the rise of a ‘new confederacy’ in today’s Republican Party – and a reassertion of ‘states rights.’ This prompted Desmond King, in his review of *Liberty and Coercion* to opine how “for all the power the US federal government wields, it is the country’s constituent states that have often had the upper

hand...". The nationalisation of 'states rights' in GOP instigated voter suppression momentum accentuates this imbalance of power; in the process exposing the shallowness of a civil rights movement that never assimilated the structural change implications of a Black Power movement which, now, must be revisited to complete the unfinished business of its promise.

Voter mobilisation and constitutional reform

If, however, there is to be (as there should) a Black Power reassertion, it cannot be allowed to revert back into the separatist cul-de-sac of black self-marginalisation. It has to form one interactive wing of a larger multiracial coalition of forces for voter mobilisation in the first instance followed up by a constitutional electoral reform movement in the second. This is where the Keith Ellison voter registration initiative in Minneapolis showed much needed promise as a possible focal point for such a protracted democratisation struggle agenda. Congressman Ellison's initiative aimed at expanding Democratic voter turnout by having workers fan out into apartment buildings and low-income urban neighborhoods, which had worked for him in Minneapolis, caught the eye of Democrats while Ellison himself was also on the frontline in mediating grassroots protests where BLM had been flourishing.

That Ellison reflects a convergence in allegiance to both Black and Progressive Caucuses in the House at a time when the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee has come under the chairmanship of Hispanic Caucus member, New Mexico Representative Ben Ray Lujan seems propitious. It could and should serve as a harbinger of the strategic concentrating of forces for the magnitude of mobilisation required to roll back the partisan-class dictatorship project that has hijacked the GOP while sustaining a long-term battle for constitutional electoral reform.

Whether or not Ellison can and does emerge into the vacuum that seems apparent in black political leadership at the moment remains to be seen. Were this vacuum to be filled sufficiently by

him (or someone else) to sustain the magnitude of black mobilisation that elected and re-elected Obama, and that might have contributed to eight years of a Hillary Clinton administration, there awaits an extensive electoral reform agenda to concentrate the black political imagination for national as well as black America's benefit. Illustratively:

- First and foremost, consolidate state and local-level initiatives such as those in Ohio, Arizona, Utah, Oregon and elsewhere into a coordinated and mutually reinforcing national campaign for nonpartisan redrawing of districts as the basis for a much broader electoral reform movement for constitutional revision.
- Focus such a national campaign on the convening of a *National Constitutional Convention* to, among other things, nationalise the American federal electoral system under a National Independent

“Democracy for African-Americans is always reversible, not just in the South but nation-wide”

Elections Commission.

- Such a commission should be empowered to oversee congressional redistricting after each census while policing state election administration which, in many states, is prioritising voter suppression.
- A constitutional convention should review ways and means of more effectively aligning the Electoral College with the popular vote in presidential elections – or whether or not it should be abolished altogether, including state-level initiatives already underway for such structural realignment.

Electoral reform urgently needs to redress asymmetries benefiting small and sparsely-populated states and regions at the expense of major urban metropolitan centres where the economic growth impetus of the US economy also resides:

- Review the inequitable basis of Senate representation increasingly disenfranchising major urban-metropolitan regions to the benefit of the smallest and least populated states and communities at the expense of the genuine representivity of American democracy.
- A constitutional convention should consider a new 'home rule' status for major urban-metropolitan regions throughout the US in the interest of urban self-determination against out-state, rural-small town dominance in imposing constraints against the most populous and diverse communities within these states and the country at large.
- If America is to continue retaining federalism with 'confederate characteristics,' such a constitutional convention must mandate an equitable balancing of 'states rights' with 'urban rights' in a manner ensuring fairness between urban big-state and rural small-state interests in a restructured federal system.
- Consideration of urban self-determination should be coupled in such a convention with exploring possibilities for regionalising the electoral and/or federal system overall as a basis for arriving at a more equitable compact as the basis for American democracy; this might take the form of clustering several states into regionally-consolidated constituent autonomous 'republics' with the option of negotiating an expanded US-Canadian North American federation.

Black and minority politics:

- The formation of independent slates and/or state and local-level third parties within the Democratic coalition (and, if feasible, extending as a black bipartisan tendency within the GOP) to influence public policy priorities and their implementation as part of local, state and national agenda-setting and electing suitable candidates (strategically and pragmatically, irrespective of race). (The Working Families Party of New York is indicative of what is possible.)

- The establishment of a King-Shabazz Tendency among black Democrats (and like-minded black Republicans) commemorating Martin and Malcolm with a reparations policy agenda featuring a public-private funded African-American National Sovereign Wealth and Development Fund.
- The coordination, within the tri-caucus congressional framework, of independent tendencies within the Democratic coalition (and amongst like-minded Republicans) addressing minority policy priorities amongst Hispanics and Asians as well as among blacks.

Urban Home-Rule: Black & multicultural self-determination

At the end of the day, this is all about strengthening the checks and balances of American federalism in an equitable manner that depoliticises how elections and federal power – local-state-federal – are structured, managed and held at all levels. In the quest for a ‘more perfect union’ that once and for all resolves civil war contradictions while opening the way for a transcending of the socio-biracial divide in guarding against plutocratic class dictatorship, the forgoing might serve as elements for informing a *National Study Commission on Historical Justice and Reconciliation* as a basis for establishing an appropriate national constitutional reform agenda with a targeted mandate. Herein might finally reside the African-American nationalist-assimilation synthesis of self-determination within the radical restructuring of American federalism. At the very least, the outcome of such a process should be the establishment of an equitable co-existence regime benefiting every community’s self-determinative aspirations in a system of democratic cultural pluralism.⁶

Postscript – and Obama’s atonement?

By now, the upset election of 2016 and its domestic and internationally destabilising outcome has become the rebirth of history that continues to unfold. That the constitutional system of democracy as is generally assumed in the US is under serious threat from a

rightist authoritarian Trump presidency in alliance with similar movements in Europe backed by Vladimir Putin’s rightwing nationalist United Russia regime and Wikileaks anarchism has become widely acknowledged if not fully processed in terms of its implications on the international left.

Even before the November election, it was reported that post-presidency, Barack Obama would join his former attorney general, Eric Holder in launching the National Democratic Redistricting Committee (NDRC) to begin the long, uphill process of rolling back the Republican gerrymandered state legislative regime that anchors GOP control of Congress in a veritable one-party dictatorship. For Obama, this should serve as atonement for his having neglected the health of the Democratic Party during his presidency which cost him control of Congress and truncated his progressive agenda.

Whether or not, in the process, this will contribute to much needed black political leadership renewal will remain to be seen. Closely allied with NDRC and the momentum it needs to generate will be Democratic National Committee renewal.

At the much anticipated election of a new Democratic National Committee chair in Atlanta on the 25th of February, Hispanic former Labor Secretary under Obama, Thomas Perez edged out Sanders-Senator Elizabeth Warren-backed Ellison. The contest was hotly contested along ‘establishment’ (Obama) versus insurgent (Sanders ‘revolution’) lines. However, with Perez choosing Ellison as his deputy, the potential exist for a black-Hispanic led progressive Trump resistance. Given the ‘sunbelt’ demographic ‘reconquista’ of Latinos, looking toward 2020, Perez was a better strategic choice than Ellison.

While Ellison did not prevail in the DNC chairmanship race, conditions still exist for greater black leadership ascendancy at the top of the Democratic Party in tandem with Obama-Holder NDRC momentum – and through Ellison, closer reconciliatory alignment between so-called ‘establishment’ and progressive wings among Democrats. Of course, this is being optimistic given die-hard tendencies among Sanders ‘revolutionaries.’ But Sanders’ weakness

during the primaries is that he was not pulling minorities. Perez as DNC chairman with Ellison as deputy should generate greater Hispanic political momentum within the Democratic Party along with the black leadership momentum Obama and Holder bring to the equation and which they will need to provide via NDRC.

The question these new developments will need to provide answers to is how/if they can:

- Generate a black political renewal dynamic within the Democratic Party, one of veritable nationalist consolidation in interactive tandem with:
- A broad-based re-organising and re-energising of the Democratic Party base across all other constituencies, building on the protest momentum generated by the anti-Trump resistance; and finally
- Begin making headway in rolling back Republican hegemony in the states coupled with launching a protracted electoral and federalist reform and restructuring agenda of constitutional change.

Incorporated into this matrix, in terms of its African-American dimension, will need to be reflection of a new imagination preconditioning Black Lives Matter with Black Votes Matter (BV-LM)! ■

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Hegemony and all that stuff



What is clear is that what we are going through is not simply an economic crisis, though certainly the financial crisis precipitated by the neoliberal hegemony and its debt-fuelled underpinning is key, but also a crisis of democracy whose outcome remains very much in the balance

By Michael Prior

Hegemony – the way in which dominant groups in society maintain their dominance by securing the spontaneous consent of subordinate groups, including the working class, through the negotiated construction of a political, ideological and economic consensus which incorporates both dominant and subordinate groups.

Historic bloc – the degree of historical congruence between material forces, institutions and ideologies and more specifically the alliance of different class forces politically organised around a set

of hegemonic ideas and structures that give strategic direction and coherence to its constituent elements.

*The sky too is folding under you
And it's all over now, baby blue*

The concept of hegemony was developed by Antonio Gramsci, writing whilst imprisoned by Italian fascists, to solve the problem which had beset all European radicals, particularly Marxists, for decades; why the subordinate working class failed to overthrow the dominant capitalist class even after its

own oppression and exploitation had been endlessly revealed, why even then they failed to follow Shelley's impassioned words written in 1819:

*Rise, like lions after slumber
In unvanquishable number!
Shake your chains to earth like dew
Which in sleep had fallen on you:
Ye are many – they are few.*

It needs to be acknowledged that, even as it provides a conceptual basis for resolving this conundrum, hegemony remains a somewhat mysterious process, something which has always bothered some Marxists who want to retain some form of economic determinism. Gramsci saw the capitalist state as being made up of two overlapping spheres, a 'political society' (which rules through force) and a 'civil society' (which rules through consent). He saw civil society as the public sphere where trade unions and political parties gained concessions from the bourgeois state, and the sphere in which ideas and beliefs were shaped, where bourgeois 'hegemony' was reproduced in cultural life through the media, universities and religious institutions to 'manufacture consent' and legitimacy. The political and practical implications of Gramsci's ideas were far-reaching because he warned of the limited possibilities of direct revolutionary struggle for control of the means of production; this 'war of attack' could only succeed with a prior 'war of position' in the form of struggle over ideas and beliefs, to create a new counter-hegemony.

Over eighty years have passed since Gramsci's original formulation and we are able, with the benefit of extended hindsight, to see how hegemony itself often carries seeds of its own instability in ways which sometimes are reminiscent of the way Marx believed that capitalist economic formations carried within themselves the seeds of their own destruction. The problem is that such instability is both more complex and also more unpredictable than any simple economic crisis.

Hegemonic domination is, of course, not confined to the capitalist era. It can be seen in some form, often religious, extending back to the Pharaohs. However, since capitalism shows great instability and shifts it is useful

to engage in a quick gallop through the last hundred and fifty or so years even though this risks considerable elision and gross simplification. This gallop is confined to Europe and America where the processes of such domination can be most clearly seen and does have a particular focus on Britain. The application of the idea of hegemony in post-colonial and post-Communist societies remains as work in progress given the relatively short period since domination by simple force was superseded by other forms of control.

The obvious starting point in Europe is 1848, the Year of Revolution, when there were popular uprisings in various forms across over 50 countries. Britain had its own, more decorous, form of uprising in the shape of Chartism. Virtually all of these uprisings were defeated, often with great bloodshed but it clearly marked the moment in which the dominant class accepted that the repressive techniques which had marked class control had to be modified. The use of these in Britain in the thirty years after Peterloo is wonderfully illustrated in paintings of the mass Chartist gatherings in remote hill sanctuaries held where no militia horses could pursue them.

No one seems to have any good understanding of just how or why there was such simultaneity across countries when there is no real evidence of any overt linkages. It does illustrate the spontaneous aspect of the formation of

any new hegemony. At the time, the bloody defeats in 1848 were seen as major setbacks for developing European socialist movements but they set in train the process of negotiation into what might be called the democratic hegemony, which included the concession of manhood suffrage, trade union rights and the development of parties representing the working class though always with unevenness and retreats. This long period of sixty years or so in which consensual democracy replaced physical repression is what would have informed Gramsci's views on hegemony and still represents the longest period of relative social stability in the capitalist era, surviving as it did the unification of Italy and Germany, several wars including civil war in the USA and the rise of mass social democracy and trade unions. It was destroyed by WWI without any real signs of systemic instability epitomised by the complete failure of revolutionary Marxists like Luxembourg and Liebknecht to organise any international opposition to war based upon working-class solidarity. It produced a rather rose-tinted memory of the epoch epitomised by the American novelist Scott Fitzgerald's description in *Tender is the Night* in 1934 in which an American couple visit a WWI battlefield. It remains as a perfect evocation of just how complex is the formation of hegemonic domination:

"See that little stream – we could

walk to it in two minutes. It took the British a month to walk to it — a whole empire walking very slowly, dying in front and pushing forward behind. And another empire walked very slowly backward a few inches a day, leaving the dead like a million bloody rugs. No Europeans will ever do that again in this generation...

The young men think they could do it but they couldn't. They could fight the first Marne again but not this. This took religion and years of plenty and tremendous sureties and the exact relation that existed between the classes. The Russians and Italians weren't any good on this front. You had to have a whole-souled sentimental equipment going back further than you could remember. You had to remember Christmas, and postcards of the Crown Prince and his fiancée, and little cafés in Valence and beer gardens in Unter den Linden and weddings at the mairie, and going to the Derby, and your grandfather's whiskers."

"General Grant invented this kind of battle at Petersburg in sixty-five."

"No, he didn't – he just invented mass butchery. This kind of battle was invented by Lewis Carroll and Jules Verne and whoever wrote Undine, and country deacons bowling and marraines in Marseilles and girls seduced in the back lanes of Wurtemberg and Westphalia. Why, this was a love battle – there was a century of middle-class love spent here. This was the last love battle."

This war broke the long-lasting 'democratic hegemony' and ushered back the old fear announced in 1848 that:

A spectre is haunting Europe – the spectre of communism. All the powers of old Europe have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise this spectre: Pope and Tsar, Metternich and Guizot, French Radicals and German police-spies.

Where is the party in opposition that has not been decried as communistic by its opponents in power? Where is the opposition that has not hurled back the branding reproach of communism, against the



Here they are in 1842 at the Basin Stone near Todmorden.

more advanced opposition parties, as well as against its reactionary adversaries? (Communist Manifesto)

Of course Marx and his allies were, at the time, quite wrong in their estimation of the power of revolution and of their own words. According to Eric Hobsbawm, *By the middle 1860s virtually nothing that Marx had written in the past was any longer in print.*¹ Only in one respect were Marx and Engels proved right; the ability of opposition parties to split based upon accusations of leftism and rightism. However, in one way, 1919 was the postscript to 1848. The Russian revolution opened up a concrete vision of a new form of society; the social democratic opposition parties in most of Europe finally split into their revolutionary and reformist factions and there were short-lived workers states set up in Hungary and southern Germany. But only in Mongolia did the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party succeed in 1921 in forming a long-lasting communist state. Instead, 1919 ushered in nearly twenty years of cultural and political upheaval, economic collapse, war and what would today be termed authoritarian populism, otherwise known as fascism. Even Britain was not immune to the upsurge of the old organs of repression with naval gunboats moored in both the Clyde and Mersey at various moments. The final devastation was WWII.

The end of WWII brought in what can be termed the 'welfare hegemony', a consensual agreement between a conjunction of forces, some of which seemed deeply hostile to capitalism including huge Communist parties in Italy, France and Finland as well as the revival of Labour in Britain based upon a left-wing programme. The 'historic bloc' developed in the agreement allowed these apparently hostile forces to be neutered and even incorporated inside the capitalist system. The essentials of this agreement need little rehearsal, basically the use of Keynesian economics to counter cyclical economic recession and the guaranteeing of certain minimum welfare levels. Of course, at the same time, capitalist Europe had been much diminished, a process that continued through to 1948 with the incorporation of Czechoslovakia into the Soviet

bloc and the continuance of forms of authoritarian fascism in Spain and Portugal. This new hegemony applied only to a core Europe of about seven countries plus the defeated countries of Germany, Italy and Austria. It was also adopted, though in a modified form, in the USA.

The twenty-five or so years of this welfare hegemony have often been thought of as the golden years of capitalism when both recession and unemployment as well as the threat of communist revolution seemed to have been banished in favour of steady economic growth benefitting all sections of society. The inherent problem of this pact was the

“The key hegemonic point of neoliberalism was the alleged return of power to the individual consumer, to allow individual choice as against state-dictated spending and the removal of power from institutions such as the trade-unions and local authorities which were portrayed as impinging on the power of the individual.”

increasing penetration of the state into the functioning of capitalism and the increasingly powerful position of organised labour within this state intrusion. This included not just nationalisation of much basic industry but also the use of various forms of planning and economic direction to steer the economy. These included such as the French economic plans which ushered in the so-called Trente Glorieuses, only briefly faltering with the événements in 1968, the Italian Istituto per la Ricostruzione Industriale, a Fascist institution taken over in postwar Italy and much admired by British social democratic economists,

as well as the various forms of state intervention in Britain, mostly involving nationalisation but also the National Economic Development Council set up in 1962 by a Conservative government followed by the ill-fated national plan of 1965 under Labour.

The inevitable economic problems created by this penetration were summarised in 1975:

The most general contradiction of capitalism remains that between the growing social character of production and the private appropriation of the product through the market.

In the period following the 2nd World War, this contradiction has developed in a number of different spheres, each marked by the increasing encroachment of conscious public control over the decreasingly effective market mechanism.

*In the area of human life, this process of increasing public control has been able to achieve definite social and economic progress, but in each such area, the problem of the increasing incompatibility of the market mechanism with the social and economic needs created by the continuing development of the productive forces, has caused new and intractable crises to develop. These crises are insoluble because each new encroachment on the sphere of the market leaves less and less room for manoeuvre in what is left of the market economy.*²

In Britain, these crises were particularly marked by very high inflation rates created by intensive union action to raise wages. However, this characterisation did to an extent draw upon the need for Marxist economists to find economic underpinning for social upheaval. What was occurring throughout Europe was more complex than any simple economic explanation. These, after all, were the anni di piombo in Italy, the Red Army Faction in Germany and the wave of various kinds of student agitation throughout Europe.

An analysis later in the 1970s looked at the almost simultaneous events in this decade:

The exact cause of the great

international explosion of 1968 is not clear, though it was a social and political phenomenon without parallel, transcending even the Year of Revolution, 1848, in its international scope. There was certainly an element of international emulation heightened by the use, almost for the first time, of virtually instantaneous satellite TV transmissions. The images of that year still stand to mind: the NLF flags on Hue Citadel; clenched fists of black athletes in Mexico City; the CRS visors and shields appearing out of teargas clouds in Paris; bewildered Russian tank crews harassed by Prague crowds; the ruins of Detroit ghettos. Yet each of these events and the accompanying discord of a hundred cities – even London, where a Vietnam march in November 1968 was seriously seen in the leader column of *The Times* as being the precursor to armed uprising – was its own end point, the result of apparently dissimilar movements within quite different societies.

We do not propose to analyse this international shock wave except to note one factor. All the popular movements we have mentioned were failures, at least in the dimension of physical repression. Even the Tet Offensive was accounted a material defeat at the time. But each, with one exception, set in motion powerful forces for change, which, in some cases, are still progressing. The Tet Offensive broke the power of the US government to convince its own people that the price was worth the gain and initiated a deep questioning of the effectiveness of political democracy in controlling the actions of governments. In Italy and France, the Communist Parties began their climb out of the political wilderness. In the USA, the struggle against racism was given a political dimension that it had never achieved before. What they all represented – save the Tet, which lies outside this circle except in its indirect effects on the American people – was a break with certain aspects of bourgeois hegemony rather than a challenge to state power. And what they demonstrated more effectively than a thousand theories was that

such challenges could emerge out of popular movements; that they need not be mediated by any strata of intellectuals or party groups; that bourgeois hegemony within the political and ideological structures of society is not absolute.³

Applying a more Gramscian analysis, we suggested a more subtle explanation than the one quoted above for the dominance of the 'welfare hegemony' and the seeds of its downfall:

This notion of an ongoing conflict between structurally antagonistic modes of production co-existing within the same social formation is crucial to the subsequent argument. It is also necessary to be clear that the dominant mode of production is not identical with the progressive mode of production. The dominant mode may lack the capacity to resolve the major social and economic issues of the day from within its own resources. In order to sustain itself and to integrate both individual and social needs at various levels of society into a stable synthesis it may have to rely on partial and contradictory borrowings from outside itself.

The previous example of post-war Britain illustrates how British capitalism was enabled to survive and even, by the standards of its own historical past, to flourish, by incorporating some of the dynamics of socialism. It is this phenomenon, the pre-emptive borrowing of elements of the class enemy's programme in order to forestall revolution, for which Gramsci coined the phrase "passive revolution". The borrowed elements do not, however, become totally submerged. They do not completely lose their progressive character by virtue of being harnessed to the dominant mode. Because they derive ultimately from an antagonistic mode of production they always retain a threatening potential and remain a continuing focus of political and ideological conflict. It is hard to see how the experience of the UK since the onset of acute economic crisis in 1973-4 can be understood in any other terms. On every front of economic and social policy, from

the control of the National Health Service to the control of the money supply, the most fundamental principles of social organisation and action have been locked in combat. That this combat has been fought out in the idiom of reform rather than revolution should not obscure its importance.⁴

The outcome of this breakdown of 'welfare' hegemony did, however, demonstrate that the victory of what subsequently became known as neoliberalism was not inevitable and that it was not total. In 1983 in Britain, the victory of what later became known as Thatcherism could probably have been resisted, at least for a time, had the Labour Party not conveniently committed suicide in 1981 just as it had done fifty years before in 1931. The key hegemonic point of neoliberalism was the alleged return of power to the individual consumer, to allow individual choice as against state-dictated spending and the removal of power from institutions such as the trade-unions and local authorities which were portrayed as impinging on the power of the individual. The final part of the agreement was the progressive privatisation of parts of the economy, including social housing, once seen as necessarily state-owned, with generous discounts offered to purchasers of shares or freeholds. One key statistic summarises the basis of this hegemonic agreement: in 1979, UK household debt was at the record low of 29.20 percent of GDP whilst in 2016 it was a little above 87% down from its record high of 97% in 2010 but increasing. Accompanying this was a prolonged attack on government expenditure from a postwar high of over 48% of GDP at the end of the 1970s down to a low of 36% in 1998.⁵

The rise in household debt was common throughout the capitalist world. In 1995, household debt as a proportion of household disposable income was about 38% in Italy and 105% in Australia. The corresponding figures in 2014 were 89% and 201%. Only in Germany has household debt been kept relatively stable resulting in Germany's current position as the economic arbiter of Europe with Angela Merkel as the good-housekeeper.⁽⁶⁾

In the USA, it will be recalled that it was the sub-prime mortgage scandal which precipitated the financial crisis of 2008, essentially the provision of the mortgages necessary to buy houses well beyond the ability of households to pay.

In one important way, the neoliberal hegemony differed from the previous two in that it was based upon a lie whereas both the democratic and welfare hegemonies were based upon at least partial truths. Real advances were provided in democratic rights after 1848 and there were real gains in welfare provisions after 1945. What neoliberalism provided was access to personal debt finance to promote consumption whilst allowing monstrous growth in real inequality to those with power either corporate or political. (A recent article in *The Thinker* has shown how much corporate power has increased in this period.⁷) A recent startling revelation about this is that just 8 people have as much wealth as the bottom 50% of the world's population⁸. Real wages have effectively stagnated for most working people whilst top-earners have soared away. This is shown in the figures for the USA of the share of national income taken by the top 1%. This bottomed out in 1973 at 8.9% and has since under neoliberalism risen to 21.2% in 2013. Similar numbers can be found for most countries.

The neoliberal hegemony was also concerned to reduce the fear and uncertainty which had been created in the turbulent 1970s essentially by reducing the power of trade-unions and other organs of social dissent.

The apparently total victory of neoliberalism was marked by the failure of opposition forces to adequately develop any counter-hegemony; particularly any way to bring together the various social movements of the 1970s and established political agents which effectively controlled access to channels of electoral democracy. This failure was most marked in Italy which had both mass social upheaval and powerful left political parties.

A paper by the controversial Italian sociologist, Antonio Negri,⁹ (later described by a conservative Italian President as 'a psychopath' who 'poisoned the minds of an entire generation of Italy's youth' — so he can't be all bad) analyses this period and, in particular, the failure of the Italian Communist Party's 'historic compromise' which was, in effect the one effort to produce a counter-hegemony, however flawed.

In various ways, the collapse of the welfare hegemony and the rise of a neoliberal hegemony was mirrored throughout Europe though in different ways and in varying degrees. The notorious tournant de la rigueur by the Mitterand government in 1983, accompanied by the expulsion of the Communist Party from government, is the most obvious example, a turn essentially derived from the same problem which had confounded British Labour governments in the 1970s, persistent and rising inflation. The historic bloc created in all cases was essentially based upon fear, that the perceived chaos created by strong

trade-unions would destroy hard-won savings and prevent individual success.

We are now in the midst of the fourth hegemonic crisis in the capitalist era if one counts the turbulent 1840s. It may or may not be encouraging for progressive politics that they seem to have come at steadily decreasing intervals; very roughly 60, 30 and 20 years. It is certainly not encouraging that war has often, in the past, been part of the breakdown. What is clear is that what we are going through is not simply an economic crisis, though certainly the financial crisis precipitated by the neoliberal hegemony and its debt-fuelled underpinning is key, but also a crisis of democracy whose outcome remains very much in the balance. The election of the maverick Donald Trump in America and the Brexit vote in the UK were a massive markers along this path.

All over Europe from the Pirate Party in Iceland to Podemos in Spain, new and rather odd political formations have arisen whilst in others the old spectre of fascism has arisen in a new garb. There have also been an array of social movements which often overlap with the new parties to the extent that it is difficult to see much difference. One problem with describing these is that the old labels no longer fit very well. In France, Marine Le Pen is often described as 'far-right' but in fact it is her likely opponent in the French Presidential elections, Fillon, who best fits this label. He would demolish the existing labour code, cut public expenditure, abolish the wealth tax, in short the full neoliberal agenda. On economic policy, Le Pen's Front National's 2012 manifesto contained commitments to raise the minimum wage and lower the retirement age to 60, reduce energy prices and taxes, introduce trade barriers along with measures designed to help small rather than big business, and give priority to French nationals in employment. Essentially, left-wing protectionism plus hostility to immigrants. In many ways, Trump offers the same kind of mix. Of course, pessimists would suggest that another name for this kind of combination is national socialism.

One more quote from 1979 to suggest that this political disarray is not unique:

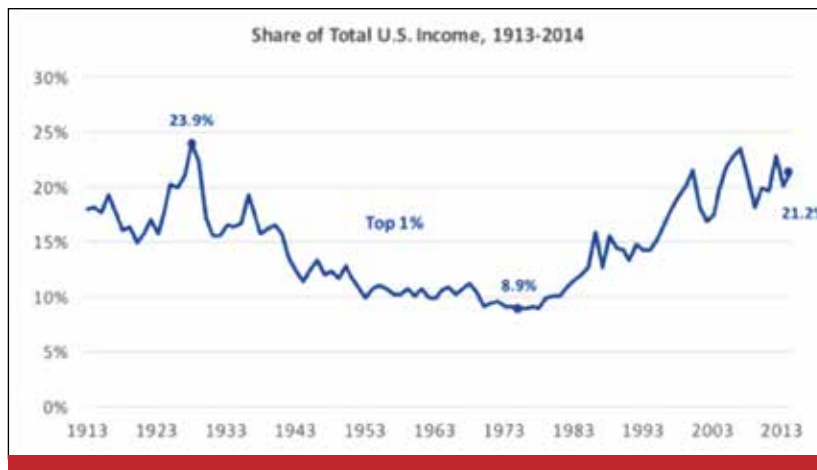


Figure 1

Source: Striking it Richer: The Evolution of Top Incomes in the United States, E. Saez, June 2015

We are paradoxically in a situation where the richness and diversity of the left has outrun the political concepts that we possess to handle their coordination, mutual support and unification around common political objectives.¹⁰

Just why have we reached this parlous state? In a previous article, we quoted Zygmunt Bauman¹¹:

We could describe what is going on at the moment as a crisis of democracy, the collapse of trust: the belief that our leaders are not just corrupt or stupid, but inept. Action requires power, to be able to do things, and we need politics, which is the ability to decide what needs to be done. But that marriage between power and politics in the hands of the nation state has ended. Power has been globalized, but politics is as local as before. Politics has had its hands cut off. People no longer believe in the democratic system because it doesn't keep its promises. We see this, for example, with the migration crisis: it's a global phenomenon, but we still act parochially. Our democratic institutions were not designed for dealing with situations of interdependence. The current crisis of democracy is a crisis of democratic institutions.¹²

Thus Europeans and Americans hear their national leaders say that they will resolve the refugee crisis, stop terrorism, provide more jobs, control the banks, increase economic growth... And then they don't. As a consequence they turn to parties or social movements disguised as parties which at least hold out the promise of action even though, as with Syriza in Greece, they prove unable to do this. In America, Trump based his campaign on exactly this self-proclaimed ability to get things done.

Some observers believe that the current turmoil presages the final collapse of capitalism. For example, Paul Mason¹³ predicts that the spread of information technology, in particular the internet, will create an entirely new form of society whilst Wolfgang Streeck¹⁴ suggests that democracy will inevitably master a weak and failing capitalist system. However,

both views seem to rely heavily on a version of the old Marxist tradition of capitalism failing because of internal contradictions rather than the actions of any agency, a new kind of economic determinism. It is difficult to see the new hegemony which might arise from the collapse of neoliberalism; certainly a return to what we have called welfare hegemony seems unlikely, particularly as pillars of international order such as the International Monetary Fund and the Economic Union seem wedded to neoliberalism. On the other hand, formation of what may be called in Gramscian terms a counter-hegemony

“Real advances were provided in democratic rights after 1848 and there were real gains in welfare provisions after 1945. What neoliberalism provided was access to personal debt finance to promote consumption whilst allowing monstrous growth in real inequality to those with power either corporate or political.”

is also difficult to envisage. The historic bloc required to achieve such requires a complex set of alliances which go beyond the simple proletariat/peasantry duality of Gramsci's time. In particular it must include alliances with refugees displaced by war and famine as well as with the mostly young protesters in such as the Occupy movement which erupted after the 2008 financial crisis. It also has to take into account the growing international importance of countries such as China and Russia which were effectively excluded in any hegemonic settlement in previous eras because of

the simple capitalist/communist duality which prevailed. It is difficult to foresee other than turmoil as the EU enters a period of crisis and Donald Trump does, well, whatever Donald Trump is going to do.

Unfortunately in this troubled time, your correspondent's local choir has little to offer save a song based upon a quote from Martin Luther King "We may have all come on different ships, but we're in the same boat now." Perhaps the best commentary comes from a prophet of a past era, our current Nobel Literature laureate:

*Come writers and critics
Who prophesize with your pen
And keep your eyes wide
The chance won't come again
And don't speak too soon
For the wheel's still in spin
And there's no tellin' who that it's namin'
For the loser now will be later to win
For the times they are a-changin'
Come mothers and fathers
Throughout the land
And don't criticize
What you can't understand
Your sons and your daughters
Are beyond your command
Your old road is rapidly agin'
Please get out of the new one if you
can't lend your hand
For the times they are a-changin'*¹⁵ ■

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ARTS AND CULTURE

A photograph of a stage with three spotlights illuminating a wooden floor. The spotlights are positioned at the top of the frame, casting beams of light down onto the floor. The floor is made of dark wood planks. The background is dark, making the spotlights and the floor stand out.

Taking Centre Stage on the Globe

During the struggle, Funda was an oasis of Arts and Culture; how can it be a place for hooligans now, when non-racialism, non-sexism and democracy are being nurtured? The Arts flourish within a cultural context where the human spirit claims freedoms and overruns barriers.

By Mongane Wally Serote

The first fight against colonial rule in South Africa was in 1492, when the Khoi and the San fought against the mighty Portuguese who attempted to settle by force of arms in the South Western shore of our country. The Khoi and the San, armed with bow and arrows, spears and knobkerries, and using cattle trained for warfare as artillery, defeated the mighty Portuguese army, which scuttled back to Portugal. We can claim, in the 21st century, that those Khoi and San warriors were fighting at that time for our sovereignty, independence, democracy and for the African Renaissance. So also did the Amazulu at Isandlwana in 1879. They defeated the mighty British army, which scuttled, tail between its legs, licking its wounds.

We are still in the same trenches as the Khoi and the San, Amazulu, and the various warriors from different language groups throughout the length and breadth of our country, who laid their lives down for the freedom of our country, fighting against European settlers who were determined to colonise our people – a scourge which lasted for over five centuries, when eventually, through the Liberation struggles, the Apartheid system disintegrated at the feet of the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM), led by the African National Congress (ANC) together with other liberation movements, the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) and the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM). We have negated tribalism, racialism, apartheid and colonialism relentlessly, with almost unprecedented courage as a people, with unflinching commitment and the conviction that, if we are not free, and if others are not free in this world, no one is free. In 1994, South Africa joined Africa and the countries of the world – as a politically free country. Even so, we are aware that the human spirit is not free.

We can state with certainty that imperialism, which is the scourge of the world in the 21st century, is a crime against humanity. All we need to do is to understand why things are as they are in Libya, Iraq, the Sahel, Syria, Mali, Ivory Coast, Zimbabwe, Venezuela, Brazil, and in some Asian and Latin

American countries – where what the people there had built for themselves is being or has been torn apart.

As Africans, if we claim our continent and the African Diaspora and state that in the international world, so called the Globe, we belong to the South, we will note that what defines us as such, besides our geographical positions, and the fact of our being endowed by nature with immeasurable resources, is the fact that we bear the deep wounds inflicted upon us by imperialism during the decades of the cold war, as we, supported by the Soviet Union and Cuba, pitted our struggles against imperialist countries. And now we find ourselves in a unipolar globe. The direct result from that system of imperialism is the emergence of terrorism, which has

“ We impacted on Europe, America, the Soviet Union, Asia and Latin America, through musicals, theatre, poetry readings, photography, film, music, plastic arts and dance, to emancipate and liberate the African voice.”

rendered the whole world an unsafe terrain of bloodletting. Which must in our minds translate to: “an injury to one is an injury to all”.

For us as South Africans, we come from a not so long ago past, when apartheid as a system was like a full blown cancer, devouring organs and organism with impunity from the South African national body, disregarding anything which tried to stop it. Then, all of us as cultural workers in our country took centre stage. We were inspired by the spirit of commitment and sacrifice of the masses of our country and of the world which did not only express their outrage against the Apartheid system, but committed to fight against it and to destroy it. We declared our

commitment in Gaborone, Botswana, in 1982, anchoring the arts and culture struggle on the foundations which were there already, in South Africa, on the continent, and in the world, through a programme called “Culture and Resistance” which primed more Arts and Culture events to assert and confirm that Arts and Culture is part and parcel of the liberation struggle. We did not end there.

We impacted on Europe, America, the Soviet Union, Asia and Latin America, through musicals, theatre, poetry readings, photography, film, music, plastic arts and dance, to emancipate and liberate the African voice. As we did so, we formed alliances with ordinary people in the world, and they formed alliances with us, so as to liberate the voices of the oppressed throughout the world also. We could do so because there was the Liberation Movement, the ANC and the Mass Democratic Movement and other liberation organisations like the PAC and BCM, and there was the Anti-Apartheid Movement. We contributed to the emergence of a culture of a people-to-people democracy, which knew no borders. We can claim that those efforts did contribute to the African consciousness, which had been planted on the continent by the African political giants, collaborating with other political giants in the diaspora, and Asia before and after the Bandung conference – all of which unleashed the spirit of Pan-Africanism and the African Renaissance and the call for the freedoms of people of the world; the Non-aligned Movement (NAM) and also the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) emerged.

It is against this backdrop of struggle, nationally and internationally, that the discussions between The Jo'burg Theatres, represented by its Chairperson, some of its board members, some South African theatre and cultural personalities led by Dr Lebogang Nawo and the German theatre and cultural workers and Professor Wolfgang from the University of Hildesheim, were held at The Soweto Theatre in Soweto recently. The partnership which is being explored, gives both sides a perfect opportunity to enter into similar partnerships with

other Cultural workers and groups in Europe and our Continent, and other peoples of the world to mount the Global Centre Stage and regain what is still fresh in the minds of the peoples of the world – a promising time of optimism and hope!

Mollo Wa Ditshomo rendered a moving performance piece during the partnership discussions, which brought back the memory of the struggle slogan which stated that: “when one comrade falls, other comrades must pick up his or her spear and fight on”. This group is based at one of the Art Centres of our country – the Funda Centre – which was part and parcel of the South African tapestry portraying the cultural expressions of our Nation. About three or four weeks before the partnership discussions at the Soweto Theatre, we had the opportunity to spend time with the creative people who are based there including Mollo and others who were involved in other different art forms under the auspices of the Department of Arts and Culture programme called the Living Legends Legacy Project.

We heard about how Funda has been invaded by a group of hooligans who have occupied the centre to rent it out to churches so that they can make money. These hooligans claim that they were freedom fighters and that because of that, they are entitled to live by any means necessary. The creative people, including Mollo, have resisted that hooliganism and they are seeking to engage the space as it should be – a place where the arts are nurtured. Historically, Funda produced many outstanding cultural workers: writers, actors, dancers, musicians, plastic artists, etc. It was most moving to experience how Mollo and others, led by Dikeledi Molatoli, were determined to reclaim that space, to lift it up almost bare-handed and with the tips of their fingers, to find a way to give it life again. During the struggle, Funda was an oasis of Arts and Culture; how can it be a place for hooligans now, when non-racialism, non-sexism and democracy are being nurtured? The Arts flourish within a cultural context where the human spirit claims freedoms and overruns barriers.

If one knew of Funda during its days

of being part and parcel of the struggle for freedom in our country, looking at it now, one can say Funda is done. It is broken. It is a shameful skeleton of what it was which is now standing. It smells like a deserted toilet and has to be rescued by the people of Soweto, the young, who, in its name and history must be ready to ensure that it reclaims its past. Dikeledi Molatoli and her group have picked up the spear of those people who not so long ago fought against the apartheid system, and built a refuge – Funda – a place from where the arts were nourished to contribute to a culture of resistance, not only in South Africa, but in the wider world.

This does not augur well. When you plant flowers and, instead of them blooming, they rot; when you try to plant vegetables and caterpillars emerge and eat up the plants; when claims about prosperity are pronounced, yet

“The Arts flourish within a cultural context where the human spirit claims freedoms and overruns barriers.”

squatter areas and poverty are glaring; when those who were freedom fighters become hooligans who threaten the population; then it is time to ponder, to introspect and to understand that things have gone wrong, terribly wrong. It is not only what we see which is an expression of things gone wrong, it is also what we hear: when the songs of struggle distort and ridicule the struggle, when instead of the diversity of the nation being the inspiration and strength of individuals and collectives, it is distorted to threaten the being of individuals, and tears collectives apart: indeed, things have gone terribly wrong.

Funda is a small symptom of a very large ailing body. The many Art Centres which had sprouted in rural, urban and suburbs of our country during the struggle, have become derelict. It is not only what we see or hear which expresses the being of the body and the mind, it is when what we cannot

see or hear or even touch, succumbs quietly to render us blind and deaf and unfeeling when we perpetually become weary that we must discover in us, the feel and understanding that, the spirit never gives in, nor does it die – it cannot be broken.

The prolific and renowned German playwright and poet Bertold Brecht and the outstanding African poet, David Mandessi Diop have nurtured and contributed a narrative and discourse in Europe, the African continent and the world, which does not only claim politics as lives of people expressed and determined to make sense of why we are here in the world, but which is also a creative narrative and discourse of the being and the spirit of the human race.

It is our responsibility, those of us who are alive, to remember that a symptom is hazard lights alerting those who are watching that something is not in place for harmony. When a place where people are present releases the stench of a toilet, as the sermon ripples in the space, competing for position with the stench – it is a sign that even the people themselves deny the image they see in the mirror whether they are passing by the mirror or they are face to face with the image on the mirror. When it is like that it is indeed a time for introspection. The arts create moments, to prime introspection; they involve a symbiotic process which must feed the spirit, the mind and the body because, as Brecht has said: “no one can be good for long if goodness is not in demand. We are in that stage in the world when “goodness” must be in demand. This has to be done so that we can make sense of why we are here in the world, which must be complemented by the priming of the spirit and feelings, as Diop asks:

*Africa, tell me Africa
Is this you this back that is unbent
This back that never breaks under
the weight of humiliation*

These are nudges for our spirit to read the writing on the wall.

We are experiencing protracted moments of assault by acts which contradict and negate the science and spirit of our revolution; we even feel ourselves regress as if into the past where powers of tyranny hold

reigns. All of us are wanting a way out so that we must not lose the gains of the revolution. At the same time, the moment demands from us that we must understand what it is we must do and we must be to absolutely commit, and as we do so, to act for a future which must ensure quality of life for all and for a liveable world for us in the present and for coming generations.

Are these not moments of the arts, the inspiration of the mind and the heart, which after expression must commit us to action where the goodness of the human-spirit resides? Both of us, South Africans and Germans, have been in pasts which were interspaced by the most horrible deeds by human beings – the brutal system of Apartheid and the inhuman ideology of Fascism respectively. Both our nations have inherited those pasts, as also we know that they came to pass through great effort, sacrifice, commitment and conviction which our people pitted against those systems.

I recall that there was – there is still – an internationally famed and influential theatre group in Germany, which commemorates Brecht's political or dialectical theatre, called the Bertold Brecht Ensemble: "no one can be good for long if goodness is not in demand". This giant of theatre and poetry was taught by life and the life of political struggle, not only in Germany, but also by the struggles of the peoples of the world. He was so taught and he taught the life of the arts to be a myriad of voices which become lullabies which must say to those who are in slumber, that even in deep slumber dreams must know and be informed by actions.

Brecht has also said that: "Intelligence is not to make no mistakes, but quickly to see how to make them good." This the German poet reminds us South Africans and his country men and women of an old time which came and went, that we, in a new time with its swift speed, which is becoming one county – the Globe – must not forget that the arts are pregnant with life experiences, will outlive the human race and politics and become a "... culture which determines history... which is positive or negative..." (Amilcar Cabral). What must we do when that history is negative?

We can do a simple thing. We can hold hands and create a song because we know that Brecht said: "no one can be good for long if goodness is not in demand." We can hold hands as we march and sing, inspired by and anchoring on the souls of the old, the poor...as Diop through words says:

Africa, tell me Africa

Is this your back that is unbent

This back that never breaks under the weight of humiliation

This back trembling with red scars

And saying no to the whip under the midday sun

The poor of the world who have faced canons and automatic rifles, choosing to live than exist in death, gave us a culture of holding hands together and singing. So did the June 16th students who instinctively knew that, as Bertold said: "No-one will improve your lot if you do not yourself". This says there is a vision,

“It is time to ponder, to introspect and to understand that things have gone wrong, terribly wrong.”

which appears, as if it were mist or in the mist, which portrays the history of our country and ties us together with the history of Germany as if we walk hand in hand in song marching. It is not a coincidence that The Jo'burg Theatre and the people who come from the Bertold Brecht Ensemble country sit and negotiate to find ways of working together in theatre and the arts. It is time to go home, to seek peace. I hope that when Professor Wolfgang from the University of Hildesheim, who led his colleagues, when he is back in Germany he will remember that the partnership is a holding of hands.

I am not only reminding him but I am also informing us here in South Africa that we convened this way. We come from a history of theatre which was on stage earlier than the '40s, '50s, '60s, '70s, '80s, a span of over seven decades, going far back even before Diphala, Scathamiya, Mohobelo, and

many other Indigenous theatres and art forms which not only entertained but educated and pondered over the drastic changes which were taking place in the lives of black people in our country. We go back to the time of praise poetry and story-telling, to the time of rituals and dances for the ancestors, before the theatre of the church.

Theatre in South Africa has been an extremely important art form. The night songs in the dark under the stars and the moon; the dances and the praise poetry moments and sessions; the ululations whether for joy or sadness; the men and women, young and old in the different languages of the people of this country, in their wisdom and education, created consciousness, awareness of different forms of life, understanding that consciousness must be expressed in order that it must become action which shapes and develops people. Theatre, or the arts in general as those rural masses understood, and as Bertold has expressed, cannot be for its sake only. Our ancestors understood that.

One of the legends of our country, "the father of South African theatre" in the townships, is Gibson Kente, a person who the actor, Kid Sithole, talks about, making him become part of the myriad drama to which one is exposed, during the tour of the heritage sites of Soweto. Most South Africans, and one must add, because of the apartheid system – especially black people in the townships, know the many theatre productions which Gibson Kente produced in this country. But also we must note that the many black people he mentored as actors, producers, directors and so on have occupied the centre stage of this dramatic art and have incubated fresh ideas by being innovative with this art form. They have been most creative in laying bare the beauty, the beasts, the contradictions, the pain and the joy – the collective being of the South African nation. Kente and his peers, Barney Simon, Athol Fugard, Sam Mahangwane and others, have not only been prolific drama creators, but they have also, many times, caught the unique but so tragic life experiences of South Africans and weaved in the South African consciousness, as also they have never

hesitated to ask through theatre: is this what we came here for, is this what we were created for as human beings?

The Soweto Theatre – the first of its kind which is not an improvised derelict apology for theatre, but which was built during the democratic dispensation, in Soweto for a population of 4 million people and hopefully for humanity, is now part of the widely sprawled Soweto landscape, literally and figuratively. It is a colourful building, and therefore very present among the houses and building structures which do not shy at all to express the social contradictions of the community of this place; it cannot just be a black theatre, yet also, it cannot not emerge as a metaphor of life not lived, building, a colourful life. The history which Sithole tells in tours unravels a tapestry of the lives of this place called Soweto. It is a history full of dramatic episodes of tragedy, comedy, bravery, great human optimism, resilience, unrelenting hope and the unbreakable human spirit. There is a great past to that; there is the great present too to that and there will be a great future which, in dramatic fashion, the past will stare into its yes# or no#: in other words to say history and the present are related, must be interlinked and related...

History has from a long time past, made it clear that the drama of the young, in their being reckless, in their being deaf, and blind at times, in their being restless – but more important, in their sense of rage about the present and the past too which they find difficult to live with and in, signify a necessary future which must rupture what must be discarded so that a present to live in and a future to be lived in will stare us in the eye and ask: what must be done now!

History has never forgotten to demand knowledge about the past from us; nor has it ever forgotten to remind us to anticipate the future as the present will either be both interesting and/or dangerous to live in. In short – it is a dangerous drama when a people, any people, forget their own history. That is why I will ask Kid Sithole whether he remembers the voice of the poets as a dramatist himself, who were produced by Soweto and those who together with them took the National stage by the scruff, during the struggle, giving

the poor and the down trodden their spirituality, their thoughts, their being, and their voice.

I am really saying four things here, which I am also putting on the National agenda:

Firstly, I would like to pay tribute to the legends of the arts in Soweto, especially in the context of the liberation struggle in South Africa. These are the people who lived the arts when there was no government to pay anything for them, to put a play together, to put together a band, to do this or that in the arts. It required sheer blood and sweat, including the fact that all of us understood at the time that what we were doing could put us in jail. I am not being romantic or sentimental when I say that, I am merely

“ Theatre in South Africa has been an extremely important art form. The night songs in the dark under the stars and the moon; the dances and the praise poetry moments and sessions; the ululations whether for joy or sadness.”

stating facts. I am saying this: young people who are in the frontline of the arts and culture now must not neglect to understand the history of arts and heritage in this country. But we should also say it can be identified through people – let me dare a dangerous thing and name some of them, knowing that I can never name all of them: Motsumi Makhene, Lebogang Nawa, Bobby Rodwell, Michael Muendane, Kid Sithole, Ishmael Mkhabela, Maishe Maponya – all of whom participated at the Soweto Theatre events, as contributors and participants. The first realisation needed, is that for young people, if you don't know your Parent's story, and if your Parents do not know their parents' parents'

stories and if mothers and fathers hide their stories from their children, those stories will express themselves through the children's madness. A history of a people is forever the identity of the future generations.

Secondly, it is extremely important that the African story must be told on the African continent – that must not mean that we must not also commit to tell other stories too – but the African voice must be emancipated, liberated and be loud and clear from the African mouths in the world. The records of that history are the feel of the lives lived as expressed by the arts. What we are inside and outside of us must say about us that we come from that time, from that place and history!

The third thing I want to say is that it is very true, it is a harmonious condition of life, in the world that arts, culture and heritage have a role to play in the lives of the people and in the being of other forms of life and the universe. Arts, Culture, and living, tangible and intangible Heritage, are there as a collective in intricate, sensitive systems and relations, which for ever demand to be known, lived, understood and forever discovered for the sake of life. Arts and culture do not only build a nation, but can also sustain that Nation against the greatest odds so that that nation/ nations not only discover meanings but also find the profound expression between science and spirituality, both of which attest to the fact that plans exist not coincidences. Of course spirituality is elusive, that is if you do not understand joy, sadness, knowing, and feelings and you live without knowing how you know or do not know – these are eternal experiments and tests which happen every second, even at times when we are not aware that they are happening. What this must mean is that expression and reality forever relate and are related forever in infinite manners and measure... .

The last thing which I want to say is that the arts do forever ask us: do you remember that feelings are important and that feeling is part of love? The arts forever ask that we must not forget to still search for that chip, the chip in our brain which says: you must remember that men and women are human. ■

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The African Renaissance, the ANC Veterans League, Africa's Development and Holistic Emancipation



The African Renaissance Monument in the Volcanic Hill of Mamelles, Dakar, Senegal

The African Renaissance seeks to repudiate the principal American and Euro-centric ideational structures that constitute the foundations of the dominant order that has always defined the peripheral locus and irrelevance of the black world in the universe.

By Ademola Araoye

The African Renaissance concept codifies the gravity of the existential challenges of Africa while critically defining the strategies of transcending, transforming and emancipating Africa and its peoples from the shackles of its ancient travails, expressed in its fractious socio-economic and political spaces and associated chronic and pervasive underdevelopment.

These challenges, the outcome of slavery, classic colonialism, settler colonialism, Apartheid, self-repudiation and many expressions of identity defections of Africans and their descendants, have spanned from antiquity to contemporary times. The African Renaissance thus advances the struggle for holistic emancipation by taking off from where the armed and revolutionary struggle for liberation

took pause. From this comprehensive and long term perspective, the armed struggle was a preliminary imperative to create the political and structural/relational conditions to launch the African Renaissance as the final offensive to achieve holistic and total liberation of not just South Africa but the totality of the African continent, and indeed, the totality of black humanity.

The scope of the African Renaissance is thus Pan-African. Veterans of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), as well as the ANC Veterans' League, must see in the advancement of the African Renaissance the tradition of the historic struggle being revived. It is the natural evolution of their historic revolutionary engagements. There is therefore no other realistic choice before the Veterans' League. The revolutionary

struggle, the armed phase of the struggle, itself was ultimately to advance the African Renaissance that was, in the final analysis, the defining motif of the liberation of Africa's broken political space. The courageous young men and women weaned in the 1960s, '70s and '80s who bore horrendous sacrifices in the armed struggle, now constitute the bulk of the MK Veterans and the Veterans' League of the historic African National Congress. They are therefore the historic inheritors of the legacy of the radical call up again to arms sounded by the African Renaissance. It is demonstrative of an unending lifelong 'a luta continua'. This 'luta' however is of a different character, even if the struggle is no less arduous.

Against the background of the African Renaissance as a desired visionary and revolutionary outcome proclaimed in the 1940s by the Youth Wing of the ANC as integral to the progressive radicalisation of the African National Congress, the end of apartheid raised hopes that South Africa, under the leadership of the African National Congress, would inject a new dynamism and provide leadership for progressive forces in the post cold war era in black Africa. It was felt that South Africa could not escape this African destiny. Under Thabo Mbeki's presidency, the radical impulse of African Renaissance driven South African foreign policy was fully deployed in its robust interventions in Africa. But first, what is the Renaissance up against?

The totality of the idea of the African Renaissance, at a conceptual level, may be understood as a black-centered counterpoise to the dominant structure of ideas and the norms and institutions that govern relations in the global system to the detriment of Africans. Its assertive Africanist worldview contrasts sharply with the negative understandings and interpretations of the African cosmology by not only extra-African powers but also implied by Africans themselves, sometimes even wittingly. The African Renaissance therefore seeks to repudiate the principal American and Euro-centric ideational structures that constitute the foundations of the dominant order that have always defined the peripheral locus and irrelevance of the black world in the universe. The African

Renaissance is also a process of and a constructivist paradigm for action. Its philosophical roots can be traced to the heterogeneous traditions of the structure of African belief systems and values and its multiple expressions. It synthesises the positive elements of these traditions with Pan-Africanist ideals into a coherent system of ideas to guide common approaches to the multifarious challenges before Africans.

In the formulation of epistemological institutions dedicated to the reversal of extra-African structures of knowledge, the renaissance seeks first and foremost to deconstruct and through consolidation reconstruct the divisive definitions of the identities of African peoples and thereby reaffirm the commonality of interests of all African peoples. The African Renaissance thus revolves around the three pivotal elements of transcendentalism, transformation and emancipation. These, together, distill the historical and experiential impulses of African societies at the end of the twentieth century. The African Renaissance expresses a changed cognitive complexity in the interpretation of historical forces that have moulded developments in Black Africa and African responses adopted as a result.

This discourse is located at a critical historical conjuncture. These developments have thrust newer realities that must impel the endeavour to translate the emerged profound challenges into opportunities, into a launching pad to re-galvanise Africa in truly renaissance and emancipatory directions. The end of the twentieth century coincided with the dissipation of historical conjunctures that had been central to the social construction of the world of Black Africa. These historical conjunctures were constituted by the confluence of four major developments.

These developments include the end of the Cold War that made bankrupt the traditional calculus of super power strategic concerns. This had a potential to put an end to the manipulation of African states and crises as pawns in grand global strategies across the ideological lines of the Cold War. The second is the delegitimation of the concept of spheres of influence maintained by neo-colonial forces. A third was the final defeat of

apartheid in South Africa. Finally, the paradoxes of a globalisation process set in motion by the end of the Cold War has called into question the relevance of colonially inspired political institutions that have remained dysfunctional to the transformation, emancipation and developmental aspirations of African peoples. The twentieth century, as a historical era, was underpinned by dominant American and Euro-centric structures of knowledge and values which defined the numerous identities of black peoples, imposed contra-pulling interests and reinforced the hegemony of the extra-African structures of ideas within the African world.

Two decades into the new millennium, the ascendance of populism, extreme right wing

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conservatism and nativist inclinations in Euro-America have raised the spectre of old fashioned open racism anew. The potential of blatant institutional assaults on and reverses to the infinitesimal gains on realigning the global system on egalitarian principles is regrettably profound. This applies to the terms of trade with the advanced industrial systems, development, health and hegemonic cultural impositions, often dubbed soft power, as well as in national interest inspired partisan intrusions of hegemonic forces in Africa's management of its numerous crises, as was demonstrated in Cote d'Ivoire and Libya. Africa's mostly unviable states would seem further challenged to rise up to the menacing new international

climate. African unity, expressed through the consolidation of its many unviable states is a strategic imperative especially in the context of an evolved global environment that grows more complex and more determined to maintain a deleterious status quo by the day.

Accordingly, in its repudiation of the dominant extra-African structures of knowledge and values as the pivots of the organisation of society and the locus of the peoples of Africa within the global spectrum, the African Renaissance challenges the structural/relational foundations on which the superstructure of the international system is built. This international realm is founded on colonially inspired and hegemonic alien structures of knowledge that transformed the historical geography of Africa in a few years. The penetration of these alien forces into Africa truncated the trajectory of developments in societies. It put in its stead incongruous ideas and institutions that confused identities of the peoples and instituted an arbitrary divisive redefinition of the allegiances of the continent. These, in turn, have spurned pervasive illegitimacies and multidimensional crises in post-colonial and post settlement/post liberation structures and institutions that have remained the challenge of black Africa in the second half of the twentieth century.

These extra-African structures of knowledge, which have dominated the African space since, created new contentions among black Africans as a result of the alienating impact of the structures of ideas, values and institutions which were the bases of the social construction of the black world. Africa's relations with the universe, the dominant values and worldviews, the rules and norms that governed intra-African relations and the place of black Africa in the universal scheme of affairs were thus externally derived. The African Renaissance confronts this construction of the African world as a philosophy and a paradigm of action. The implication of Mandela's accentuation of the Africanness of the Bantu is to challenge the legitimacy of post-colonial and conservative identities and interests imposed by the alien imposed regime.¹

Thabo Mbeki rose to the challenge of distilling the elements and revalidating the instrumentality of the African Renaissance as the strategic navigational compass to meet the evolved challenges of Africa's post/neo coloniality and in the post settlement in South Africa as well as in post liberation in Southern Africa. In this Mbeki rearmed Africa with a much needed compass to rise above its ancient debilitations. As its preeminent disciple and indefatigable advocate Thabo Mbeki, expounding on the African Renaissance, highlights that all Africans throughout our Continent are fully aware of the fundamental challenge all of us face that we must successfully and urgently address. He named the interconnected phenomena of the eradication of the poverty of the billion African masses of the African Continent. In identifying the elements of the African progressive agenda, Mbeki enthused that the African masses know that some of the major challenges our countries face, constituting the strategic national and therefore African interest, are:

- establishing genuinely democratic systems of government, including accountable State systems;
- entrenching peace, security and stability;
- achieving national and social cohesion as well as social development;
- eradicating poverty and underdevelopment through sustained and sustainable economic growth and equitable economic development;
- ensuring African integration and unity; and
- securing Africa's rightful place among the world community of nations.

To conclude, Thabo Mbeki affirmed that all these outcomes, which are critical to the realisation of fundamental social transformation, can only be achieved through conscious, purposeful and concerted action by ourselves as Africans. He argued and firmly proposed that the goals identified constitute the core of the contemporary African progressive agenda. It therefore follows that to achieve them demands of the African progressive forces that they discharge their responsibilities to ensure

their realisation. This constitute the new definitive charge in the new phase of the continuing 'a luta continua'.

These are consistent with the ANC's post-Liberation ideology codified in its National Democratic Revolution agenda. As a member of the Socialist International, the ANC also identifies the redressing of socio-economic differences stemming from colonial- and apartheid-era policies as a central focus of its policy. The National Democratic Revolution (NDR) is described as a process through which the National Democratic Society (NDS) is achieved; a society in which people are intellectually, socially, economically and politically empowered. The drivers of the NDR are also called the motive

“Thabo Mbeki affirmed that all these outcomes, which are critical to the realisation of fundamental social transformation, can only be achieved through conscious, purposeful and concerted action by ourselves as Africans.”

forces and are defined as the elements within society that gain from the success of the NDR. Using contour plots or concentric circles the centre represents the elements in society that gain the most out of the success of the NDR. Moving away from the centre results in the reduction of the gains that those elements derive. It is generally believed that the force that occupies the centre of those concentric circles in countries with low unemployment is the working class while in countries with higher levels of unemployment it is the unemployed. The ANC'S NDR mirrors key principles and tenets of the African Renaissance at the domestic level.

On its part, the ANCYL has incorporated the primacy of the

African Renaissance in its agenda in the post settlement. It notes that in the last 53 years the ANCYL established itself as an active, militant and leading youth organisation in the country. It recalls that at its founding, it provided the ANC with a clearer creed of African Nationalism which for the first time enabled the ANC to clearly appraise and understand the South African conflict, and hence formulate a radical and militant program of action. The Youth League avers that in the post settlement the African Renaissance is central to the task of building a democratic and prosperous South Africa. It concludes that South Africa cannot grow and develop economically as an island in an ocean of poverty all around it. The ANCYL charges itself to mobilise the South Africa, southern African and the entire African youth for this task. But, it is also determined to also mobilize the progressive youth movement throughout the world to play a part in this. However the ANCYL has to move beyond rhetoric and engage in purposeful and meaningful action.

The MK Veterans and then Veterans' League of the African National Congress is charged to formally:

- adopt the African Renaissance project as a natural logical outflow of its armed revolutionary struggle in the post settlement;
- where necessary, to establish and/or strengthen internal party structures and mechanisms with responsibility to engage in the implementation of different aspects of the African Renaissance;
- to serve as a watchdog of the integrity of the tenets of the African Renaissance;
- to mobilize itself, its comrades and cadres domestically as well as engage progressive forces across the African continent and internationally to advance the goals of the African Renaissance. ■

Endnote

¹ In his statement to the summit meeting of the Organization of African Unity in Tunis, Tunisia, held 13-15 June 1994, President Nelson Mandela committed South Africa to the vision of the African Renaissance when he reiterated that Africa 'must, in action, assert our will to do so. We must, in action, say that there is no obstacle big enough to stop us from bringing about a new Africa. I am happy, Mr. Chairman, to commit South Africa to the achievement of these goals', he added.



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Why the time has come for South African women to volunteer for planetary leadership...



Outgoing IEC Chair and Deputy Chair Dr. Brigalia Bam and Mrs. Thoko Mpumlwana participate in a candle-lighting ceremony to pass the baton between women leaders at an IDT/SAWID event on 28 March 2012, here with poet Naledi Chirwa. SAWID Photo

In rethinking women's contribution to a rapidly changing world, South African women are well-placed to plot a collaborative and grassroots revolution of women's leadership, articulating a women's charter with a few very clear demands.

By Marthe Muller

“This nation represents the best of the feminine efforts in the world to reform a whole nation... there are women leaders who are altruistic and who are looking for a new pattern for re-establishing a new society of family and communities.”¹ The month of August in South Africa commemorates a day of enormous collective feminine intention and impact, when, on 9 August 1956, more than 20 000 South African women marched to the Union Buildings, bastion of an oppressive apartheid system, to petition against proposed amendments to the Urban Areas Act of 1950, the pass laws that severely restricted the movement of Black African men and women in their own country.

Although this unjust system of pass laws was only formally repealed on November 13, 1986, the bundles of petitions with more than 100 00 signatures that were delivered by South African women outside the doors of then Prime Minister JG Strijdom on this day marked a significant moment in the collective legacy of South African women towards systems of human governance that are in greater alignment with the universal principles of equality, fairness and inalienable human rights.

South African women again find themselves at a crossroads where their collective intentions and efforts can set an example for the rest of the world.

The state of the world

More than twenty two years after the end of apartheid, it is clear to many that the world we inhabit is spiralling dangerously out of our conscious control in a way that severely compromises the human rights and quality of life of the majority of earth's more than 7.4 billion inhabitants.²

On 16 January 2015, a team of 18 researchers warned in the journal *Science* that four out of nine ‘planetary boundaries’³ necessary for human survival, namely climate change, loss of biosphere integrity, land-system change, and altered biogeochemical cycles (phosphorus and nitrogen), have already been crossed as a result of human activity.

The reigning global economic system, which is increasingly showing itself to be deeply unsustainable and flawed, with 24 nations already facing a debt crisis by 2015⁴, has further empowered the wealthiest 8 people in the world to amass as many assets as the combined wealth of the poorest 3.6 billion people⁵ and the economic cost of domestic violence worldwide now outnumbers the cost of all present wars by 9 to 1.⁶

The Global Peace Index, (GPI) produced annually by the Institute for Economics and Peace, with offices in New York and Australia, did a study that shows that the intensity of internal armed conflict has increased dramatically, with the number of people killed in conflicts globally rising over 3.5 times from 49,000 in 2010 to 180,000 in 2014.

The present population of earth also far exceeds the carrying capacity of a

“The three core values for attaining social sustainability in families and communities have been defined as ‘quality of life, growth and equality’ supported by the three value-emotions of ‘empathy, compassion and love.’”

sustainable society, and many experts have concurred that our planet has reached a tipping point in terms of its population growth.

A 2011 publication by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) pointed out that human sustainability depends on three determinants, namely the rate of economic growth, the rate of technological progress and the rate of population growth.⁷

The promotion of the green economy addresses two of these determinants – economic growth and technological progress – but since 29

of the 31 countries in the world where women average more than 5 children per woman are in Africa⁸, and since there exists a very clearly established link that illustrates that an increase in human development indicators requires a reduction in fertility rates, African women represent a powerful resource for global transformation.

Population/Age Pyramids of the Developed and Developing World⁹

According to a 2013 Population Reference Bureau report, Sub-Saharan Africa still has a fertility rate of 5.2 children per woman, which does not bode well for our economic and human development prospects, as statistics show that the most developed countries in the world have an average of 1.7 children per woman, and the least developed, 4.5 children per woman. Africa, which is already the poorest region in the world, is driving global population growth and it is estimated that by 2050, Africa's population will have more than doubled from its current population of 1.1 billion to 2.4 billion, with almost one in four of the world's people living in Africa¹⁰.

The additional challenges that face individuals, families and society worldwide include increasing unemployment, hunger and nutritional deficiencies, disease, obesity, lack of education and skills, continuing racism, corruption, waste, climate change, and natural disasters.

The state of South Africa

A 2014 Oxfam report further noted that 20% to 30% of all South Africans were suffering hunger in our supposedly food-secure nation.¹¹ Although our formal unemployment rate stands at 25%, South Africa has one of the highest youth unemployment rates in the world, at around 36.1%.¹²

In addition, the structures of our society do not support the most basic components of social sustainability, namely quality of life, growth and equality at the level of the individual and the family.

A Statistics SA Report released in November 2013, indicated that South Africa's infants, who represented 10% of the population, or 5.3 million

children in 2011, lived in homes characterised by the absence of fathers and a high degree of unemployed adults.

The study showed that only 33% of black children under the age of five years lived with their fathers, that half of all mothers in South Africa were classified as single, and that children raised by single mothers often live in poverty, with 61% of SA's 5.3 million children under five years receiving social grants, which means that they live in households where the primary caretaker has an income of less than R 3300 a month.

A report by the South African Institute of Race Relations, released in April 2011, similarly documented the extent of family breakdown in South Africa and the effect this was having on children and youth.

Urgent interventions are required to turn the tide of unconscious parenting, disengaged fathering, unintended single motherhood, sexism, domestic violence, incest, rape and child abuse. Such a fragmented and "multiply wounded" society cannot survive, thrive or attain resilience in uncertain and challenging times.

Global, continental, regional and national development priorities

The post 2015 sustainable development agenda, including all the local, national, regional, continental, and global development goals, can be summarised in only 5 major categories:¹⁵

- poverty eradication and economic empowerment;
- cradle to grave education, training and skills development;
- health and human security, including reduction of war, crime, domestic violence and violence against women and children;
- partnerships and coordination, leaving no one behind (disability, sexual orientation, sex workers, migrants, rural and grassroots women, youth and children, etc.); and
- environmental sustainability and climate change.

The articulated priorities of

SA women for the National Development Plan

What do women want, and how should South African women coordinate their efforts for the satisfaction of human needs? Given the enormous levels of household poverty, racism, family breakdown and father absence that were the legacies of apartheid design and practice, South African Women in Dialogue (SAWID) has emphasised the need for a national peace, healing, reconciliation and social cohesion programme since its establishment in 2003, as well as towards a psycho-social, family-based strategy to reduce poverty and inequality.

The psyche of a whole nation has remained unhealed, bruised, fragile, quick to take offense, or to be

“The integrity of the family, based on planned pregnancies, conscious parenting, engaged fathering and the professionalisation and remuneration of the unpaid work of women is fundamental to ensuring the emotional, psychological, physical and spiritual health of individuals, families and communities.”

defensive. The human infrastructure agenda in South Africa demands that we take the ragged edges of the open wound that has remained of our divisive colonial and apartheid past and pull them together to be invisibly mended.

The spending of R827 billion between 2013/14 and 2016/2017 on the national infrastructure agenda¹⁶ will not be sustainable unless we attend to the human infrastructure necessary to restore a bruised and brutalised people. This will require a

comprehensive national healing agenda, linked to a poverty eradication approach that massively skills youth to attend to the material and psycho-social needs of individuals and families, ensuring that promised services are delivered, and that human needs are identified and matched with the appropriate resources and services.

In 2011 and 2012 South African women articulated their priorities for the National Development Plan in the SA Women as Champions of Change¹⁷ provincial and national dialogues co-hosted by SA Women in Dialogue (SAWID) and the International Women's Forum of SA (IWFSa), with the support of the Royal Norwegian Embassy.

The priorities of SA women were defined as:

- a psycho-social, family based poverty eradication approach, combined with a productive self-reliance and economic empowerment strategy;
- accessible and affordable early childhood education;
- a strategy to reduce violence against women and children;
- civil society coordination (This includes women's leadership towards creating greater resilience and sustainability in addressing issues of climate change, renewable energy, food security and access to water and sanitation); and
- skills training, job creation and income generation in all of the above.

Co-creative design

"One of the fundamental concepts of this work is that any real, lasting social change that improves the quality of life of ordinary citizens always begins at the local level. Said another way, hierarchies of authority, control and power have almost never been able to develop and complete social programmes to improve the conditions of ordinary citizens. All real social progress usually begins at the local level and is initiated by local citizens."¹⁸

The recent book, *Social Sustainability Handbook for Community Builders*, indicates that social sustainability can only be achieved at the level of families

and communities, and suggests that the strategy that will have the most impact and success is one that seeks to establish co-creative design teams at local levels, (in South Africa at the level of every ward and municipality), where committed groups of 7-9 people can regularly meet to articulate a vision, intention, guiding philosophy, mission statement, objective and goals to collaboratively solve challenges identified and explored by community members themselves.¹⁹ The book suggests validating the vision, intention, guiding philosophy, mission statement, objective and goals against the three core values of social sustainability, (quality of life, growth and equality) and that recommendations from these grassroots groups then be coordinated, and linked to relevant resources and additional expertise and collaborative solutions for their implementation.

In rethinking women's contribution to a rapidly changing world, South African women are well-placed to plot a collaborative and grassroots revolution of women's leadership, articulating a women's charter with a few very clear demands. Women then need to demand funding for the implementation of this transformational women's agenda in a way that is removed from party-political interference and bureaucratic inefficiencies.

Partnerships for sustainability

The three core values for attaining social sustainability in families and communities have been defined as 'quality of life, growth and equality' supported by the three value-emotions of 'empathy, compassion and love.'²⁰ In order for South African women to take the lead in rebuilding our society humanely, we will need to partner with the existing and diverse faith-based organisations in our country that are already closest to families and communities, as well as with women from every single political party to ensure inclusivity and effectiveness.

South African women as planetary managers

- Is it possible that our 'wide and woeful land' is at the same time also

'the most adaptable and amenable nation, socially, politically and economically, that is capable of rapid, positive social evolution, one that could set an example for the rest of the world's democracies'?'²¹

- How can South African women position themselves for planetary leadership during these times of enormous change?
- The single most useful lesson we can learn is that the world is the way it is because we are the way we are. All the current systems in the world reflect the values, attitudes and behaviours of humans. If humans want better and more sustainable human development outcomes, we need to make better and more sustainable decisions.

If our world were to change greatly at one time, what would be the greatest contribution that South African women could make to more sustainable systems of "planetary management"? The idea of rapid changes in planetary fortunes is one that was raised in 2015 by several international scientists during the National Astronomy Meeting in Llandudno in Wales, when they noted that between the years 2030 and 2040, earth can expect the arrival of an intense cold spell similar to the one that raged during the "Little Ice Age", which froze the world during the 17th century and in the beginning of the 18th century, especially between 1645 and 1700.²²

Although these predictions dispute the current "scientific consensus" of climate change experts, global warming scientists and other environmentalists, if the upcoming "Maunder minimum," or prolonged reduction in solar activity predicted by solar scientists, will last for at least thirty years, it could have disastrous implications for food security, human security, livelihood, income and employment.

Humans and the planet share a common destiny. How can individual South African women contribute to 'intentional global-scale management of Earth's biological, chemical and physical processes and cycles...?'²³ What will it take for women to become stewards of the eco-system services that nurture and sustain us, including the climate, freshwater supplies, food,

energy, clean air, soil, seeds, and pollinators?

Conclusion

South Africa has a very important task to accomplish and a very specific role to play in the wellbeing of the whole planet. We represent the most conflictive and extended racial tensions resolved to some extent in a manner that was not only peaceful, but which provided hope for people in situations of conflict in every corner of the world.

Yet the level of compromise necessary for the negotiated settlement in South Africa has stressed the fabric of social cohesion to the utmost. The stresses on the social fabric includes the violence done to human potential where individuals and families continue to live in situations of poverty, deprivation, lack of skills, and unemployment, and the growing economic inequalities perpetuated by a global macro-economic system that is neither inclusive of the unpaid work of women nor reflective of the true value of human labour; the continued experience of racism, and the incredible levels of brutality that continue to characterise our society. This does not bode well for the rainbow dream that we all hoped to participate in.

South African women are again confronted with an opportunity to take a collective and revolutionary position towards the satisfaction of the most basic human needs for belonging and family-connectedness, for healing and social cohesion, for food security and access to clean water, for renewable energy sources, for safety, peace and security, and for productive self-reliance.

This revolutionary stance includes demanding the necessary coordination for the accomplishment of a consensus around a women's and human development agenda, a system to measure it, skilled people to operationalise it and an adequate budget for its implementation.

The struggle against racism and sexism remains one of the most critical challenges facing the people of South Africa. In this struggle, women cutting across party political affiliation,

religious beliefs, sexual orientation, racial and ethnic identities and class, should play a leading role.

South African women have already demanded:

- a national peace, healing, reconciliation and social cohesion programme that reaches every municipality and school;
- a psycho-social, family-based strategy to reduce poverty and inequality;
- accessible and affordable early childhood education for every child;
- A strategy to reduce violence against women and children;
- an electronic framework, added to the existing SALGA Municipal Barometer, to enable coordination between civil society, government and the private sector towards measuring women's and human development and creating greater resilience and sustainability in addressing issues of climate change, renewable energy, food security and access to water and sanitation;
- skills training, job creation and income generation in all of the above, as well as the appointment of paid women community leaders in every ward to oversee the implementation of such a transformational women's agenda; and
- prioritisation and immediate implementation of the Right to Food campaign being spearheaded by the SA Human Rights Commission²⁴, and similar to the Zero Hunger Brazilian strategy²⁵ and of the National Action Plan for South Africa on Women, Peace And Security that is in the process of being consulted and drafted, funded by UN Women, towards the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325.

What will it take for South African women to take the lead towards achieving massive social evolution during the final four years of the African Decade of Women? Seventeen years ago American futurist Susan Mehrtens wrote two books, *The Leap Frog Option* (1999) and its sequel, *Wake up South Africa*²⁶ (2000) in which she suggested that South Africa was well placed to become a world leader in the future,

due to its position in the southern hemisphere, its industrial base, its motivating past, its independent spirit, a sufficient set of challenges, its high degree of diversity and its small size. The author of the recent book *Social Sustainability Handbook for Community Leaders*²⁷ has similarly suggested that South African women are best positioned to lead the world to more sustainable human development practices based on the minimum values of quality of life, growth and equality.

Let us wake up and demand that funds be made available from government and the private sector to heal the ragged wound that still pains the nation, and to skill young men and women to identify and meet human needs, thus reducing the poverty and inequality that keep the majority of South Africans from participating in

“In this struggle, women cutting across party political affiliation, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, racial and ethnic identities and class, should play a leading role.”

the much-touted dream of a “rainbow nation”. Empower the women of South Africa to make the African Decade of Women meaningful and effective!

The integrity of the family, based on planned pregnancies, conscious parenting, engaged fathering and the professionalisation and remuneration of the unpaid work of women is fundamental to ensuring the emotional, psychological, physical and spiritual health of individuals, families and communities.

We have been called to action. Let us volunteer for planetary leadership towards greater resilience and social and material sustainability through love, compassion and empathy during uncertain and increasingly unsustainable times... Can South African women afford to wait another 17 years to step forward? ■

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- ²⁶ Sue Mehrtens is president of the Potlatch Group – a research organisation specializing in the analysis of business trends related to global evolution and social change. She has a PhD from Yale University and has worked in a range of Fortune 500 companies.
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Watershed Election Results emerge from Political Crisis in Irish Peace Process



For as long as the DUP and others within political unionism remain opposed to power sharing and equality, the north will be destined to remain gripped in permanent crisis.

By Declan Kearney

Since my previous article was published in the last edition of *The Thinker*, Quarter 1, 2017, the political process in the north of Ireland has entered a very serious and deep political crisis.

The political institutions, which represent the architecture of the Irish peace process collapsed. Consequently a new election to the northern regional assembly (parliament) took place on 2 March 2017. This election has been a watershed. It has arguably become the most important electoral contest since the Good Friday Agreement (GFA) was signed in 1998. Sinn Féin secured 224,245 votes representing a

3.9% increase in the Party's share of the vote from the previous election in May 2016.

Most significantly this election brought to an end the unionist majority in the northern assembly. Sinn Féin won 27 seats, only one less than the largest unionist party, the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), and reduced the gap between the two parties to less than 1,200 votes.

The background to the election and newly unfolding political context in the north of Ireland is set out in this article.

A key condition of the GFA framework is that the regional government in the north must operate

on the basis of power-sharing and partnership between republican and nationalist political parties and unionist (pro-union) parties.

Since 2007 the Sinn Féin leader Martin McGuinness has held the position of Joint First Minister in the regional coalition government, along with a DUP politician. In the interim period three unionist politicians have held that role with Martin McGuinness – Ian Paisley, Peter Robinson, and since May 2016, Arlene Foster.

On 9 January this year Martin McGuinness resigned from this position.

In his resignation letter he said:

“The equality, mutual respect and all-Ireland approaches enshrined in the Good Friday Agreement have never been fully embraced by the DUP.

“Apart from the negative attitude to nationalism and to the Irish identity and culture, there has been a shameful disrespect towards many other sections of our community. Women, the LGBT community and ethnic minorities have all felt this prejudice. And for those who wish to live their lives through the medium of Irish, elements in the DUP have exhibited the most crude and crass bigotry.

“Over this period successive British governments have undermined the process of change by refusing to honour agreements, refusing to resolve the issues of the past while imposing austerity and Brexit against the wishes and best interests of the people here.”

Corruption of the Political Process

The DUP's hostility towards partnership and power-sharing; its refusal to embrace equality or properly adhere to the GFA; and its institutionalised bigotry, and intolerance for mutual respect and equality have been steadily corrupting the political process.

A significant and influential section of the DUP, known euphemistically as the '12 Apostles', have always opposed power-sharing and partnership, and the GFA itself. That has found expression in their opposition to power-sharing with Sinn Féin, and hostility to equality for republicans, the Irish cultural identity, ethnic minorities, the LGBT community and women.

These are the people who forced Ian Paisley out of the DUP leadership after he led that party into coalition government with Sinn Féin in 2007, and then assumed the role of Joint First Minister alongside Martin McGuinness.

The '12 Apostles' regressive mind-set still dominates within the DUP. Their world view is guided by, in part, fundamentalist theology, conservative politics, and a desire to return to the old days of domination and a unionist one-party state in the north of Ireland.

When the Conservative Party came back into government in Britain in 2010 those on the extremes of political unionism seized on the opportunity to push back against the progress of the peace process.

This backlash has defined the political process in the north of Ireland for the last seven years.

The persistent failure of both the British and Irish governments to fulfil their international obligations under the GFA created a context within which this could happen. The reality is that when political unionism believes it is not being held to account it reverts to the old political attitudes of domination and supremacism.

Since it returned to power in 2010 the current Conservative government has adopted explicitly pro-unionist and partisan policies towards the north of Ireland. It has politically aligned itself with both the DUP and the other main unionist party, the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP). That has been evidenced by their shared positions in support of austerity; Brexit; promoting a single unionist/British narrative of the political conflict; blocking any progress on dealing with the past; and equality issues. The British Government and the DUP have both reneged on commitments made in formal agreements.

The existing political crisis is the culmination of both the British and Irish governments taking the peace process for granted since 2010 and 2011 respectively. Both governments have failed to fulfil their internationally binding responsibilities as co-equal guarantors of the GFA and to ensure its full implementation and that of successive agreements.

Background of Financial Scandals

During 2016 it emerged that an ill-conceived green energy Renewable Heating Incentive scheme (RHI) was seriously mismanaged by Executive Departments held by DUP Ministers, including the current DUP leader Arlene Foster. Now up to £500 million may be lost to the north's budget and vital public services such as health, education and infrastructure. Incompetence apart, there are serious allegations of abuse and corruption associated with the scheme. These and the whole operation of RHI will be subjected to a public inquiry established by the Sinn Féin Minister of Finance prior to the collapse of the political institutions.

This massive financial scandal and loss to public funds, comes on the back of other financial scandals with which

policy denies the northern regional government fiscal independence and refuses to recognise that the special economic and social circumstances of the north of Ireland as a society emerging from protracted political conflict, demand exceptional strategic economic interventions and investment.

Brexit and the British state's withdrawal from the EU will have further catastrophic repercussions for investment, trade, productivity and economic stability in the north. All of this will also have negative knock on consequences for the economy in the south of Ireland, and cause a reduction in overall GDP for the two economies on the island.

This is the broader economic context within which the RHI scandal is playing out.

“When the Conservative Party came back into government in Britain in 2010 those on the extremes of political unionism seized on the opportunity to push back against the progress of the peace process.”

the DUP has been associated in recent years, and questionable relationships between senior DUP figures and unionist paramilitaries.

The RHI scandal threatens to destabilise for decades the financial basis of local public services due to serious mismanagement, and parallel allegations of insider trading, aggressive commercial exploitation, and corruption associated with it.

The north's regional economy is structurally weak. Britain's partition of Ireland continues to hold back the growth potential of massive all-island economic integration. Significant historic patterns of inequality have remained unchanged, ever since the GFA was signed in 1998.

British government economic

Tipping Point of the Crisis

The DUP's arrogance in refusing to take any responsibility for RHI has caused widespread popular anger. Public confidence in the political institutions has hit rock bottom. The scandal itself represents a tipping point towards which the political process has been dragged recklessly by the DUP.

One senior unionist politician suggested that this overall political crisis was inevitable and it just happened to be on the issue of RHI.

He was right – RHI became the tipping point.

However, for as long as the DUP and others within political unionism remain opposed to power sharing and equality, the north will be destined to remain gripped in permanent crisis.

During the debate on the GFA before the regional Assembly closed down, DUP speakers referred to their party's negativity towards power sharing and how they still hold their noses towards Sinn Féin.

Those were significant insights to current DUP attitudes.

The DUP leader's subsequent dehumanising description of republicans as 'crocodiles' and her undisguised disrespect for the Irish language is a further stark illustration of that party's real mind. These comments were an echo of a previous UUP Joint First Minister David Trimble's words when he alluded to Sinn Féin as dogs

which needed to be 'house trained'.

DUP political arrogance and contempt, and how that party has abused and misused political power is at the very heart of this crisis.

Equality is not a concession or an appeasement.

All sections of society are entitled to have high expectations of our political institutions. But they have not been allowed to deliver against these benchmarks due to the DUP's subversion of the political process.

In relation to various decisions made within the regional government from 2013 the DUP has repeatedly shown bad faith in honouring agreements. In turn Sinn Féin has kept the political process under very careful review in the period since.

Our Party has invested heavily in the political institutions and persevered with inordinate patience.

The difference between Sinn Féin, the DUP, and others in political unionism is that we want to share power. The DUP is opposed to that agenda.

Republicans have sought to develop a reconciliation process. The DUP, the British Government, and others in political unionism, are opposed to that and remain locked into a mode of continuous psychological war, and recrimination.

Sinn Féin wants to ensure equality exists at the heart of the political process for all citizens. But the DUP and powerful agencies within the British state have never reconciled themselves to the outworking of power sharing and partnership. This is the reason why political unionism and the British Government have become clearly aligned in opposition to dealing with the past, with their demand for complete immunity from prosecution for offences committed by British state forces during the conflict.

So the election on 2nd March has become a watershed in the outworking of the Irish peace process.

A new phase of negotiations commenced on 6 March 2017 involving all the parties and the British and Irish governments. A three week period has been set aside for these talks. Sinn Féin will participate positively in an attempt to restore public confidence in

the political process and to re-establish the political institutions on the correct basis. There can be no return to the status quo.

But equally, there is no need for protracted negotiations. What's actually required is implementation of the GFA and other previous agreements.

However, the public political positions, particularly on dealing with the past, suggest that both the British and DUP may not want be serious about resolving this political crisis.

The British Secretary of State for the north, James Brokenshire, has in recent months sought to posture as a neutral referee, whilst at the same time attempting to 'legalise' the impunity conferred upon British state forces during the conflict. Both he and the DUP are attempting to give primacy to a single unionist narrative of the conflict in Ireland, and are also trying to write the British state out of its central role and responsibility for the conflict in Ireland.

British and DUP Deepen the Crisis

These and other interventions by the DUP leadership are in fact deepening the political crisis. All this suggests that the DUP does not want to engage seriously in negotiations.

The GFA drew a line under the political conflict in the north of Ireland. As a result the peace process is irreversible.

The British and Irish governments need to understand that equality, parity of esteem and respect for all citizens of society in the north are not negotiable.

That negotiation is over. It concluded in 1998 with the signing of the Good Friday Agreement. Yet nineteen years later it has still not been fully implemented. This fact exacerbates the scale of the current crisis.

Until the DUP and others in political unionism, and both the British and Irish governments accept responsibility for implementing the GFA, and their binding international obligations, this much is clear – there will be no restoration of the political institutions.

Sinn Féin acted decisively to bring the political corruption of the political process to an end. We will be just as decisive in preventing the political institutions being re-established unless these negotiations deliver the

guaranteed outcomes of proper power-sharing, equality and implementation of the GFA.

Direct rule from Britain was a failed status quo in the north of Ireland. The DUP's refusal, and the two governments' failure, to adhere to the GFA and other successive agreements, has now created another failed status quo. There will be no return to either scenario.

No Going to the Back of the Bus Again

The Sinn Féin position is clear – republicans, nationalists, gays, women, and ethnic minorities will not be pushed to the back of the bus ever again.

There must be a qualitative step change in the political process and an end to political corruption. Unless that happens, and unless equality is firmly entrenched at the heart of the political process, there is no point in having the political institutions because they will have no value.

In those circumstances, the north of Ireland could face the prospect of protracted political crisis.

That would be an untenable situation.

Civic society in conjunction with political parties opposed to corruption and which support equality and power-sharing need to mobilise in defence of the GFA and the Irish peace process.

The Irish Government must end its semi-detached and passive approach to the peace and political process and challenge the British Government's negativity and partisan unionist policies.

An international axis is also needed to bring maximum political and diplomatic pressure to bear, embracing positive political and civic forces from both the northern and southern hemispheres.

That is an urgent strategic requirement to ensure the crisis within the Irish peace process does not escalate.

International intervention, goodwill and support including from the African continent for the Irish peace and political processes are now more important than ever, to ensure that the hope and ambition of the Good Friday Agreement is realised. ■

Ed: Sadly, Martin McGuinness died on 21/03/2017

AFRICAN SOLUTIONS TO AFRICAN PROBLEMS

An analysis of the nature and origins of African problems



This imperial system has underdeveloped Africa by draining African wealth and by making it impossible to develop more rapidly the resources of the continent.

By Eric Blanco Niyitunga

Although the dynamics of global political systems and Africa's international relations are forever changing, the relevance and position of "African Solutions to African Problems" within the spheres of international politics remain a valid and defining factor of African diplomacy. The African Union (AU), sub-regional organisations and patriotic African scholars, whether on the continent or in the diaspora, are the significant players in the application of this principle. Today, as never before in African history, we witness countless debates surrounding the ability of Africans to understand the problems of the continent and provide solutions to them. Is this demand a myth or reality? African solutions necessitate the understanding of the nature of African problems and devising suitable

and/or sustainable solutions to them, as well as the capacity to implement in a practical manner.

The major task is to understand African problems by exploring their root causes. This is because any solution must derive from and address the root causes or it will not be sustainable. African problems can be triggered by innumerable issues, including: intractable conflicts; the culture and attitude of some African leaders (for example, of changing their constitutions to remain in power for life); deep-rooted poverty; outbreaks of uncontrollable diseases; the issue of African in Northern Africa drowning in the Mediterranean Sea as they run away from the continent; terrorism and terror wars in the Horn of Africa and West Africa; and xenophobia in some cities in South Africa. Such problems

raise many questions.

Many African problems have degenerated into full blown conflicts. African rulers and politicians are pointing out and emphasising that the best way of dealing with these conflicts is through a home-grown localised African solution.¹ The aim of this article is to critically examine the nature and origin of many of the most typical African problems, and how much these problems have impacted on the lives of Africans.

African problems: A critical inquiry

The origin of African problems is linked to the history of the Arab and trans-Atlantic slave trade; colonialism; the Cold War; and the US-led Global War on terror. These events had a tremendous impact on the mind and behaviour of African people. It is argued that slavery existed in Africa long before Europeans arrived, in the 1400s. However, Europeans introduced a form of slavery that devastated African life and society.² Scholars have estimated that 10 to 12 million Africans were forced into slavery and sent to European colonies in North and South America from 1520 to 1860. Moreover, many more Africans were captured but died of disease and/or of starvation before arriving.³

One major impact of the trans-Atlantic slave trade is derived from the fact that slave traders targeted Africans between the ages of 18 and 30. This, of course, robbed our continent of young people, very energetic, healthy, leaving behind their task of leading and developing their communities and families.⁴

Unfortunately, while these labourers were being sold, killed, oppressed and tortured, others were forcibly working for the building up and development of the first world states, Europe and USA in particular. European slave traders chose young, strong, healthy people, leaving a few weak and sick Africans behind to lead families and villages. A critical impact was that African cities, towns and villages did not have enough workers, and leadership structures and family structures were devastated.⁵ And yet the family remains the basic school where future leaders of a society and nation are nurtured.

Thus the trans-Atlantic slave trade created a great vacuum in terms of human development, political leadership, and economic development and this marked the start of African problems. For almost five hundred years Africa remained without strong and healthy workers who could have developed the continent. Literature depicts that the impact on the African people is still visible in the modern African person, in the way they behave, react, as well as the feeling of inferiority before a white person. It is argued that Africans tend to hate themselves and wish to be white (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013: 48).

He further argues that "African people continue to manifest the disease of mental colonisation which made them assist in the reproduction of a racially hierarchised world system". Arguably, this is the reason why Africans are today acting like confused people on the continent. Critical examples include the xenophobia attacks on their fellows Africans in South Africa, and the drowning in the Mediterranean Sea of those running away from the continent to Europe.

After the trans-Atlantic slave trade was abolished and made illegal, Africa and her people did not have a period of respite to recover from it and find solutions to the problems it had created on the continent. Moreover the European world which had devastated the continent did not see it important to help Africans, neither did it give them opportunities to recover from the wounds created by the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Instead, colonialism, which was a kind of foreign leadership, was introduced and imposed on Africa and her people by force. Hence, colonial and oppressive rule was established.

Through the introduction of colonial education, colonialism alienated African young people from their own cultures and undermined African traditions. Slowly, African people began to consent to colonial rule and to surrender the elements of their culture and traditions (Khapoya, 2012: 103). Against this backdrop, colonialism also taught European ways of thinking, which often conflicted with, and destroyed, African traditions. Yet African solutions must be rooted in

African cultures and traditions.

Problems caused by colonial legacies in political leadership and institutions are still rampant on the continent. Mazrui argues that the problems facing Africa are actually consequences of the presence of Western imperialism on the continent. There were no divisions and boundaries in pre-colonial Africa, and African people were united and lived together in groupings (Mazrui, 2012: 30). This means that the failure of African leadership we see every day is in fact the lack of a leadership that is rooted in African cultures. Thus, I argue that colonialism is still with us, embedded in the systems of political leadership on the continent.

Thomson (2000) notes that European imperial rule is inherent in the systems of governance in almost all the African states. This argument is confirmed by Ahmed Mohiddin (1998), who points out that immediately after independence, colonial authorities chose their collaborators and, wherever possible, imposed them on the people. These people have inherited the divide and rule system of governance from colonial masters till today. Therefore many of the first generation of African leaders were colonial collaborators in the sense that these leaders were created and supported by colonial authorities (Mohiddin, 1998). Thus, colonialism has continued and still devastates the continent in many countries through the current political leadership.

Consequently, the first generation of African leaders who assumed power in post-independence Africa acquired all the attributes of the colonial state and governance. In spite of the elections and promises of more freedom that preceded independence, the states continued to be unresponsive, unaccountable, lacking in transparency, and in most cases repressive (Mohiddin, 1998). Unfortunately colonialism continues to manifest itself in African political leadership today, which means that many African leaders have turned into tyrannical masters over their fellow Africans.

It is important to note that if structures in place are colonial, whether the leader is an African or not,

this leader would find it hard to do other than what the structures dictate. Thus, colonialism and its legacies made African problems endemic.

The other event that intensified African problems is the Cold War. It is important to know that while Africa was still suffering from the wounds caused by the trans-Atlantic slave trade and colonialism, the Cold War did not spare her. Africa was devastated by the Cold War which had a tremendous impact on the continent. With two elephants (USA and USSR) fighting (including ideologically), Africa became the battle field for proxy conflicts and violence which were deadly in nature. While colonialism led to the emergence of African leaders who are colonial collaborators, the Cold War led to proxy wars and military coups on the continent. The Cold War created proxy wars, and also created proxy leaders.

The Cold War also destroyed the evolution of local ideology which sought to address local issues in an African way. In many parts of Africa, the Cold War led to the presence of warlords, criminal gangs, and paramilitary groups. Economies became fragmented; political power vacuums were created and left unsolved; ordinary people were discriminated against and denied the available opportunities (Schmidt, 2013: 193).

Instead of ethnicity being an opportunity for human growth and economic development, it became one of the deadliest triggers of conflicts, thus worsening African problems.

Another factor that is escalating and worsening African problems and making them more complex is the ongoing Global War on Terror. Nhema and Tiyambe argue that the US-led 'war on terror' in Africa and other parts of the world is the liberatory logic of anti-colonial wars in that it is an imperial war in so far as it seeks to advance the agenda of the world's pre-eminent imperial power, the United States (Nhema and Tiyambe, 2008). Aspects of this imperial war include the rise of Boko Haram in Nigeria and Al-Shabaab in Somalia.

Walter Rodney in his outstanding book *How Europe underdeveloped Africa* argued that the presence of

the imperial system embedded in the governance of many African states is by and large responsible for African problems. This imperial system has underdeveloped Africa by draining African wealth and by making it impossible to develop more rapidly the resources of the continent. He also demonstrated that western capitalism was extending its exploitation from Europe to include the whole of Africa.

Africans: their own enemies

The major problem that makes the continent vulnerable and the source of many other problems is the lack of political will and patriotism. Many African states lack total independence from their colonial masters. Such African leaders are still dependent on their colonial masters, and thus a proxy of external forces. They also lack that political will and patriotism that would make them love their own states and the continent as well. Ahmed says that many of the leaders on the continent are created and supported by the colonial authorities (Mohiddin, 1998).

Being created and established by the colonial masters means that the leader serves those who put him/her in power at the cost of Africans. Should I serve those who put me in power and continue to support me or the interests of Africans? Such 'puppet' leaders confront this dilemma. If they wish to retain power and privilege they will continue to serve the ex-colonial masters.

This has aggravated African problems and made the process of finding African solutions to African problems exceedingly difficult. Lack of political will and patriotism has led African leaders to turn into tyrannical rulers and dictators. These leaders impose themselves on the people, and remain in power for life.

This is another problem that has created resentment and led to the militia groups, rebellions, and retarded economic development which characterise many African states. For example, the current President of Burundi had recently refused to relinquish power, a decision that led to loss of many lives, and created refugee problems in the neighbouring states.

As with other many leaders on the continent, to succeed, he manipulated the judicial systems to organise his own general elections without any competitor, which he unashamedly called democratic, free and fair. The International Crisis Group (2016:2) report says that President Pierre Nkurunziza and his CNDD-FDD ruling political party decided "to do away with the institutional system established by the Arusha accord – an agreement between Hutu and Tutsi elites in 2000 which put in place an ethnic quota system for state institutions, including the army, and established a two-term presidential limit".

It is regrettable to note that many African leaders are perpetrators of the African problems. They condone and protect the unacceptable behaviour of their fellow leaders. For example, both the current president of South Africa, Jacob Zuma, and the facilitator in the Burundian crisis, former Tanzanian President, William Benjamin Mkapa, said the Burundian 2015 general elections were legitimate. These African leaders further said that there was no reason to question the legitimacy of president Nkurunziza. While the ICG report says that president Nkurunziza's third term is illegitimate and violated the 2000 Arusha peace accord, those African leaders said his third term is legitimate. Should one trust the ICG report or president Zuma and the facilitator's report?

One can see that President Pierre Nkurunziza's decision to run for a third term brought about violence and made it very difficult to find a more just and peaceful resolution to the conflict. As bad manners are infectious, the trend continues. For example, the likes of Kagame of Rwanda, Museveni of Uganda, Denis Sassou Nguesso of Congo Brazzaville, and Joseph Kabila of the Democratic Republic of Congo, to name a few, have equally changed their constitutions to remain in power for life. Those leaders have no intention of serving the interests of their people or the continent, thus rendering African Solutions to African problems even more complex and elusive.

The issues of corruption, ethnicity, and bad governance perpetrated by Africans themselves cut across

the continent. In many African governments, leadership is based on tribalism and marred by corruption. For example, in Kenya, political parties are organised along tribal lines. It is said that a corrupt society begets corrupt leaders. This weakens the AU and makes it very hard to find African solutions, because the agency is made up of the very same African leaders who are the African problems. Hence, one can argue that Africans are their own enemies.

Conclusion

African problems are man-made and can be solved by men and women. There is a need to develop strong political will and patriotism on the side of Africans. There is a need to examine our attitude toward our continent and our respective countries. I imagine if 54 African states with one goal come together to understand our African problems, African solutions that could lead the continent to a higher level and free it from the current problems could be found in a very short period.

It is pertinent to note that countries in the North have recognised that Africans themselves must carry out the agenda of resolving their own problems. France, for instance, expressed the view that African states and the AU must make greater financial contributions for peace operations, and must take the lead in resolving problems that their continent is currently facing. This would necessitate the understanding of the nature and origin of African problems. It would also require Africans to have strong political will and patriotism, otherwise African solutions to African problems will remain a distant dream. ■

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Is Israel an America colony?



The US has given more aid to Israel than it has to all the countries of sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean combined – which have a total population of over a billion people.

By Anton M. Pillay

On December 25th 2016, the UN Security Council adopted a resolution demanding a halt to Israeli illegal settlements in the occupied territories. The resolution was passed unanimously (14-0) despite both the Israeli government and president elect Donald Trump applying pressure on the White House to veto the resolution. The US decision to abstain led Trump to declare that when he takes office the state of Israel's agenda will be prioritised. Despite Trump's rhetoric, US-Israel relations have been based on the ideology of "shared values." As a point of reference, the US decision to abstain from this particular resolution is nothing short of damning of Israel's policies, as in 2011 the US vetoed a similar resolution and since 1972, the US has used its veto powers to protect Israel. Examples of resolutions vetoed by the USA include:

- 1972 Condemning Israel for the death of hundreds of people in Syria and Lebanon in air raids and the violation of the cease-fire of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war.
- 1973 Affirming the rights of the Palestinians and calling on Israel to withdraw from the occupied territories.
- 1976 Condemning Israel for attacking Lebanese civilians.
- 1976 Condemning Israel for building settlements in the occupied territories.
- 1976 Calling for self-determination for the Palestinians.
- 1976 Affirming the rights of the Palestinians.
- 1978 Criticising the living conditions of the Palestinians.
- 1978 Condemning the Israeli human rights record in the occupied territories.
- 1979 Calling for the return of all inhabitants expelled by Israel.
- 1979 Demanding that Israel desists from human rights violations.
- 1979 Requesting a report on the living conditions of Palestinians in the occupied Arab countries.
- 1979 Providing assistance to the Palestinian people.
- 1980 Condemning the Israeli policy on the living conditions of the Palestinian people.

- 1980 Condemning Israeli human rights practices in the occupied territories.
- 1980 Affirming the right to self-determination for the Palestinians.
- 1981 To discuss the issue of Palestinian refugees in the Gaza Strip.
- 1981 To grant the rights of displaced Palestinians to return home.

Since 1982, the United States has vetoed 32 United Nations Security Council resolutions that were critical of Israel, a number greater than the combined total of vetoes cast by all the other Security Council members. A few prominent US Veto votes since 1982 include:

- 1995 Stating that land in East Jerusalem, annexed by Israel is occupied territory.
- 2003 Condemning the decision of the Israeli parliament to "eliminate" Palestinian President-elect Yasser Arafat.
- 2003 Condemning the construction of a wall by Israel on Palestinian land.
- 2006 Calls for an end to raids and Israeli military attacks on Gaza.

In the majority of these resolutions the US vetoed alone, or with only Israel plus one in support of it against a hundred plus state majority. As of 2013, Israel had been condemned in 45 resolutions by United Nations Human Rights Council since its creation in 2006.

The unwavering support that America affords to Israel does raise the question: Is Israel a colony of the US? A colony is defined as a country or area under the full or partial political control of another country and occupied by settlers from that country. The term colonisation refers strictly to migration, for example, to settler colonies in South Africa or New Zealand, trading posts, and plantations, while colonialism deals with this, along with ruling the existing indigenous peoples of styled "new territories". Colonialism is the establishment of a colony in one territory by a political power from another territory, and the subsequent maintenance, expansion,

and exploitation of that colony.

Using these various definitions as examples, to what extent can Israel be described as a US colony?

The colony as a substate

The idea that the colony is a substate of the homeland is prominent in the colonialisation philosophies of France and Britain. France viewed its colonies such as Algeria as "an extension of its borders". Britain saw its colonies as large corporations, hence the setup of "companies" such as the Royal Niger Company or the Imperial British East Africa Company. In the upkeep of the colony, the core must channel funds to the periphery to maintain the colony's efficiency as "sources of revenue." This exploitation is conducted

“Since 1982, the United States has vetoed 32 United Nations Security Council resolutions that were critical of Israel, a number greater than the combined total of vetoes cast by all the other Security Council members.”

through a bureaucracy usually run by a Governor. Basically, the core must undertake the expensive task of setting up an efficient government. This can be very expensive as seen in the case of a bankrupt Britain at the end of WW2 succumbing to the anti-colonial revolutionary struggle baby the Indian National Congress.

This bankrolling paradigm is observable in the US-Israeli relationship. The US has given more aid to Israel than it has to all the countries of sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean combined – which have a total population of over a billion people. Since 1949 the US has given Israel approximately \$130 billion plus while other estimates range

from \$200 billion plus. Since 1992, the US has offered Israel an additional \$2 billion annually in loan guarantees. Congressional researchers disclosed that between 1974 and 1989, \$16.4 billion in US military loans were converted to grants. In addition, there is the more than \$1.5 billion in private US funds that go to Israel annually in the form of \$1 billion in private tax-deductible donations and \$500 million in Israeli bonds. In 2007, US donations/diaspora remittances reached \$2.1 billion in a single year.

Israel receives about \$3 billion in direct foreign assistance each year, which is roughly one-fifth of America's entire foreign aid budget. In per capita terms, the United States gives each Israeli a direct subsidy worth about \$500 per year even though Israel comprises just .001 percent of the world's population and already has one of the world's higher per capita incomes on par with Spain or South Korea. Indeed, Israel's GNP is higher than the combined GNP of Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, the West Bank and Gaza. With a per capita income of about \$14,000, Israel ranks as the sixteen wealthiest country in the world; Israelis enjoy a higher per capita income than Saudi Arabia and are only slightly less well-off than most Western European countries.

The US provides Israel \$10.2 million in military aid each day, US military aid to Israel was \$2.775 billion in 2010, \$3 billion in 2011, \$3.07 billion in 2012 (and \$3.15 billion per year from 2013-2018). In 2016, the US signed a \$38 billion military aid package over a decade which will start in 2018.

Normally US aid recipients receive funding in quarterly instalments, but Israel receives its entire appropriation at the beginning of each fiscal year. In the case of military aid, the requirement is that all should be spent on American companies. Israel though is the only recipient that does not have to account for how the aid is spent and uses roughly 25% of its aid allotment to subsidise its own military industry.

Migration

A further aspect of the colony is the migration or arrivals between the state and its colony. The United

States has played a special role in assisting Israel with the complex task of absorbing and assimilating masses of immigrants in short periods of time. Within months of Israel's founding in 1948, President Truman offered \$135 million in loans to help Israel cope with the arrival of thousands of Holocaust refugees. Within the first three years of Israel's establishment, the number of immigrants more than doubled the Jewish population of the country.

Drawing on 2014 estimates of Israeli government ministries and Israeli American Council which represents Israelis across the United States and promotes their interests, there are between 500,000 and 800,000 Israelis living in the US. A significant figure given Israel's 2014 population was 8 million. Between 2015 and 2016, approximately 4000 Americans emigrated to Israel. Two-thirds of US-Israeli borns have dual citizenship; approximately 91,000 in 2010. The largest number of Israeli tourists in 2015 came from the US with 640,000 arrivals, representing a 2% increase from the previous year.

Both the US Capitol Hill and Knesset have many members with dual US-Israeli citizenship. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as well as former Prime Ministers Shimon Perez and Ehud Barak completed their university education in the US. As such the cultural affinities between the two are immense.

Expansion of new territory

According to Mearsheimer the US has become the *de facto* enabler of Israeli expansion in the occupied territories. Despite the recent resolution to "condemn", the US has long protected the expansion of "new territory" giving Israel wide latitude in dealing with the occupied territories (the West Bank and Gaza Strip). In 2004, President Bush proclaimed that Israel would not have to return all the territories that it occupied in 1967 and that Palestinian refugees would not be allowed to return but would have to resettle elsewhere.

Trump's nominee to become the next ambassador to Israel, David Friedman, has been an outspoken supporter of settler groups the illegal settlements in occupied territories

and has cast doubt on the notion of a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian dispute.

Over half a million Israeli settlers now live in the occupied West Bank. Under international law, it is illegal for Israel to move Israeli settlers into the occupied Palestinian territories. Israel is on the verge of annexing 60% of the West Bank.

The colony as a trading post

The US is Israel's largest single trading partner. The United States-Israel Free Trade Agreement, established in 1985, was the first free trade agreement entered into by the United States. Since, trade between the countries has increased fivefold to \$49 billion in 2016. Israelis now invest close to \$24 billion in the United States, nearly triple what it was a decade earlier.

In its efforts to defeat 'radical'

“Israel is the only recipient that does not have to account for how the aid is spent and uses roughly 25% of its aid allotment to subsidise its own military industry.”

movements, Israel has become a testing ground for US weaponry. Between 2001 and 2008, Israel was the 7th largest arms supplier to the world, selling \$9.9 billion worth of equipment. In 2015, Israel sold \$5.7 billion in military goods to other countries. The United States also contributes funds for a joint US-Israeli Missile Defence Program. Arrow II, Arrow III, David's Sling, and Iron Dome refer to different projects under the umbrella of this Missile Defence programme. In 2015, the US spent \$619.8 million on these programmes and plans to spend between \$280 and \$601 million in 2017 (depending on Congressional approval).

As with Apartheid diamonds, Israel has successfully funnelled US arms to third countries to which the US could not send directly, such as apartheid

South Africa, the CONTRAS, the Guatemalan military Junta, South Sudan, and Iran.

American companies such as Motorola, HP, IBM, Microsoft and Intel chose Israel to establish major R&D centres. Critical components of leading American high-tech products are invented and designed in Israel, making these American companies more competitive and more profitable globally.

US firms have been a big part of the Start-Up Nation story, with US companies establishing two-thirds of the more than 300 foreign-invested research and development centres in Israel. Israeli firms, meanwhile, represent the second-largest source of foreign listings on the NASDAQ after China – and more than Indian, Japanese, and South Korean firms combined.

Israel is home to more than 2,500 US firms employing some 72,000 Israelis, according to an estimate by the US Chamber of Commerce.

Conclusion

What do you call a relationship where one country pays tribute to another? And where one country sends its men and women to fight to defend the interests of another? American right-wing political heavyweight John McCain was quoted as saying he would go to war for Israel at the drop of a hat. It is worth noting that in the past two decades American military aggression has caused a serious economic and political crises in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya and Syria. Israel remains America's most reliable partner in the Middle East. Israel and the United States are bound closely by historic and cultural ties as well as by mutual interests.

Israel serves as a surrogate for American interests in a strategic region. The US-Israel relationship is based on the twin pillars of shared values and shared interests. Given this commonality of interests and beliefs, it should not be surprising that support for Israel is one of the most pronounced and consistent foreign policy values of the US.

Indeed, Israel does fit the description of colony. ■

The rise of Donald Trump in the context of Universal Racism



In the mind of Donald Trump and his supporters, the protection of the American “nation” against international terrorism and immigration simply means the protection of the white ethnic majority.

By Gerson Uaripi Tjihenuna

The rise of Donald Trump should be seen in the broader context of the right-wing wave of white nationalism that has been sweeping across Western Europe over the last two years or so.

On 08th November 2016, the American people went to the polls to elect their 45th President. The race

was hotly contested between the Democratic Party nominee, Hillary Clinton, and her Republican Party rival, Donald Trump. Against all odds, Donald Trump was elected as the next President of the United States and he was subsequently sworn in on 20th January 2017.

The American Presidential elections

usually draw a lot of international attention for a number of reasons. Given the size of the US economy and her military power, the US is, beyond any shadow of a doubt, the most influential state internationally. Another reason why American elections attract international interest is the fact that the multi-party democratic model that has

come to be accepted internationally as a norm, has, to a large extent, been influenced by the American political system.

Before I attempt to analyse the rise of Donald Trump, I want to first and foremost qualify my reservations about the American political system in general. I have a problem with the totalisation and universalisation of the American political system. By that I mean that the American political system is used as the de facto model or absolute yardstick of political democracy world-wide; and that notion is almost taken for granted by many. However, the American political system has a lot of shortcomings and contradictions which many people are perhaps not aware of. For example, is it correct to talk about multiparty democracy in the US if it is a de facto bi-party system with the Democratic Party and the Republican Party having dominated the political scene over hundreds of years?

What many outsiders are also not aware of is that political lobbying (the use of money to sponsor or fund the campaigns of Presidential candidates, for example) is a booming industry involving big corporations and other lobby groups that employ professionals to influence politics and policy direction in favour of certain corporate interests. Therefore, the vote of a private American citizen is not necessarily the most important determining factor in influencing the outcome of the US Presidential elections or the subsequent policy direction that the elected President will pursue. One can also argue that there is an asymmetry between political and social rights – with the balance heavily skewed in favour of political rights at the expense of social rights. Social rights are those rights that deal with social justice issues e.g. medical care, education, housing etc. Obamacare, which is a pro-poor medical care programme introduced by the Obama Administration, and which Trump has now reversed, is a case in point. This has not come as a surprise because the imbalance between political and social rights is usually very pronounced when you have a Republican President in power. These are just a few of the

shortcomings one can think of; there could be more.

However, it is problematic that the dominant discourse has led vast numbers of people to arrive at a general conclusion that there is no alternative to the American system of political governance and the so-called free market economic system that sustains it. In other words, the dominant discourse dictates that the seemingly “unknown” alternative political model is “false.” To put it differently, the system simply does not allow for an alternative universe or other transcending modes of freedom. To borrow a phrase from Herbert Marcuse’s book, *One Dimensional Man*, the system is “immune” to change but the majority of the citizens are not aware of this immunity. The system has over hundreds of years shaped and defined certain assumptions that are now, by and large, accepted by society

“Trump represents a social phenomenon or movement which can be referred to as “right-wing white nationalism” – that has a strong universal dimension.”

as facts. The citizen’s private space is so much invaded by mass culture, consumerism and political socialisation that he/she is “forced” – not by coercion but by ideology – to conform to existing thought and behaviour. The citizens’ thought processes are shaped by words like freedom; democracy; immigrants; international refugees; international terrorism; Islamic fundamentalism etc.

The problem is that these words are not neutral, as some might think, but ideologically value-laden and even their meaning is defined and pre-packaged by the system and this is then presented to the citizens as common sense. This dominant mode of discourse is reinforced by state institutions, the media, religion, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrine etc. It

was this play of ideologically value-laden words in the context of the existing political climate in the US and globally that Trump effectively used to ascend to the Presidency by appealing to a predominantly right-wing leaning white constituency. There were certainly other factors at play, but in my opinion, this was the trump-card that Trump used.

Trump has basically reversed the American political life ninety degrees back to the White Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP) days; both domestically and at the international level. The phrase WASP has historically been used in reference to *an informal, but closed social group of high-status and influential white Americans of English Protestant ancestry*¹ This is the group that is said to have controlled the financial, political and social life in the US for many years. It is interesting to note that out of the 45 Presidents that have ruled America over the years, only John F. Kennedy and Barack Obama were not from this group. Kennedy was a Roman Catholic and Obama an African-American. It is also worth noting that, for example, for many years, both the Irish and Italian Americans (two groups that happen to be predominantly Catholic) were not considered as “members” of mainstream “white America.” That theme is, for example, captured in Patrick McKenna’s book titled *When the Irish became White*.

The WASP ideology – although it was never formally written – was, to a certain extent, informed by the 20th Century German Sociologist Max Weber’s book *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. The central thread of that book is that although economic production for gain had existed in other civilisations like India or China, it was only in the West where capitalism, for the first time, gained momentum and took off.

This, according to Weber, is due to the notion of the ‘calling.’ This notion of the ‘calling’ did not exist either in Antiquity or in Catholic theology; it was introduced by the Reformation, Weber argues. In other words, the highest form of moral obligation of the individual is to fulfil his/her duty in worldly affairs. This is particularly so for those who are

called out or chosen, who then need to demonstrate high work ethics and iron discipline. The surety of being chosen is to be demonstrated through the performance of ‘good works’ in worldly activities.²

Weber further argues that it was this Protestant ethic that paved the way for the introduction of the formal factory system and thus the creation of a ‘free’ mass of wage-labourers whose livelihood depends upon the sale of labour power in the market. According to this theory, for the first time in history, there were ‘free’ labourers who were neither slaves nor mere household unit producers.

Max Weber’s theory is based on the doctrine of predestination as advocated by John Calvin. According to this doctrine, only some human beings are chosen to be saved from damnation; and that choice is predetermined by God. This was the doctrine that was used to undergird and justify the Apartheid ideology.

Relying heavily on this WASP informal ideology, and perhaps without saying so openly, Trump is pursuing a doubled-edged conservative policy of marginalising the minorities and rolling back social and other rights that affect minorities at the domestic front, while following a hawkish and isolationist foreign policy. The last minute cancellation of talks between him and the Mexican President, Pena Nieto, a few days after he had assumed office, is a case in point. The reason why the talks were cancelled was because Trump was still insisting on building a wall between the US and Mexico for which the latter would have to pay. Just after a few days in office, Trump has also placed a blanket ninety-day ban preventing citizens from seven predominantly Muslim countries from visiting the US. This is a policy decision that has not only sparked international anger but also protests in a few cities across the US rejected by the courts.

He has also sent signals that he might use the one-China policy as a “bargaining chip” in negotiations with China. The one-China policy implies that most countries, including the United States, regard Taiwan as part of China. However, Trump wants to

entertain the possibility of recognising Taiwan as an independent state; a move that China would regard as a “slap in their face.” When all is said and done, it is imperative to note that it is not only the progressive forces that are opposed to Trump’s policies but a good number of leading Republicans have been distancing themselves from the neo-conservative policy pronouncements of Donald Trump as well.

The bottom-line, however, is that we cannot understand the rise of Donald Trump just as an individual in isolation; we need to analyse and unpack that within a broader socio-cultural and political context. Trump represents a social phenomenon or movement which can be referred to as “right-wing white nationalism” – that has a strong universal dimension.

“Whiteness is more than just skin colour. You could define it as a membership in the ethno-national majority. What it really means is the privilege of not being defined as other.”

In the era of perceived or real danger of international terrorism; refugee crisis; and international immigration, the right-wing movement of white nationalism has been sweeping like a wave across a good number of Western countries.

The decision of Britain to exit from the European Union should, for example, be understood within that context as well. The leader of the far-right National Front in France, Marine Le Pen, has also come out singing praise songs to the Donald Trump victory. In an article that was published in *The New York Times* on 2nd November 2016 and re-published in *The Namibian* newspaper of 4th November 2016, titled “Behind 2016’s Turmoil, A Crisis of White Identity” Amanda Taub argues that: ...whiteness

is more than just skin colour. You could define it as a membership in the ethno-national majority. What it really means is the privilege of not being defined as other.

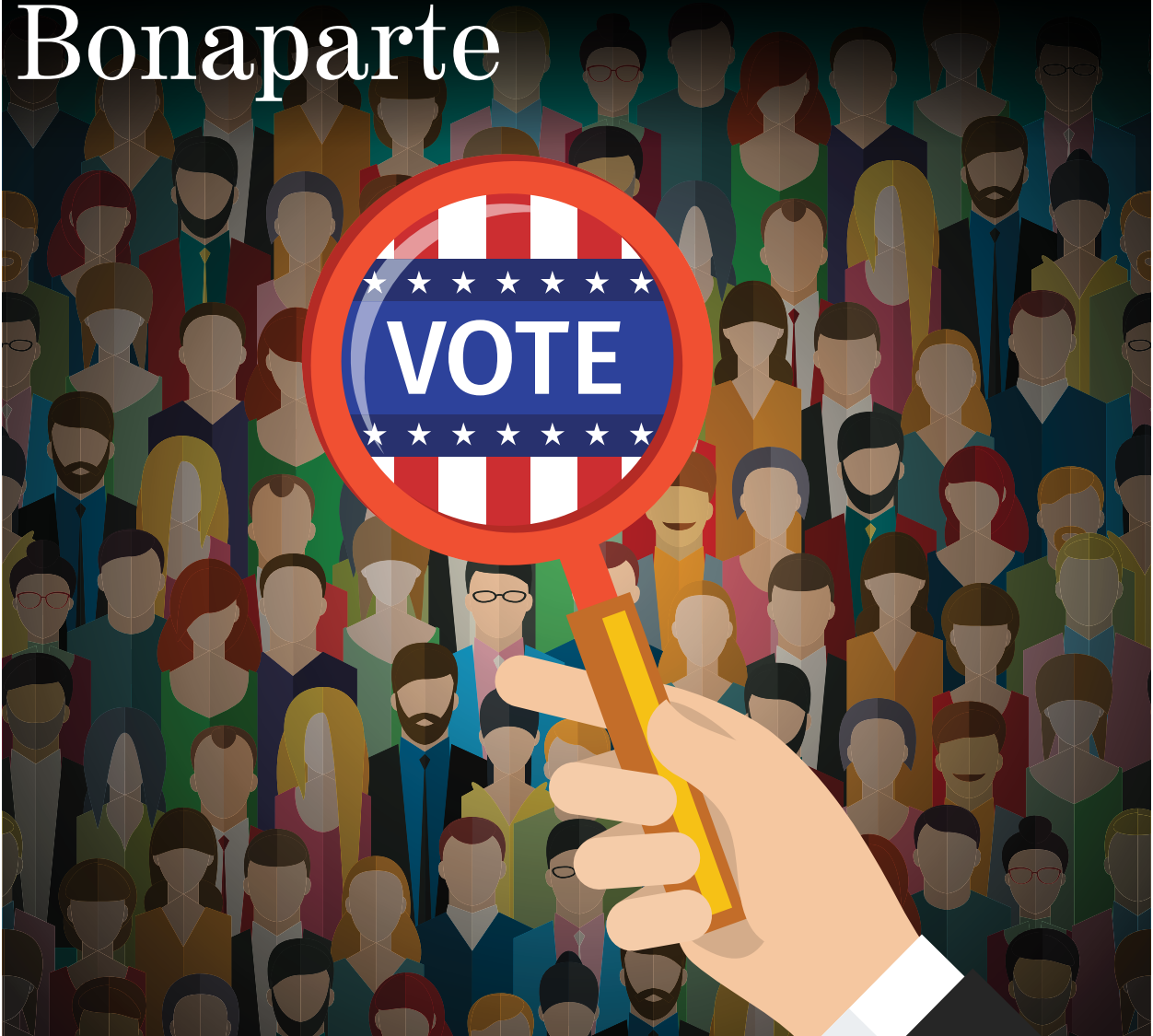
Therefore in the mind of Donald Trump and his supporters, the protection of the American “nation” against international terrorism and immigration simply means the protection of the white ethnic majority. It is on record that during the campaign leading to the 08th November 2016 Presidential elections, Donald Trump “went to town” in bashing women, African-Americans, Muslims, Latinos; and specifically Mexicans. His tone and vocabulary appealed to supracracist groups like the Ku-Klux-Klan and other right-wing white elements. This is not to imply that all those who voted for Donald Trump are white racists. However, it is an open secret that Donald Trump ran and won the Presidential elections on the basis of a racist agenda! To paraphrase Taub in the article referred to earlier, the supracracist elements in the US feel that they were in a long line leading uphill where they were hoping to get hold of the American dream; but alas the line had slowed down or even stopped because immigrants, African-Americans and other “outsiders” seemed to be cutting the line. That was the heart of Trump’s campaign message and it does not matter how much some of his supporters or spin-doctors may want to sugar-coat it; it was heavily loaded with racism! Taub further argues that: ...*for decades the language of white identity has only existed in the context of white supremacy. When that became taboo, it left white identity politics without a vocabulary.* It was that white identity vocabulary vacuum that Trump saw and exploited to the full. For people like Trump and his supporters, what constitutes “political community” in the US – those that have the right to vote and to be voted into public office – is the “silent” assumption that it is “the white ethnic majority” – the others are “outsiders” and thus just a footnote, if not a nuisance to the “white political community.” ■

End Notes

¹ Wikipedia (accessed on 30th January 2017).

² Weber Max, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Taylor and Francis e-Library (2005:xiii)

The 18th Brumaire of Donald J Trump Bonaparte



When all is said and done, I hope that this piece makes us less eager to trumpet the genius of Donald J Trump and lament, instead, the circumstances that have made a grotesque and mediocre individual like him play a hero's role in the United States' public life.

By Olufemi Táíwò

It was GWF Hegel who wrote that historical figures come twice in history: the first time as heroes and the second time as farce. Karl Marx cited this in his peerless analysis of the saga of Louis Napoleon Bonaparte whom he considered the farcical reenactment of his original heroic uncle, Napoleon Bonaparte, who practically rewrote the history of Europe, which rewriting had consequences for the rest of the world the echoes of which continue to reverberate even today [*The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon Bonaparte* (1869)].

We Americans love to trumpet our exceptionalism; for some in the Republican Party, not shouting this exceptionalism from the rooftops is akin to treason. The election of Donald J Trump as president of the United States makes it clear: America is not unique, either in contemporary politics, or in history. For proof, we can look to Europe, where far-right movements are on the rise, or we can look to history. In our time, we see antecedents of Trump's emergence in the election of another blowhard, enemy-chasing, fear-mongering, foul-mouthed, and sexist, Rodrigo Duterte, as president of the Philippines. In the saga of Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, in the uncanny similarities between the French tyrant and the new American autocrat, we can observe the U.S. repeating a gory history. It is unexceptional, and exceptionally dangerous.

It was the late wit, Gil Scott-Heron, who panned the re-election of Ronald Reagan in 1984 as the "Re-Ron" of a B-movie [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xc1fIR0LgwY>]. Trump's election is the latest re-make of the B-movie that was the saga of Louis Napoleon Bonaparte. Here the focus is on the almost uncanny parallels between their respective personalities.

In the mid-1800s, France was in the throes of legitimacy crises induced by the 1789 Revolution, and continued through the Napoleonic Period that lasted from 1791 to 1815 and the Restoration of the monarchy in 1830. Although the revolution had been prosecuted in the name of the people, it merely substituted a new ruling class: the bourgeoisie, whose factions – the industrial segment and the financial class – jostled for legitimacy as the true

representatives of the new order. These factions were driven by economic interests and grasped at whatever political ideologies – from republicanism to monarchism – that would give them the upper hand against each other. The crisis became acute with the overthrow of the monarch again in 1848, which saw the restoration of the Republic. But the republic was not to last. It was supplanted by a coup d'état in December 1851, as Napoleon's not-too-smart but rather clever nephew, Louis Napoleon, began his farcical replay of his uncle's reign.

Both during the campaign and since his election, I have been struck by the parallels between the circumstances that produced the farce that Louis Napoleon was and the one that took the reins of power in the United States, too, on January 20, 2017. Learning the lessons that these parallels offer may help the United States preempt a repeat of the ending of the Bonapartist regime in 1871 four or eight years down the road in our own time.

Despite the century-and-a-half that separates them, there are three points of convergence between mid-nineteenth century France and early twenty-first century America – between the rise of Louis Napoleon and the ascent of Donald Trump. First, the state of the electorate.

By the time Louis Napoleon executed his coup d'état in 1851, the electorate was already sufficiently alienated from the ruling classes and had been internally divided for long enough that its capacity to resist any pretender was significantly attenuated. Similarly, the contemporary American electorate has been degraded enough in the course of the last thirty years, beginning with the all-show, little-substance regime of Ronald Reagan in 1980, and ending with the relentless badgering, battering and efforts at delegitimising Barack Obama's presidency over the last eight years.

The situation has not been helped by the assault on truth and objectivity. On the right, the culprits are talk radio, Fox News, and think tanks that are geared always to muddying the waters on objectivity. On the left, it is a particularly virulent species of nihilism sponsored by less careful post-modernist popularisers,

domiciled mostly in academia. In an environment in which truth now comes with inescapable bylines and criticism is no longer regarded as coming from objective standpoints, it was an easy transition to a campaign where then-candidate Trump could boast that "I could stand in the middle of 5th Avenue and shoot somebody and I wouldn't lose voters"; where a candidate, Trump, lied routinely, peddled conspiracy theories and embraced his inconsistencies without shame; but it is his opponent, Hillary Clinton, with a lifetime of public service, who was deemed untrustworthy.

Louis Napoleon's base of support was in the French peasantry in a yet to be industrialised France dominated by Catholicism, and in the lumpenproletariat, the omnibus category he created for the castoffs of society: thugs, vagrants, prostitutes, etc., who were always on the ready to be hired hands for causing mayhem, especially in political struggles among the various classes in society.

In the present case, Trump's base in white rural America mimics the description of the French peasantry offered by Marx. "[T]he Bonapartes are the dynasty of the peasants, i.e., of the mass of the French people. The chosen hero of the peasantry is not the Bonaparte who submitted to the bourgeois parliament but the Bonaparte who dispersed it." Trump may not be able to disperse the Congress – that institution is going to be severely tested under Trump – but there is little doubt that, both during the campaign and while his transition lasts, he was dismissive of Congress and of the elite of his party. Certainly, his standing with the base of the Republican party and with America's rural whites who came out in historic numbers to hand him the presidency, owes everything to his dismissive attitude towards the "establishment", his refusal to countenance "political correctness" and his penchant for, supposedly, "saying it as he sees it".

Although she walked back her comments, Hillary Clinton did hint at the lumpenproletariat equivalent in her characterisation of Trump's supporters but I think that what she called "the basket of deplorables" was real and a significant pillar of Trump's constituency. The Tea Party

and Republican Party functionaries who never met a racist depiction of the Obamas they did not fall in love with are not phantoms in the American space. The resurgence in the numbers of hate groups and hate incidents in the same thirty-year frame that I am using as my benchmark in this piece speaks to the wide reach of the deplorables referenced in Clinton's comments.

The second striking parallel between Bonaparte and Trump: the character of the candidate. In the aftermath of France's turbulent social dislocation, Marx wrote, "historical tradition produced the French peasants' belief that a miracle would occur, that a man called Napoleon would restore all their glory." Historical tradition in the United States has engendered a similar belief in white America. The country has not lacked social dislocation, either. The malaise of which Jimmy Carter spoke, the crisis of confidence that doomed his presidency, produced the miracle worker, Ronald Reagan.

The economic collapse of 2008 and the anxiety of the white lower classes that they were being left behind, pushed from the pedestal they had hitherto occupied in the American structure, kindled in Americans the expectation of a miracle. In 21st century America, as in 18th century France, an individual, Trump, turned up who pretended to be that man. Republicans and Trump's other followers' obsession with the second coming of Reagan coincides with Trump's obsession with being America's saviour from what he called in his Inauguration address, "the carnage".

From Reagan's "it's morning again in America" to Trump's "Make America Great Again", the pangs of nostalgia, a yearning for what in the French situation was the many configurations of Restoration – monarchy or republic, it didn't matter – the country has found its candidate who "would restore all their glory".

Trump, too, has had no difficulty claiming leadership of that class in which he finds what Marx called "a mass reflection of the interests he himself pursues" as he "perceives in the scum, the leavings, the refuse of all classes the only class which can provide him with an unconditional

basis." Recall his declaration: "I love the poorly educated," he enthused after winning the Nevada Republican Caucus during the primaries.

We are beginning to see the outlines of a possible usurpation – NATO exit, unilateral imposition of tariffs, negotiating trade agreements, removing sanctions on Russia. Again, the similarities are quite instructive. Both desire to usurp power. Both behave "like misunderstood genius[es] proclaimed by all the world to be simpleton[s]." And Trump's ever-present threat of unleashing his Twitter hordes on the opposition must not be discounted now that he is president.

“ From Reagan’s “it’s morning again in America” to Trump’s “Make America Great Again”, the pangs of nostalgia, a yearning for what in the French situation was the many configurations of Restoration – monarchy or republic, it didn’t matter – the country has found its candidate who “would restore all their glory”. ”

Then, the third chilling similarity: the situation of the ruling classes in Bonaparte's moment and in Trump's. Bonaparte rode to power as different ruling class factions jostled for power and on the opposition's diffidence at alienating the masses that supported him. In Trump's case, Republicans and Democrats alike cowed before "the angry white, largely male, voter". The Republican Party helped create this incubus, the Democratic Party feeds it while beggaring its minority constituencies – think of its scandalous running away from Obama's record in the 2014 midterm elections – and the American media pander to it.

No doubt, though, the Republicans' thinly veiled racist and sexist agenda, their insane commitment to making

Obama's presidency fail which made them, again in chillingly similar ways to what Marx reported of Bonaparte's methods, "wage an incessant war against public opinion and mistrustfully mutilate and cripple society's independent organs of movement where it did not succeed in entirely amputating them" in part explains the badly diminished ability of American society to beat back the Trumpian hordes and save the republic from itself. We are seeing this now carried into the opening month of Trump's administration with the declaration of war on the media.

Some might argue that I have overdrawn the parallels between mid-nineteenth century France and late twentieth and early twenty-first century United States or between Louis Napoleon Bonaparte III and Donald J Trump. That may well be so. Of course, for all the chilling similarities between Bonaparte and Trump, there are obvious differences. No doubt, we do not expect Trump to crown himself "Emperor". And we know that American institutions may have the resilience to survive the shenanigans of a narcissist Commander-in-Chief. We should, however, not be too sanguine about how battered and compromised our cherished institutions – Congress and other political institutions, the education system, and the media – have become in the last thirty years. And therein lies the wisdom of sleeping with only one eye closed while our current pretender sits in the Oval Office.

When all is said and done, I hope that this piece makes us less eager to trumpet the genius of Donald J Trump and lament, instead, the circumstances that have made a grotesque and mediocre individual like him play a hero's role in the United States' public life.

Louis Napoleon Bonaparte's reign ended with a humiliating military defeat at the hands of a new power, the emergent and recently unified Germany. At home, the Paris Commune led an insurrection and a new era of instability was inaugurated that lasted decades. How Trump's reign will end, and how many people will suffer in the meantime, and in the aftermath, remains to be seen. ■

This is a long version of a piece originally published at <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/58aa29e6e4b0fa149f9ac7f6>

STATE CAPTURE

The intersection between capital and politics



The fundamental question we are to confront is whether economies in transition, like South Africa, are more susceptible to state capture.

By Tshepiso Mphahlo and Charter Modise

This article seeks to discuss the import and the impact that the subject of State Capture has had in the public discourse in our body polity. This subject will continue to be in the public domain for years as it continues to gain traction in all quarters.

This is informed by the fact that South Africans, whether in their individual capacities or as members of some form of organised civil society institution, have this proud history of engaging head-on with the issues affecting them and this outstanding trademark stems from their history of injustice and oppression.

What is State Capture as opposed to the State of Capture report as produced by former Public Protector Adv. Thuli Mandonsele? Joel Hellman defines state capture as the efforts of a small number of firms (or such groups as the military, ethnic groups and kleptocratic politicians) to shape the rules of the game to their advantage through illicit non-transparent provision of private gains to public officials. He further notes that examples of such behaviour include the private purchase of legislative votes, executive decrees, court decisions and illicit political party funding.

Flowing from the definition of state capture, the question arises: Is South Africa a captured state?

What is a State? A State is a type of polity that is an organised political community living under a single system of government; other general categories of state institutions can include administrative bureaucracies, legal systems, and military organisations.

South Africa invoked in its constitution the safeguard of the doctrine of separation of powers (the Legislature, Judiciary and Executive) which ordinarily means that if one of the three spheres of government is responsible for the enactment of rules of law, that body shall not also be charged with their execution or with judicial decisions. The same will be said of the executive authority, it is not supposed to enact law or to administer justice and the judicial authority should not enact or execute the laws.

In our context, can we say other arms of government are captured given

the recent judgment by the courts on the exercise of matters of state power? The answer is an emphatic NO! This means that each of the organs of state exercises its functions without hindrance to the functions of another. The legislative arm exercises its oversight influence over other arms of government and court decisions are invariably implemented by both the legislative and executive arms of state to correct the anomalies inherent in its administrative actions. This was seen in the case of EFF vs The Speaker of the National Assembly regarding the remedial actions of the Public Protector in the now famous Nkandla matter.

The unbundling of the concept of corruption is important as elucidated in the definition of state capture.

“The SACP referred to this intersection between capital and politics as interface between capital and the state; and in particular, how capital exerts influence on and colludes with public officials to extract advantages.”

This concept links the problem of corruption with vested economic, social and political interests – which in turn form key obstacles to economic reform. While the pace of economic reform in countries in transition does have an impact on the degree of state capture in a country, the fundamental question we are to confront is whether economies in transition, like South Africa, are more susceptible to state capture. Historically, one of the main challenges posed by the programme of transition from apartheid to a prosperous democratic society was to redefine how state interacts with capital. In the ANC's *Strategy and Tactics*, this relationship is defined as of unity and struggle. The SACP referred

to this intersection between capital and politics as interface between capital and the state; and in particular, how capital exerts influence on and colludes with public officials to extract advantages.

Generally, scant attention is afforded to how capital exerts influence on the state in transitional state economies, and the way in which a transitional economy makes it easier for public officials to shape rules to the advantage of the captors – with considerable and devastating social costs.

The Political Colour of Capture

Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past. Karl Marx

White supremacy in South Africa has always been premised on greed and corruption and this accounts for the fact that during apartheid economic crimes fleeced the state of millions and/or billions of rand with the help of international criminal networks.

In South Africa we inherited an intrinsically corrupt system of governance. To survive, it created a legal framework that was based on and facilitated corruption. It has taken years for the democratic parliament to repeal old laws and introduce even the basic legal framework that would enable the democratic government to deal with corrupt bureaucrats, politicians, police and the private sector. The private sector also operated in a closed society and profited by it. There were partnerships with international criminals, and the corruption that was built into the system is very difficult to overcome.

The National Party government turned South Africa into a Mecca of maladministration, crime and corruption. This gave impetus to Afrikaner Nationalism and secret organisations such as the Broederbond (a group of white male Afrikaner Nationalists). This secret grouping could count amongst its ranks cabinet ministers, military leaders, heads of Afrikaans-speaking universities and of the South African Broadcasting

Corporation (SABC).

Prior to 1948 there was a secret third Volksraad or Assembly which was an undercover group of businessmen who clandestinely controlled the economy. These crony capitalists were beneficiaries of political patronage resulting from the convergence of interests between the business and political elite in the country. One of President Paul Kruger's three sons was his private secretary. A son-in-law of his, C F Eloff, was a businessman who was granted several (government) concessions, namely business monopolies of one kind or another.

When the Gupta family does business with the state, the President's son and the progressive black elite or businesses, people cry foul to say the State is captured by one family. In the interest of democracy, no family has the right to capture a democratic State as the Republic of South Africa politically or economically. The state must belong to all with open and transparent policies and partnerships through the people and government. The democratic government, as a single biggest procurer of goods and services has to counter white monopoly capital in South Africa with the strategic task of creating powerful black businesses, entrepreneurs and senior managers – not a bought set of black faces, and not comprador or bureaucratic capitalists – to share in the wealth of the country.

Since the allegations by the former Public Protector that the Guptas influenced the President in the appointment of ministers and the executives of State Owned Enterprise in violation of provisions of the Executive Members' Ethics Act (1998) are of serious concern to some sectors of society, it would be prudent for the President to request a judicial review of these allegations. South Africa cannot risk its hard won democracy because of the greed and lust for power and economic influence by individuals. Transparency should serve as a tool to maintain a stable State in the interest of its people.

The truth is not told of the murky role played by the apartheid government in the growth of white capital in several highly questionable deals and the capture of state by big

business and/or conglomerates. The Ruperts and the Oppenhiemers of this world owned swathes of land where mining rights were acquired, wine farms were established in the Cape and golf courses built in a growing nexus between private capital and political power. Unsurprisingly this had catastrophic political and economic fallout for the black majority, ensuring both white domination in the agricultural, financial, industrial and mining sector and that black South Africans were forced to move to the cities where labour was in short supply in the country's mines.

Who are the Capturers of the State before and now?

A critical analysis should be

“The main question should be: insofar as state capture has taken place, who has benefitted? Has it been in the interest of the masses, or individual politicians, their families and friends and the corporate world?”

undertaken on who are the real capturers of the State if the State is said to be captured. It seems that the African-Black majority or the Natives of Africa if you like to say have been spectators since the arrival of other races. The current situation dictates that there is a continuation of an indirect and direct European rule in the economic activities of South Africa; they continue to own most of the means of production and almost all the financial institutions in South Africa. Let us try to understand first whether Jacob Zuma was trying to redirect economic influence and advantage to the underprivileged group of African or was this redirection of economic influence to the family partners of

political allies?

The new democratic political dispensation in 1994 failed to decisively distribute resources to the majority of the former oppressed people. The main concentration was on freedom and political rule rather than fundamental change in the economy. The Mandela years passed and played a pivotal role in the reconstruction and development of a new State with a greater focus on and more concern about unity. The Mbeki years saw a powerful growth of the economy of South Africa, but it focused mainly on the narrow and limited Black Economic Empowerment (BEE), now Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) framework, rather than a sustainable fairer and equal distribution of wealth and resources. The image of a clean, transparent and democratic government came under a lot of scrutiny. The dirt was exposed and explicitly reflected in the media as it is today.

The democratic and progressive State must prioritise the poor, the working class, the weak, disabled, the marginalised and the unemployed before everything and everyone else.

The former Public Protector Advocate Thuli Madonsela's report expressed several untested allegations which leave question marks and compels us to doubt some of the findings. It could have helped the state and the South African people if the report has been more explicit and pointed accusing fingers at those who were found to be on the wrong side of the law, the President included. The usage of words such as 'maybe', and 'may have' on page 7 of the Public Protector's report is a case in point.

The qualified findings of the report note unfair appointments of Ministers and Heads of the South African parastatals. The implicated persons are alleged to benefit from business deals with the Gupta family and their close business associates as in the supply of coal to Eskom, the proposed signing of the nuclear deal etc. The report projected an unbalanced side of the story on who has captured the state. If there are suggestions or implications that not only one family has captured the state, every family suspected to

have undue influence in the running of the government unconstitutionally and undemocratically must be investigated and brought to book. This should include those who control the banks, financial sectors, mining and large scale agriculture and retail sectors.

Many opinion makers who have written about the issues around State Capture seem to have failed to pay attention to the citizens of the country. The conflict between the families seeking to or succeeding in capturing the State, the fight between politicians in support of various views about who has unfair advantage in government deals, leave the ordinary citizens ignored and marginalised. Some of the leaders of South Africa seem to have forgotten the line in the Preamble of the country's constitution that says "we the People of South Africa". They have chosen to bury their heads in the sand with capital and fight amongst themselves using government institutions. The Public Protector's State of Capture report vis-à-vis the so called State capture should move those with a clear conscience to rise and take charge of the state and become the pilots of their own destiny.

The rise of the Global South with its unavoidable impact on the Global scale forced the 'Powerful Nations' to push for what many believe to be regime change in the Emerging Markets nations and in particular the BRICS bloc. Some commentators argue that the buzzword 'state-capture' is an attempt to discredit the ruling party and its leadership in preparation for regime change. The State of Capture report is also seen by some as a tool used by opposition parties with strong ties to the Western world advocating the toppling of the former liberation movement.

Power and Capital have played a malevolent role in the battle to rule the state. The main question should be: insofar as state capture has taken place, who has benefitted? Has it been in the interest of the masses, or individual politicians, their families and friends and the corporate world?

One must investigate the richest people in the world. How did they make their wealth and who was behind their supreme financial accumulation

which amounts to more than 60% of the world's wealth. Western rich elites have benefitted from the "revolving door" which affords privileged individuals access to those in political power.

Paul Frijters and Gigi Foster (2015) demonstrate how research reveals that a huge proportion of Australia's richest people amass their wealth by the use of political connections rather than by the use of innovative businesses. This work by Frijters and Foster makes it clear that corruption or political favouritism and nepotism are not restricted to South Africa or the African continent but are also commonplace in the so-called developed world. They point out:

Over 80 per cent of the wealthiest

“Every family suspected to have undue influence in the running of the government unconstitutionally and undemocratically must be investigated and brought to book. This should include those who control the banks, financial sectors, mining and large scale agriculture and retail sectors.”

Australians have made their fortunes in property, mining, banking, superannuation and finance; generally all heavily regulated industries in which fortunes can be made by getting favourable property rezoning, planning law exemptions, mining concessions, labour law exemptions, money creation powers and mandated markets of many stripes. (Frijters and Foster 2015).

Peter Lawrence in an article which should be widely read writes:

This increasing concentration of control in the hands of very few global corporates is paralleled by increasing global inequality, not only between nations but also within

them. This is driven by the dictates of the dominant financial institutions whose demand for a rate of profit that matches that which they can achieve through the trading of the financial instruments ('products') they issue, forces enterprises in the non-financial sector to squeeze wages and salaries of all but the top executives and worsen conditions of work. This is the race to the bottom, where many areas of production migrate to where labour is cheapest and the labour force is unorganised or politically suppressed. Recent research has drawn attention to the way wealth is increasingly concentrated in the hands of the few to the extent that 1% of the world's population owns approximately 50% of global wealth (Oxfam, 2016). Even within that 1%, there is a further concentration of wealth. In the US, for example, the wealth of the top 0.1% is now almost equal to that of the bottom 90% (Saez and Zucman, 2014), something that, according to the authors, has not occurred since the beginning of the last century (The Thinker, Quarter 1, 2017).

The observation made by Lawrence on the perspective of Syal and Hughes, (2015), that there are many cases of former ministers, civil servants and ambassadors going to well paid jobs or directorships in big banks or the corporates with interests in areas where former politicians might provide useful information from which the corporates might gain. In 2015, the former Health Secretary, Andrew Lansley, a newly elevated member of the House of Lords, and who actively worked for the privatisation of the National Health Service, took a job with a US consultancy firm working with healthcare clients. Lansley's job is to advise corporate clients on healthcare reforms, as these clients become increasingly involved in bidding to run parts of the NHS.

A similar exposé of this type of collusion is provided by George Monbiot (*The Guardian*, 2 February, 2017). He points out that:

Trump was prepared not only to promote the cause of corporations in government, but to turn government

into a kind of corporation, staffed and run by executives and lobbyists. His incoherence was not a liability but an opening: his agenda could be shaped. And the dark money network that some American corporations had already developed was perfectly positioned to shape it.

Dark money is the term used in the US for the undisclosed funding of organisations involved in political advocacy. Few people would see a tobacco company as a credible source on public health, or a coal company as a neutral commentator on climate change. To advance their political interests, such companies must pay others to speak on their behalf.

Soon after the Second World War, some of America's richest people began setting up a network of think tanks to promote their interests. These purport to offer dispassionate opinions on public affairs. But they are more like corporate lobbyists, working on behalf of those who founded and fund them.

These are the organisations now running much of the Trump administration.

South Africa is relatively a new modern democracy. It should learn from the bungles and mistakes of the so-called advanced democracies which appear to be dirty and polluted with corruption and high rates of nepotism. It is not only Africa and other developing countries that are corrupt.

In the final analysis we reach the vision which Mao Zedong set for the Chinese people to "let a thousand flowers bloom, let a thousand schools of thought contend".

The State of Capture report received an inordinate amount of attention from media houses and corporate circles. We now need a thorough investigation and analysis to uncover what remains hidden beneath the surface.

When Charles Dickens vividly summed up the period which was the setting for his book *A Tale of Two Cities* he could have been writing about the times that we live in now. He wrote:

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the

season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way – in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only.

In conclusion we urge the ANC to move with speed to implement its policies of radical economic transformation. As Zizi Kodwa, spokesperson of the ANC, said in a statement:

“South Africa is relatively a new modern democracy. It should learn from the bungles and mistakes of the so-called advanced democracies which appear to be dirty and polluted with corruption and high rates of nepotism. It is not only Africa and other developing countries that are corrupt.”

As per ANC NEC Lekgotla, Radical Economic Transformation refers to a fundamental change in the structure, systems, institutions and patterns of ownership and control of the economy in favour of all South Africans, especially the poor, the majority of whom are African and female. Our main objective remains the liberation of Blacks in general and Africans in particular. Its components include the creation of jobs, accelerating shared and inclusive growth, transforming the structure of production and ownership of means of production and enabling the talents and productive potential of our people to flourish. At the heart of radical

socio-economic transformation is an effective state that is decisive in its pursuit of structural change.

To achieve decisive advances towards radical economic transformation, the ANC urges government to use SONA 2017 to give expression to the 12 urgent tasks of the movement being:

- Return the land to the people using Constitutional means
- Invest money in township and rural communities and ensure we build post-apartheid cities in our rural areas and vibrant businesses in our townships
- No less than 30% of ALL government spending must go to black businesses and small, medium and micro enterprises
- Massive roll out of broadband infrastructure, ensuring connectivity of schools, universities, hospitals, police stations and other public spaces
- Implement the Maputo Declaration and ensure 10% of GDP goes to agricultural development
- Turn South Africa into a construction site, deliver water, sanitation, roads, electricity and houses.
- Diversify ownership in the financial services sector, licence the Post Bank, introduce new players and transform the industry in favour of the people as a whole
- Finalise the National Minimum Wage to give income security to all our people
- Increase the requirement for black ownership in mines, ensure that a significant amount is in the hands of the workers and advance local beneficiation.
- Implement free higher education for the poor and produce no less than 5000 PhDs per annum by 2030 and urgently generate more artisans
- Review SA's trade policies to prioritise national interest and support and promote local businesses
- Mercilessly deal with corruption, fighting both the tigers and the flies. ■

GAUTENG

The Province that Delivers



Extracts from the State of the Province address by Gauteng Premier David Makhura

By David Makhura

I want to reiterate the commitment I made to the families [of the mental health patients] on Saturday: I will spend the remainder of my term over the next two years to ensure that there is restorative justice and healing for the families and take every executive action possible to restore confidence in our public health system.

I would like to state categorically that the decision to transfer Life Esidimeni mental health patients to NGOs was

not made in consultation with the Provincial Executive Council. The Executive Council and I would have never approved a plan to outsource mental health, a primary responsibility of the state to care for the vulnerable in society, to NGOs. What is even worse is the fact that such NGOs didn't meet appropriate standards and legal prescripts...

It is our responsibility as the state to care for the weak. Every institution

that provides services to the most vulnerable must meet appropriate standards. We cannot wait for another tragedy before we take wide-ranging action. The Life Esidimeni tragedy must spur us into action over the next two years to restore the dignity and human rights of mental health patients and all vulnerable groups in our communities. I am determined to lead this mission over the next two years of my term of office as the Premier of this province.

I will appoint the Premier's Mental Health Advisory Panel to assist in this mission so that never again should a tragedy like this ever happen in our province...

Gauteng has recorded the largest net gain in new jobs created since the 2008 global financial crisis. Between 2010 and end of 2016, our provincial economy created more than 700 000 new jobs. Since the start of the fifth administration in 2014, bi-annual employment has reached 317 000, thus breaking the ceiling of 300 000...

We know full well that in order to significantly decrease unemployment, we need to double this number and reach at least 600 000 new jobs over a two-year period from 2017 till 2019...

With regard to the revitalisation and mainstreaming of the township economy, the Gauteng Provincial Government has increased its spending on the township economy from R600 million in 2014 to R6 billion in 2016.

The Gauteng Provincial Government has reached a critical point wherein 91% of our procurement budget of R46 billion over the MTEF is directed to empower black people, women, youth and people with disabilities. Of the 12 000 companies that conduct business with our provincial administration, 10 000 of them are HDIs, including township enterprises...

Between 2013 and 2016 our infrastructure investment amounted to R30 billion, translating into an average annual growth rate of 20.7% – the fastest growth rate in the country. Evidence emerging from a commissioned study conducted by KPMG regarding public infrastructure investment has found that:

- 92 000 direct jobs were added into the Gauteng economy through infrastructure spend.
- Infrastructure spend raised R 15 billion to support household incomes.
- On average, every R1 spent on infrastructure adds 92 cents to the Gauteng economy.
- Infrastructure spend increased government revenue by R6 billion.
- Infrastructure spend resulted in additional economic activity worth R26 billion.

This suggests that without govern-

ment-led infrastructure investment at national, provincial and local level, our national economy could have been in recession, with serious consequences for families and businesses alike...

Let us work together regardless of which party runs which sphere of government, to rollout infrastructure projects that are beneficial to all our citizens. These projects include public transport, Broadband and free Wifi, water and sanitation, mega human settlements and new industrial nodes.

Firstly, among the interventions we are planning, is to ensure that there is sufficient land available for social and economic development in order to effect radical economic and spatial transformation of our urban landscape. Accordingly, we implement constitutional measures such as expropriation of land so that we can locate new developments not in the periphery but in the urban core of our province. Gone are the days when blacks must be settled far away from economic opportunities and social amenities.



Secondly, the long awaited construction of mega human settlements and new cities will commence this year. There are 31 new mega human settlements that are both public and private sector partnerships that will start in April in different corridors. This will mobilise and unlock huge public and private investment at a level unprecedented in our post-apartheid history.

As we implement our new Mega

Human Settlements programme, we are also doing work in the renewal of old townships and converting hostels into family units and integrating them into communities.

Thirdly, we are mobilising resources for public transport infrastructure in ways that will ensure that we don't commit the same mistakes which were made with the e-tolls. We can't build roads and only later inform citizens that they must pay. In fact, there will no e-tolls on our new roads.

We are committed to ensuring that the taxi industry is empowered. This includes participation in the BRTs, the expansion of the Gautrain and meaningful participation in the industry supply and value chains.

Madame Speaker, I am pleased to announce that we have completed the feasibility study on the expansion of the Gautrain and its full integration into the broader modern public transport system of our province. The new areas that will be covered will include Mamelodi in Tshwane, Boksburg in Ekurhuleni, Randburg-

Lanseria in Johannesburg, Mogale City and Syferfontein in the West Rand and Roodepoort/Jabulani.

This expansion will primarily be done on a public-private partnership basis, in phases that will take a period of two decades to complete.

Youth unemployment is the most acute and primary economic problem of our time. Although the scale varies, no economy is free from this problem. Currently, there are 2.7 million young

people of working age who are neither in education nor in employment, while around 3 million young people are in the public and private education system, including higher education and TVET colleges.

Many of these young people end up getting involved in social ills such as drug and substance abuse as well as crime. They deserve a second chance in life.

Tshepo 500 000 was launched to enhance the employability of the youth and ignite the spirit of entrepreneurship among young people in order to rescue them from self-destructive lifestyle of drug abuse, violence and crime.

Given the magnitude of the problem of youth unemployment and the positive response we are getting from private sector partners, we are confident that we will be able to change the lives of more than 1 million young people by 2019.

In our Ntirhisano engagement with young people, they have made it clear that they don't want hand-outs. They don't want patronage. They want to be empowered so that they can take charge of their own destiny and become their own liberators. They want opportunities to be opened so that they can seize them with both hands.

Accelerating Social Transformation and Promoting Social Cohesion

Madame Speaker, investing in quality public education is the most decisive and sustainable way through

which we can empower our youth. Turning around the performance of our public schools and ensuring that learners from schools in townships and villages do well is in itself a decisive act of radical social and economic transformation.

In Gauteng, we can proudly report that, increasingly, townships are becoming centres of academic and educational excellence and redress. We have narrowed the performance gap between fee-paying (most township schools) and non-fee paying schools from 27% in 2011 to 11% in 2016, which is a mark of addressing equity in the entire system.

Although the number of people living below the poverty line has decreased from 32% in 2004 to 16% in 2016, we still have a long way to go. Close to 20% of the population of our province don't have enough food to live on every day. This is a serious problem that puts the life of many citizens at risk.

In order to tackle urban poverty and hunger, since 2014 through the food banks we have provided food relief to more than 300 000 beneficiaries, in more than 101 000 households.

Honourable Members, drugs and substance abuse continue to ravage our society. They rob our young people a chance of a brighter future.

Working together with our partners in the social movement against drugs, we will in the next two years strengthen the fight against drug and substance abuse.

Since 2014, initiatives such as the

Ke-Moja drug prevention programme have benefitted more than one million drug and substance abusers.

Madame Speaker, we are committed to working with and supporting people with disabilities. Our target is to achieve way above the 2% employment and empowerment target. Over the two years, we have remained at 1.6%.

We remain concerned about the plight of the girl learner in Gauteng. Indications are that they are now being deliberately targeted by older men putting them at risk of contracting HIV. We are worried that the rate of HIV infections among young women is rising. This puts the future of these young women and girl children at great risk.

In the next two years we will be embarking on a massive HIV awareness and prevention programme focusing on schools, in partnership with civil society.

In my inaugural SOPA in 2014, I made a commitment to mainstream military veterans into existing socio-economic and governance programmes.

We must do this in honour and in recognition of all those who rendered military service in our country. Gauteng is home to more than 7 000 military veterans...

Madam Speaker, with regard to sport, arts and culture, Gauteng remains the Home of Champions. We are the mecca of competitive sport in Africa. Gauteng is also the creative pulse of our country and the fountain of the creative industries...

Our successes in building Gauteng to be a Home of Champions and the home of the creative industries are the result of strong partnerships that we have built with our stakeholders...

Promoting social cohesion and contributing to nation building remains one of our key priorities as we build an economically and socially inclusive Gauteng City Region.

We know too well that the task of building a nation requires that we work together across race, class gender and political affiliation. It requires partnerships.

As this year has been declared by President Zuma as the year in which



our country should celebrate the extraordinary leadership and vision of Oliver Tambo, our work on Social Cohesion is dedicated to this colossal icon of our liberation struggle.

“It is our responsibility to break down the barriers of division and create a country where there will neither be Whites nor Blacks, just South Africans, free and united in diversity”, so said Oliver Tambo...

I have always been clear that everyone is welcome in Gauteng. Gauteng is a home for all. We are South Africa’s most cosmopolitan and Afropolitan province. I have personally participated in marches and said very clearly that I am against xenophobia.

Honourable Members, I would like to call on all leaders to handle the matter of migrants with a great deal of sensitivity and care. In any country, migrants and refugees are very vulnerable people...

The trajectory on crime remains negative. From Sophiatown to Soshanguve, Kagiso to Katlehong, Khutsong to Evaton, Elodrado Park to Rosettenville, Olievenhoutbosch to Tembisa, our communities are terrorised by gangsters, drug lords and rapists. Murder and robbery remains excruciatingly high. Violence against women, children and members of the LGBTI community remains out of control...

However, our police men and women are not coping. They are not getting the leadership they require from the top management, due mainly to incessant in-fighting among the leaders of our law enforcement agencies...

We remain seized with the task of building an accountable, transparent government underpinned by state machinery that is responsive, caring, efficient and effective. Our work is bearing fruit. For instance, our audit outcomes have consistently been improving. The 2015/16 financial year marked the best audit outcomes in 14 years. All our departments and entities got unqualified audit reports – 60% of which were outright clean audits.

The introduction of the Open Tender System has helped to enhance probity, transparency and integrity of the public procurement system. It is



also contributing to restoring public confidence in government decision making as well as in promoting fairness and certainty...

Although there are some improvements since last year, the Departments of Education, Infrastructure Development and Health, still fail to pay service providers on time due to accruals. This has a negative effect on the sustainability of SMMEs and black businesses.

The Provincial Treasury is working with these three departments to ensure that they reach at least 90% compliance with the 30-day payment requirement before they can even think of 15-day payment...

Ntirhisano is about government working with communities to resolve ongoing day to day and service delivery challenges. Its implementation has gone a long way towards closing the gap between government, communities and citizens.

There are good stories by citizens themselves on how Ntirhisano has assisted to resolve problems associated with lack of compassion among our civil servants, especially when they deal with the most vulnerable in our communities such as mental health patients, the elderly, people with disability and children.

Transformative politics must be about utilising our budgets to radically transform lives and build sustainable livelihoods. It must be about the values of service and loyalty to the citizens. This is a call to return to value-based

politics without which there can be no honour...

Politics must be about building an economy that creates more jobs and includes blacks, women, people with disability and youth...

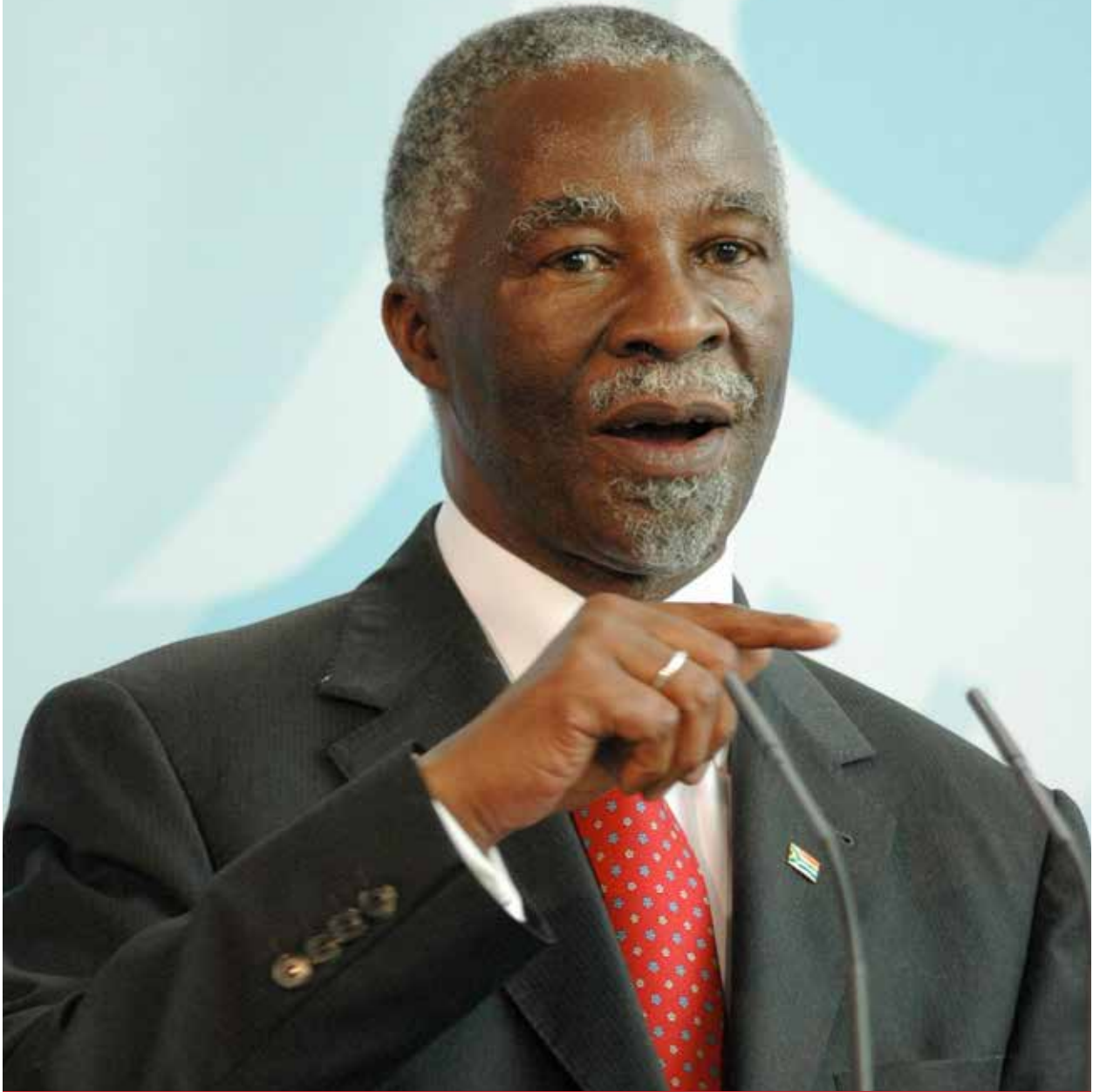
Politics must be about an accountable, responsive and clean government. We are not getting clean audits in order to please the Auditor General. We must do so because it is good leadership to manage public finances well and account for every Rand we collect from tax payers and rate payers...

Honourable Members, I don’t know what type of politics you subscribe to. Mine is a different type of politics: a politics that respects evidence, enjoys a good argument and acknowledges sound reasoning even from the opponent(s). I can’t subscribe to a politics that glorify insults, chaos and anarchy.

I subscribe to the politics of optimism and hope even in the face of adversity and tragedy. I can’t subscribe to politics of doom and gloom; politics of the impending apocalypse wherein politicians make a career out of preaching that South Africa is about to collapse. If I didn’t believe in the power and agency of citizens to drive radical social and economic transformation, I wouldn’t be here... ■



Engaging Mbeki's Proposed Solutions for Racism



We must, as a new thing, accept that we can develop an acceptable and appropriate vocabulary and means to describe our past, present, and future, free from the labels of race.

By Clyde N S Ramalaine

WEB Du Bois observed, “The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color-line – the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America and the islands of the sea. It was a phase of this problem that caused The Civil War.” We must today admit the problem of the twentieth century as advanced by Du Bois is equally the problem of the twenty-first century.

Human beings have made tremendous strides on many fronts as the technological, digital, space, and medical research fields and other spheres confirm; yet it appears we have made little or no progress on the subject of the ‘problem of the color-line’.

Across the globe, we are witnessing a hardening of racial attitudes along the colour-line divide. This is evident in the recent Brexit vote as well as political developments in France, the Netherlands, and other parts of Europe. This hardening of racial attitudes is prominent in the Donald Trump presidential victory.

On the home front we are witnessing it every day. Our daily news carries increasing public utterances by emboldened racists who shamelessly parade their convictions.

The growing hardening of attitudes compels all of us to ask, how can we deal with the personal and institutional racism that continues to plague our country and the world? We must therefore ask why racism proves this stubborn to overcome.

What is Racism?

According to Fredrickson (2002:5), the word ‘racism’ “came into common usage in the 1930s when a new word was required to describe the theories on which the Nazis based their persecution of the Jews.”

The original definition of racism asserts it as a belief that all members of a purported race possess characteristics, abilities, or qualities specific to that race so as to distinguish it as inferior or superior to another race or races.

Institutional racism refers to particular and general instances of racial discrimination, inequality, exploitation, and domination in

organisational or institutional contexts, such as the labour market or the nation-state.

Mbeki’s address on combating racism

Former President Thabo Mbeki addressed a conference on Racism held under the auspices of the South African Human Rights Commission on March 15, 2016.

In his address, Mbeki started out by suggesting that, in order for us to combat subjective racism, a number of things need to be undertaken. Among these he included strengthening the capacity of the HRC, strengthening of the legal capacity of the State to act against racism, the inclusion into both lower and higher grade curricula, a cultivation of a common patriotism, healthy cooperation between national public and private sector organised formations; and the need for both

“ Racism exists in evidence that one subscribes to the notion of race itself, because belief in race is the fallacious prerequisite for the belief in differences between races.”

Government and the Private sector to prove vigilant as exemplary custodians for a non-racial society; upholding the values of true reconciliation, non-racialism and non-sexism.

It is important to engage with Mbeki’s ideas and approaches. He said:

It would therefore seem obvious that given the fact that all of us are keenly interested to accelerate progress towards the creation of a truly non-racial and non-sexist society, we must do at least three things:

By way of preamble Mbeki rightfully makes the assumption in good faith that we all share a keen interest to accelerate progress towards the creation of a non-racial and non-sexist

society. I too share this optimism and consider it right for us to continue to believe in the greater good of a humanity that espouses and aspires to these noble ideals. Yet such hope does not render us oblivious to the fact that all in the USA, Europe, and Africa do not share greater good.

I have for the purpose of this article consciously chosen to restrict myself to engage what can be considered Mbeki’s dovetailed three-point action plan as a means to combat racism.

Critical assessment of our policies and programmes

The first of these is that we must carry out a comprehensive and critical assessment of our policies and programmes during our years of democracy to try to discover and determine why we have not made greater and more decisive progress in terms of the eradication of the legacy of colonialism and apartheid as this bears on the strategic matter of the creation of a non-racial and non-sexist society.

One can appreciate Mbeki’s preference to start with the policies and programmes for these constitute the outflow in practical sense of the philosophy and ideology that principally identified our democratic dispensation as led by the ANC.

The review and relook at policies and programmes is not an uncommon practice for any society, regardless of the spectrum of the development cycle, defined in first or third world descriptions. However, perhaps in this instance the departure point of re-assessing policies and programmes is placing the proverbial cart before the horse.

Should we not first ask what is the anthropology of our common citizenry and how is that understood by the leading party of South Africa in policy expression for a normalisation of South African society. It appears that anthropology with its concomitant anomalies must direct us to appreciate who we are and thus assist us in our review and analysis to ascertain why we have not progressed beyond a limited extent.

The practical reason to ask for an anthropology resonates in the

undeniable and decisive role that the State has in developing and creating the mould within which social identities are constructed, as we are all aware.

It is clear and correct that progress for Mbeki is necessarily a move away from colonialism and apartheid; hence, I am of the view the departure point for this move away is to first ask what underpinned Colonialism and Apartheid as ideologies that produced our South African past and present societies? A basic assessment will guide us to appreciate that Colonialism and Apartheid share a fundamental communality immanent in the anthropology of South African citizenry as extracted from the doctrine of race. This doctrine of race that sees people that share a common humanity identified along racial categorisations and classifications is rooted in the choice for racism. Meaning if we identify racism as a problem and an enemy of our common humanity we must ask the question why is race palpable in our societies the world over. Rachel Dolezal in her 2015 TEDx Talk presentation helps us when she states: "race didn't create racism, but racism created race."

Dolezal demonstrates that the belief that some humans are biologically and behaviourally superior or inferior to others created the idea of race. Therefore, it was the very hierarchical worldview of white supremacy that mythologised race. The need to control, dominate, discriminate, etc., justified itself by manufacturing a worldview of the race hierarchy. It would appear this critical assessment that Mbeki rightfully laments couldn't occur without us pausing and looking at race and its role in the slow transformation of South Africa into a non-racial and non-sexist society.

It would appear that Mbeki and others move from the premise that race by itself firstly is an innocent constant, and does not in and of itself constitute a problem; therefore race can exist with no presence of racism. However it is here where we have a definite disjuncture and undeniable dialectic tension. Or is it that Mbeki and others have resigned themselves to the insurmountability of the problem of race, therefore it being a constant.

The only thing constant about racism is race, the common denominator remains race. D E Muir helps us to appreciate the comfort of proximity shared by race and racism when he asserts that racism exists in evidence that one subscribes to the notion of race itself, because belief in race is the fallacious prerequisite for the belief in differences between races.

If we accept the logic that racism produced race, it would appear that in order to deal with racism we will have to take much more serious the fact that race as a classification of humans into immutable biological categories with qualitative differences is a discredited enterprise. Yet we extend its life in other forms, mostly as a social construct and

“We must discard the old constructed and constricted formulations for a common humanity, thus freeing ourselves from out-dated paradigms in full and conscious embrace of a non-racial notion, not as a founding myth but as our necessary current reality.”

even as a pseudo-science of medicine where we identify certain diseases and seek to prescribe medicine informed by race.

Mbeki is not problematising the subject of race given its reality as a discredited enterprise. He does not show a dissonance if not discomfort with the ideology or doctrine of race as a natural challenge for a meaningful life for a common humanity in a democratic sojourn with the espoused hope of a non-racial and non-sexist society.

Beyond the discredited enterprise status of race we are compelled to critically question the veracity and validity of race as a social construct in asking what society defined it as a social

construct. Deborah Posel reminded us, "The architects of apartheid racial classification policies recognised explicitly that racial categories were constructs, rather than descriptions of essences".

It would appear whilst apartheid's architects of racial classification explicitly recognised racial categories as constructs, the ANC as entrusted leader of the democratic state and society with its analysis and understanding of a South African citizenry appears to be attaching a description of essence directly eked out of these apartheid constructs. The logic that must mean if racial policy categorisation constituted mere constructs then they must within themselves contain the natural right to be subjected to question and their relevance challenged and not necessarily appropriated, particularly in a different time and space.

One would have thought that Mbeki would have attempted to critically unpack the social construction of race, its ontology and its relevance if not irrelevance in a democratic sojourn. Perhaps the reason for not questioning race as a social construction is borne from the reality of the fact that the ideologies of colonialism, apartheid and our very democracy, share the same categorisation for social identity markers.

It thus appears race with its ontology (the belief that some humans are biologically and behaviourally superior or inferior to others created the idea of race of racism) functions problematically to homogenise large groups of people and to facilitate the presence of racism.

Race by general admittance of all was decades ago declared defunct as a scientific reality, yet it remains uncritically accepted as a social construction. The most recent attempt at giving race a lease of life assumes a new-pseudo science reality of disease analysis and medicine prescription.

We therefore equally must consciously draw attention and debunk the 'new pseudo-science' base for race as visible in so called prescribed medicines for certain race groups informed by a fallacious claim of race categorised diseases. We know this backdoor attempt to

give race a scientific premise in this century emanates from the first contact patients have at their public or private sector health facilities where the race of patients is always solicited. We know that the USA Food and Drug Administration (FDA) hitherto claims more than twenty types of diseases with this pseudo-science frame.

We must therefore ask again as Dexter Gordon reminds us why race and its attendant and chromatically inaccurate colour descriptors, especially black and white, enjoy almost universal usage today, though often with the pernicious assumption of the innate physical, mental and moral superiority of one group over another.

Nina Jablonski asserts “the first scientific classification of humans, published by Carl Linnaeus in 1735, was simple and separated people into four varieties by skin color and continent. Later, Linnaeus not only added more physical traits to his descriptions but also changed them to include information that he had surmised about temperament. Europeans were white and sanguine, Asians were brown and melancholic, Native Americans were red and choleric, and Africans were black and phlegmatic.”

Jablonski argues racism found its intellectual foundation with Linnaeus’ analysis as the first authoritative classification that combined physical traits with folk beliefs about dispositions and character. The folk beliefs had little to do with fact or observation but were mostly just fables — racist pronouncements that were personal and emotional expressions of, at best, discomfort and, mostly, prejudice. It was from this point on, that debasing associations of physical appearance with temperament and culture became commonplace and were considered scientific.

We know that the first person to formally define races was the noted philosopher Immanuel Kant, who in 1785 classified people into four fixed races, which were arrayed in a hierarchy according to colour and talent. Jablonski further contends that despite Kant’s clear lack of evidence or personal knowledge about groups of

people, it did not stop him from opining on the tastes and finer feelings of groups about which he knew nothing. For Kant and his many followers, the rank ordering of races by skin colour and character created a self-evident order of nature that implied that light-coloured races were superior and destined to be served by the innately inferior, darker-coloured ones.

Despite serious opposition from his contemporaries, Kant’s ideas about a fixed natural hierarchy of human races, graded in value from light to dark, gained tremendous support because they reinforced popular misconceptions about dark skin being more than a physical trait. The preference for light over dark — strictly speaking, white over black — was derived from pre-medieval associations of white with purity and virtue and of black with impurity and evil.

When Mbeki therefore rightfully asks for a comprehensive and critical assessment as to why we have not meaningfully progressed from Colonialism and Apartheid, which is by definition institutional racism, it cannot be without engaging the subject matter and reality of race. A race prism directly extrapolated from the dogma of Linnaeus and Kant that defined both colonialism and apartheid systems of governance and in this season threatens to define a post-apartheid epoch. For the umpteenth time, neither can we attempt to deal with racism devoid of its product, race.

If we therefore ask for a critical look at our policies and programmes, we will soon realise these policies and programmes have race as a premise. They have race as a departure point and they have race as the quantitative index assessment and measurement tool.

The Democratic State of South Africa is trapped in using the same defunct and scientifically debunked notions of race as its epicentre and circumference for a claim of redress.

Therefore, the policies and programmes on the one hand claim redress yet on the other hand entrenches our otherness as extrapolated from that very doctrine and paradigm of race. We cannot overstate Neville Alexander when he pleads for a new vocabulary

for describing things (and I include people): “...societies and the global village have changed so radically that to continue to analyse and describe things as though we were still in 1848 or 1948 or even 1984 is to be woefully blind and self-defeating.”

There is a justified disdain and an abhorrence of racism; why, then, I am compelled to ask, is race for a means of identifying and describing a common humanity not found equally detestable? Why is it not addressed with the same verve or energy?

We must caution against the myth of state institutions as a knee-jerk reaction capable of action against racism in outlawing and pursuing racists when we have not yet engaged race as the fulcrum of our societal expression in critical and honesty of true reflection. Particularly since the employing of strategies and policies for redress at the hand of the very racial logic and architecture assumes the State presides over the ability to define if not distinguish, no different to its predecessors, in content between what makes for “Africans”, “Indians”, “Coloured” and “whites”.

We must ask how serious we are in red carding racism as oppositional to the society we seeking to build when we refuse to engage the race in rac(e)ism?

This brings us to the second of Mbeki’s solutions.

Material racism as a national emergency

The second is that we should then engage the challenging question – what are the genuinely new things we must do, treating the matter of continuing pernicious existence of material racism in our country as truly a national emergency which does not allow for an approach as business as usual!

Mbeki identifies material racism as a national emergency. The yardstick for Mbeki, perhaps as an economist, is material well-being as a means of assessing progress from the former colonial and apartheid states. The signpost for Mbeki thus of a liberated and democratically defined society is material well-being. It is as if Mbeki identifies with those who believe if

we can deal with the economic gap (between white and black) that confirms race disparity in SA as a growing unequal society we would have dealt with racism. It perhaps mirrors the older definition of racism where racism is purely rooted in the power one has over the other, that power for those of this school of material racism is usually informed by capital.

I am not necessarily opposed to this assessment. However, I argue, material racism as an emergency cannot be dealt with in the absence of firstly acknowledging the reality of pseudo institutionalised and structural racism realities, brought about by a democratic society obsessed with race as the true means for identity configuration of people's common humanity. When I talk of a Democratic State its in full awareness that the leader of the State is the African National Congress. Do I agree that there is an undeniable gross disparity between colonial and apartheid benefactors and colonial and apartheid victims, a resounding yes! Do I fundamentally believe that if all apartheid victims in hypothetical sense become wealthy tomorrow morning, we would have destroyed racism, a definite No! That idea of racism suggests 'blacks' cannot be racist or practice racism.

I am not convinced that racism can in a magic wand sense be obliterated thus dealt with by simply empowering people economically therefore extending them a counter power to the racist beliefs and practices imbibed by the doctrine of race. This argument is not dissimilar to that advanced by those who believe that the election vote of 1994 by itself eradicated racism. We know now that our finest moment as important and significant as it was didn't kill racism, for it protests a livelihood in many forms. We know now that the youth of today refer to that moment as project regardless to how some of us consider it sacred.

Equally it is the belief in race that must be discarded that will extend opportunity to South Africans to share the content of that new society which will define a common ideal of a non-racial and non-sexist society.

Structural racism was always present in colonial and apartheid states. The

interesting phenomenon for a presence of structural racism was that the implementation for it was outsourced to localised low-level officials who had the right to alter identities as they had the power to do so. We must sadly admit structural racism did not die with the advent of the democratic era but is sojourning with us in new-draped garments.

Structural racism therefore is a prevalent reality in our democratic society for it emanates from the reality that the democratic state requires its citizenry to comply in accepting a definition of themselves at the hand of the four baseline apartheid classifications immanent in "African", "Coloured", "white", "Indian", more

“There is a justified disdain and an abhorrence of racism; why, then, I am compelled to ask, is race for a means of identifying and describing a common humanity not found equally detestable? Why is it not addressed with the same verve or energy?”

recently to include Chinese and vacuous other. Daily South Africans are legally required to complete official government forms where their identities are predetermined firstly by racial description and along the above markers for identity.

Not only that but the very policy formulations, for example employment equity, confirms the definite presence of a form of structural racism, when race is required but not provided by a citizen, the functionary role for defining a human being is left to that of a human resources manager. They are entitled to complete blank spaces and thus ascribe identities to people who consciously refuse to accept the apartheid race classifications in a

democratic epoch. This gross invading of privacy and clarion denial of a right to self definition outside the prescribed decided markers for identities for South Africans therefore an extension of apartheid practice warrants being declared repugnant and outright reprehensible.

Mbeki is correct to see the national emergency of material racism, yet that can never stand on its own without the existence of a neo-institutionalised racism and a definite presence of structural racism.

Material racism therefore is a direct outflow and evidence of the complexity and perplexity of the race doctrine in which the State continues to define, describe, and serve its citizenry along the same racial classification and markers for their identity as its predecessor states, i.e., segregation and apartheid states.

Mbeki asks what new things we should be doing to stymie racism. Let me first venture to say, as much as we are conscious of the new prominence of a right leaning populist world evidenced in racism, we dare not assume the answer is an automatic left liberal response. We have been around this proverbial mountain before, and to assume a leftist response will cancel what we have deemed a right leaning world is perhaps short-sighted if not ill conceived. I therefore plead for a dispensing of the idea that a leftist ideology is our natural saviour and answer to a hardening racist right. Our world is not simply made up of binaries of right and left, but it is and remains fundamentally informed and framed by stubborn race rhetoric as uncritically appropriated into democratic societies.

In attempting to answer Mbeki, it would appear that if we are serious about our collective soul-search we will have to as a new thing consciously discard the old thinking that race is detachable from racism.

Meaning race is a benign construct that was twisted with a resultant effect of racism. We will have to discard the doctrine of race as that which defines humanity.

At another level, the ANC as the leader of society will have to concede its engaging in a form identity doublespeak of pursuing non-racialism

whilst holding on to the doctrine of race as expressed in the National Question that inadvertently reinforce the historical realities of race-based identity configurations.

We will have to be brave and admit the democratic state (which has its history in a Government of National Unity) with race as anchor tenant in its ontology has until now inadvertently robbed us of our collective and individual freedoms to self-definition in replacing of this race notion. Meaning the Democratic State since Mandela has been reluctant to afford South Africans the space and freedom to engage and articulate in dialogue for their self-defined identities.

We should concede that the current government policies and programmes emanate from that unsustainable and questionable premise of uncritical race as its departure point.

We dare not be held prisoner to the idea that redress is only possible and measurable in terms of the archaic toxic race based identity configurations.

We must, as a new thing, accept that we can develop an acceptable and appropriate vocabulary and means to describe our past, present, and future, free from the labels of race. If we lack the vocabulary, it is perhaps only because we have not yet afforded ourselves the opportunity to dialogue when we have failed to afford South Africans the space to articulate who they are. It remains my persuasion and hope that out of such dialogue and critical reflection the new vocabulary to explain our anomalous past and ambiguous present will help us define our new society.

We must discard the old constructed and constricted formulations for a common humanity, thus freeing ourselves from out-dated paradigms in full and conscious embrace of a non-racial notion, not as a founding myth but as our necessary current reality that warrants a conscious filling with much needed content as we together craft our future.

A national dialogue required

The third is that we should encourage action on a process which was visualised by the National Planning Commission in

the Diagnostic Report it issued in 2001, when it said: 'A national dialogue involving all South Africans is required to arrive at solutions that are credible and implantable.... Tackling (the) challenges (facing the country) will require the involvement of all sectors of society'.

A call to action is always welcome; it attests to a common responsibility in a common sojourn for a common agreed destiny in which we share a common responsibility. That destiny has been visualised in a 'non-racial, non-sexist and democratic society'. However that action assumes various premises and departure points, responsibilities evidenced in particular as to whose action, what action and where and for what reason? It appears rhetorical to assume the common enemy is racism thus action against racism is natural. However some of us remonstrate in saying direct that action to the product of the racist mind, namely race, a less uncritically appropriated and challenging sojourner that militates our liberation claim.

It appears that before we aim at action from institutions of State such as the Human Rights Commission, we will need to appreciate our dichotomy less in acts against racism by way of law and legislation against racism, but to encourage open dialogue on race as the epicentre of our identity configuration in democracy informing a new anthropology from which new policies will emerge.

I have elsewhere contended that the first step in such re-mythologising of the current identity markers of the South African societal expression is for human agents who embody its content and structure to claim and demand the opportunity to construct their identities. We know that the markers for identity in democracy have been uncritically appropriated and internalised as permeating all spheres of societal description. The action for me is embodied as genesis here. Equally, such self-concept must be freed from the overwhelmingly uncritical acceptance of race as its primary premise.

The subject of a national dialogue as articulated in the NPC is not anymore a wish, but a necessity. This dialogue,

as I have shared with some senior leaders of the ANC at Luthuli House and elsewhere must be initiated by the ANC, facilitated and sponsored by the Democratic State as its genuine first contribution to give content to the non-racial pursuit articulated in the ANC's National Question and later in the Constitution of SA. The national dialogue therefore must give content to the claim of non-racial reality anchored in intent of living a meaning-filled life. It cannot be that we pay lip service in romanticism of a non-racial reality of pursuit when we glibly continue along the doctrine of multi-racialism as the ANC in doublespeak does.

The aim of the national dialogue must be a first step to test the efficacy of a State extending unilaterally to its citizens identities its citizenry plausibly never approved. It must as an outflow, be the intent of such dialogue to consciously work for the re-mythologising of our current race informed identity markers for the South African societal expression.

Thus on the subject of a national dialogue I am in concert with Mbeki and the NPC whilst I am of the view that dialogue in agenda must have the above as departure point. I am further of the view that should the ANC and the State by extension fail to action this dialogue, civil society in all its expression must take the liberty to lead this agenda. The action needed is overdue, the dialogue perhaps 23 years late; yet the need has never been more pressing since racism lives emboldened by its product – race – in our democratic society.

Essop Pahad, in his editorial comment of *The Thinker* Quarter 2, 2016 Volume 68, asserts:

It is obvious that the ANC and its branches should take the lead in developing a mass-based anti-racist movement comprising of different political formations, trade unions, faith-based organisations, youth, women, and student bodies, NGOs, CBOs and foundations bearing the names of icons of our revolutionary struggle, Nelson Mandela, OR Tambo, Thabo Mbeki, Ahmed Kathrada and Steve Biko. Such a movement can then link up with anti-racist progressive forces

throughout the world.

I want to concur with Pahad that the ANC and its branches must lead; it only makes sense to make that argument since the ANC remains the custodian for a better future as entrusted by the ballot. Yet I struggle with the fact that the ANC's current practice is imbued with multi-racialism whilst it claims to pursue a non-racial reality. For some there is no dialectic tension because they equally share the prism that race can stand-alone and does not necessarily fuel racism. To them we ask: What would racism look like if there were no race connotation to it from which it derives a presence and meaning?

In order for the ANC to lead anything against racism, it must first engage its policy platform and pillars on a South African citizenry and their identities as articulated in its policy footprint. Any leadership therefore is informed as cognisant and may be constrained if not hamstrung by its very policy position.

This inadvertently brings us back to the subject of the National Question.

Lest we forget this aspect of ANC policy ultimately in democracy defines Government policy. There is therefore firstly a need to engage the subject matter of race and how it is understood in the ANC and how it is actualised in the ANC as praxis.

An adumbrated summary of the National Question attests the following as was carried in *Umrabulo* 23 2005. The ANC exists:

- To firstly liberate black people in general, and Africans in particular.
- The struggle to evidence and bring about a non-racial, non-sexist, democratic, and united South Africa.
- To search and work for the unitary South African Nation with a common overarching identity.
- To work for the eradication and resolve of antagonistic contradictions between black and white.
- To deal with ethnic oriented race-filled feelings of any form of ethnic chauvinism.

I have in my article, as captured in Issue 71, *The Thinker* with the heading 'The Quest for a non-racial

South African Society: The case for remythologising identity construction' advanced it would appear to me that the National Question as articulated by the ANC commits at least five immediate and perhaps fundamental errors.

Firstly, it uncritically gives credence and veracity to the false race informed identity markers for people who are South Africans however culturally, socially and politically defined. If read in concert with the struggle for a non-racial society, it uncritically continues with the debunked and unscientific notion of race as the anchor tenant for identity configuration, albeit in using race as a social construct. One would hope the burden is on us as a collective to challenge the veracity of the notion of a 'social construct' usage at this time in our history.

Secondly, it conveniently engages in what is called a form of exceptionalism if not separatism. Exceptionalism because in the National Question

“ The subject of a national dialogue as articulated in the NPC is not anymore a wish, but a necessity. ”

the term 'African' is rendered an apartheid convenient exclusive identity. Separatism, because the black is separated from the African with exacted pain as the premise.

Anyone who ever suffered under the brutality of an apartheid regime can never be accused of making light of the exacted pain. Yet to uncritically accept and adopt apartheid's myopic classification of an African identity as the yardstick to define a people in exclusion of others in a democracy regardless of exacted pain for the measurement of progress must militate against the known inclusivity of an Africa in geographic setting.

Thirdly, it continues in the trajectory of the exacted pain in configuring people's group and individual identities out of the entitled residue of an Apartheid state.

We may in this season question, if the premise for a notion of 'black in

general and African in particular', is extrapolated in response to what I have termed degrees of exacted pain, can an equal case be made for the longest suffering of inflicted pain evident in the Khoisan people?

Can the case equally be made that there is today a group of South African citizenry, namely the Khoisan people, who remain disenfranchised, dis-served by the new democratic reality, side-lined in institutional racism and definitely live an experiential reality of all forms of racism? It would appear the Khoisan in all its formations can rightfully claim their pain extends to that of a longest suffering claim, which evidences the first attempts of Europeans at taking their land as far back as the first attempted Portuguese invasion of the 1500s who attempted what later colonial and apartheid forces successfully attained.

How will we make sense of degrees of exacted pain immanent in identity construction of 'Africans in particular' for qualification of exceptionalism and relate that to a UNDRIP 'First Nation Right status' for the Khoisan people of SA? A people that still remains unacknowledged even within the much acclaimed egalitarian constitution of 1996 and reduced to a convenient notion of coloured identity (as the State determines) within the employment equity frame, in disregard for them being the longest sufferers of disenfranchisement? The current holders of state power have bought into the narrative

Fourthly, it is devoid of careful analysis and of objective scrutiny; thus, it narrowly promotes the excluding of people in the 'African' identity definition, when the African identity warrants a thorough and not an emotional unpacking.

Finally, it inadvertently engages in what I have termed identity-doublespeak when it espouses a yet to be filled non-racial reality whilst it denies firstly the opportunity to engage in a publicly facilitated sense the subject identity construction. It as a by-product of the denial of a state facilitated initiative for self-define, a critical aspect of our collective liberation narrative, to be

buoyant in a democratic atmosphere and space.

'African in particular': a colonial and apartheid accrued benefit identity?

The evolution of my thought provocation leads me to ask a question that may be pertinent: Why the 'African in particular', may never see the problem of a dubious and questionable National Question in its current form? I have taken the liberty of sending my critique on the national question to cadres and thinkers from the common African cohort. Despite a protracted history of engagement as common in the liberation formations, thus far there appears very few willing to engage the subject.

One conclusion to be may extend itself to the presence of what I have chosen to describe as the 'apartheid-accrued-identity-benefit'. Is it possible that the 'African in particular' as asserted in the national question, finds comfort in a form of entitlement out of the collective exacted pain from both the Colonial and Apartheid states? And that democracy for them is about redress for their collective pain suffered?

Is it plausible that the accrued-*apartheid-identity-benefit* for the African in the National Question renders him/her blind, even numb, to red flag the National Question as divisive? No different to how apartheid beneficiaries never questioned their benefits in a sea of oppression?

Yet, I would remonstrate in this season we need the new Beyers Naude and Braam Fischer's who, despite having the deck stacked in their favour for an identity of 'whiteness' and superiority as afforded by apartheid with all its benefits, made conscious choices to question that whiteness if it means a blackness of subordination for those who share common humanity – even breaking with it if it meant an exclusion of others.

Perhaps this hour needs the 'Africans' as claimed in the National Question to break with the comfort of the benefits of a narrow convenient 'Africanness' or, what I have earlier alluded to as 'apartheid-accrued-identity-benefit', and question the

salience of this uncritical adopted notion, its efficacy for a continuance of developing a new society that informs a non-racial, equitable and just society.

It is then precisely this policy with its now manifested entrenched programmes of an uncritical adoption of the National Question in ANC policy that renders that Pahad editorial insisting on a mass anti-racist movement led by the ANC suspect and questionable.

The danger of the ANC not leading this mass anti-racist campaign informed by a dialogue gives counter-revolutionary forces space and legitimacy, evidenced in both rightist and neo-liberal agendas, to capture the moral high-ground for narrow political interest. This is clearly something the transformation of SA into a normal society cannot afford.

The DA as official opposition in its 2029 Vision Statement articulates 'we see a South Africa in which all races are equal.' The DA therefore agrees with the ANC on race as the means of description and definition for a South African citizenry. This unequivocally suggests we cannot lean on the official opposition to help us to free ourselves from the out-dated unscientific race configuration of South African citizenry.

Pahad proves bold in suggesting that some foundations such as that of Mbeki or Kathrada can lead this mass anti-racist campaign against racism. We must recognise the role of NPOs, CBOs and Foundations yet such recognition does not automatically tell us these are the best to lead, particularly if the prism of identity configurations for them remains not dissimilar to what the ANC proffers in its National Question, or the DA in its Vision 2029 Statement for their respective practical policy footprints.

I am of the view that the revolution for radical change that asks for clear direction to give content to the non-racial notion is upon us and the masses may very well be more ready to lead than the State, political formations, some civil society formations imminent in foundations of both a form of liberation aristocracy and historically liberal formations in

challenging the race based identity status quo.

Unfortunately perceptibly these foundations may make up the status quo and uphold race as the fulcrum of identity construction for the SA citizenry. This may render them questionable to lead the mass anti-racist campaign.

In conclusion, beyond using a review of policies and programmes as a point of departure, as advanced by Mbeki, beyond a national emergency of material racism, and beyond the belief that the ANC can lead a mass anti-racist movement, as advanced by Pahad, remains a critical question we all collectively must answer.

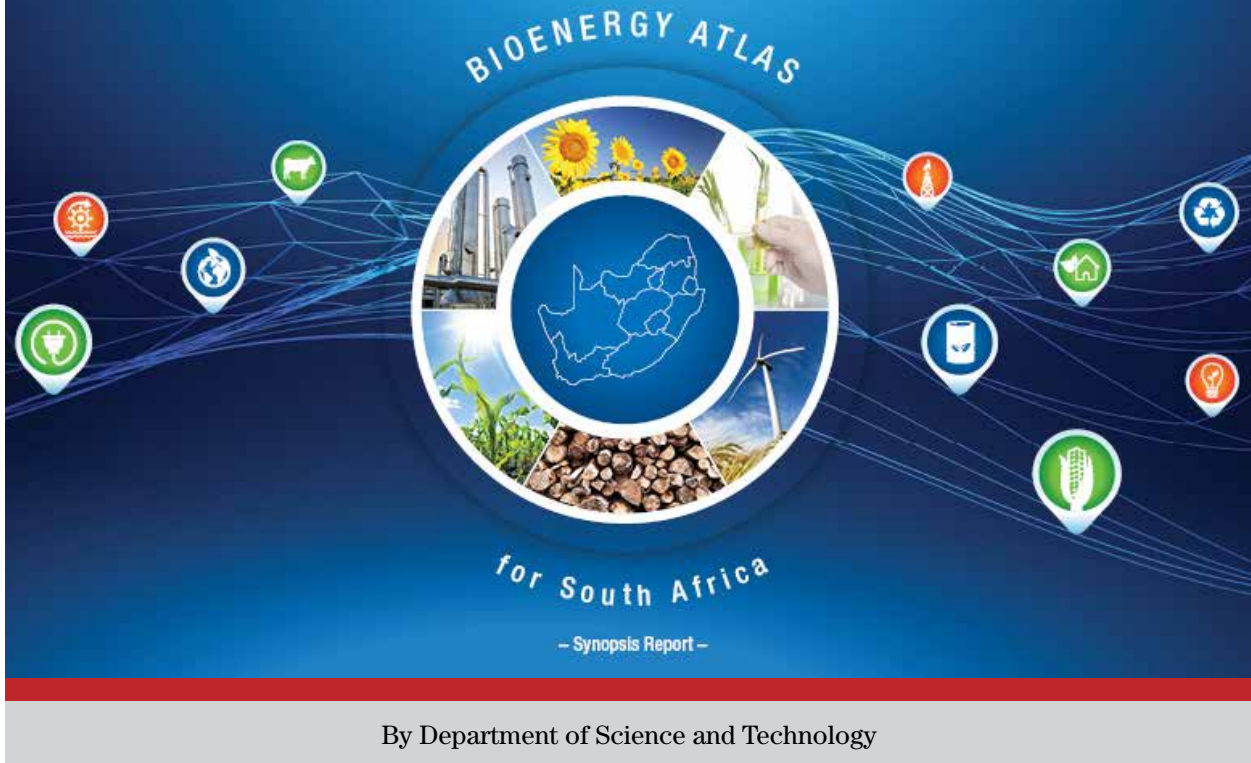
The critical question is how we combat racism without unpacking its ontology, and how do we discard racists who practice racism as their ideology, when we continue to acknowledge and uphold the doctrine of race in extending the livelihood of race, the end-product of racism, in our democratic sojourn.

We unfortunately do not have the luxury to choose for or against the idea of filling the notion of a non-racial society with content. For some of us we have consciously crossed the proverbial Rubicon and have made a conscious choice to let that non-racial reality count in democracy, for it's a choice against race thus racism, the product of a racist mind. We do so out of the full persuasion that our cause for liberation was to free us from the burden of race and its attending false notions of identity but rooted in a common humanity.

We therefore must keep the ANC and the Democratic State to its commitment to honour this espoused claim less in lip service or romantic soliloquies but in practice.

Non-Racialism cannot be accepted as a founding myth of the new South Africa, as some of us have observed; yet it seems the elites have not yet afforded themselves time to fully unpack the socio-political and socio-cultural ramifications of this rhetoric. Perhaps the myth is convenient for those who can afford to engage in identity-doublespeak against the reality of what I have termed an apartheid-accrued-identity-benefit. ■

First bioenergy atlas for South Africa



By Department of Science and Technology

In support of efforts to increase South Africa's energy-generation capacity, the Department of Science and Technology developed a Bioenergy Atlas to use as a decision-support tool in energy policy formulation, as well as to guide investments in bioenergy technologies.

The atlas, launched in March 2017, provides information on potential energy resources, their geographic spread, their proximity to infrastructure, and potential end users. The atlas looks at different categories of bioenergy resources like lignocellulose, organic waste and purposely cultivated feedstock.

In an effort to improve the

cost competitiveness of delivering alternative energy solutions, the atlas assesses different bioenergy conversion technology pathways. This will enable researchers to prioritise investigations into cost-reduction options in technologies applicable to dominant South African feedstock.

The National Development Plan calls for adequate investment in energy infrastructure so that by 2030 South Africa will have an energy sector that promotes economic growth and development. The plan also envisages that by 2030 South Africa will have a sufficient supply of electricity and liquid fuels to ensure that economic activity and welfare are not disrupted, and that

at least 95% of the population have access to grid or off-grid electricity.

The plan envisages that gas and other renewable resources such as the sun, wind and water, as viable alternatives to coal, will supply at least 20 000 MW of the additional 29 000 MW of electricity that will be needed by 2030.

The government aims to ensure that the energy supply is secure and demand is well managed, and that there is an efficient and diverse energy mix for universal access within a transformed energy sector. It will also implement policies that help South Africa adapt to climate change and mitigate its effects.

In developing the atlas, the

DST held discussions with relevant institutions which included universities, government departments, science councils and Eskom before a draft framework was adopted. The framework focused on providing a holistic view of resources that might be used for bioenergy.

KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga could contribute approximately 2 800 MW annually by converting lignocellulose into electricity with an additional 1 400 MW generated using organic waste from serviced households. Lignocellulosic biomass in KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga includes forestry and agricultural residues, while in the Eastern Cape it comes mostly from invasive alien species.

With respect to biofuels, the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal could produce about 570 million litres of biofuel per annum from land used for subsistence farming and from degraded land. The energy generated from these resources could have an impact on both energy access and job creation in the targeted areas. The atlas is able to provide details of available resources at a resolution of 5 km by 5 km, thus assisting local governments with feasibility assessments for energy projects.

The proximity and ability of various kinds of energy infrastructure (decommissioned, operational and planned) to service the target markets was also evaluated. The findings indicate that most of the current energy infrastructure deployment focuses on supporting economic activity/sectors, and limited attention is given to addressing social challenges such as energy access. Additional infrastructure will be required to provide more rural communities with electricity.

There is good infrastructure cover in areas where biomass production is high and most biomass potential is within the reach of existing and planned energy or agricultural infrastructure. However, some biomass resources in rural areas will require new infrastructure, particularly in the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo.

The Eastern Cape has the potential to contribute approximately 500 MW of additional electricity-generation



capacity and approximately 150 million litres of biofuels. The province of KwaZulu-Natal could contribute about 600 MW of additional electricity and 200 million litres of biodiesel capacity, and Limpopo could contribute approximately 100 MW from Polokwane.

The atlas projections regarding

“ The atlas projections regarding the number of people in low-income groups that could benefit from access to modern energy services is 125 000 in the Eastern Cape, 365 000 in KwaZulu-Natal, 268 000 in Limpopo, and 106 000 in the North West. ”

the number of people in low-income groups that could benefit from access to modern energy services is 125 000 in the Eastern Cape, 365 000 in KwaZulu-Natal, 268 000 in Limpopo, and 106 000 in the North West.

In addition, the people who might benefit from job creation in the biomass cultivation or harvesting sectors could be as many as 60 000 in the Eastern Cape, 35 000 in KwaZulu-Natal, and 30 000 in Limpopo. However, these

jobs are seasonal and, in the case of invasive species eradication, will be for a period of two to five years only.

The estimates for manufacturing and processing jobs that could result in major rural areas are approximately 2 000 in the Eastern Cape, 700 in KwaZulu-Natal, and 300 in Limpopo.

The atlas provides a comparative analysis of different conversion processes in terms of efficiency and viability. It uses models to forecast estimated yields or production, determine feedstock properties (including calorific values), and the full value chain impact of bioenergy resources.

The DST will share the Bioenergy Atlas with the rest of government, particularly the Department of Energy and the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, to ensure that the atlas influences energy planning in all spheres of government. The atlas can be used to enhance decision making around key programmes such as the Working for Energy programme, the National Biogas Platform and the Rural Electrification Programme, which deploy energy technologies to deal with the triple challenge of unemployment, inequality and poverty. ■

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A History of Cultural Violence

Without seeking positive peace, the crisis in tertiary education is likely to continue in this robotic fashion forever. I would argue the same for many other aspects of South African society such as the mining sector. Events such as Marikana will repeat themselves *ad nauseam*, further numbing the South African psyche.

By Mandisi Nkomo

This article aims to apply Galtung's theory of Structural Violence to the South African context, notably the #FeesMustFall protests of 2016. Using Galtung's theory it will be argued that personal violence experienced during the #FeesMustFall protests was eerily predictable. Personal violence during South African

protests should be expected at this stage, if structural issues are not dealt with adequately.

The article will then briefly analyse media roles in aggravating protest action and citizen responses. By over-emphasising personal violence, the media does not provide citizens with the knowledge they need to

properly understand protest action and violence. Neither does it allow citizens to adequately contextualise violence. It is vital for all South Africans to deepen their analysis of violence if lasting peace is to be established. The aim should be for positive peace rather than short-term negative peace.

To quote Galtung: "These are

factors behind the drama, the drama is the famous tip of the iceberg".¹

Personal and Structural Violence

As a young democracy, recently freed from race-based totalitarian rule (Apartheid), South Africans tend to display an obsession for personal acts of violence. Almost as if the Apartheid State's gross abuse of state-sponsored personal violence has collectively numbed the country's psyche, setting our standards of social justice painfully low, and making us bet hard on the absence of personal violence as a testament to the success of Democracy.

The existence of violence as defined by Galtung is, "present when human beings are influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realizations are below their potential realizations". This is a broad definition that allows a deeper analysis of violence. For one, we can separate physical and psychological violence. As stated by Galtung, this distinction, "is between violence that works on the body and violence that works on the soul".²

Physical violence occurs when a person's potential is undermined physically, like dying young, or being paralysed in war. It should also be noted that physical violence can operate in complex ways, such as constraining an individual, which may not 'hurt' them per say, but limits their movement. Psychological violence on the other hand, "would include lies, brainwashing, indoctrination of various kinds, threats, etc., that serve to decrease mental potentialities".³

It is important when making these distinctions to note that they are not mutually exclusive. They tend to operate in an interrelated manner, many times simultaneously. Referring to our case study of #FeesMustFall for example, cases of vandalism by certain actors have been well documented in the media. I would define vandalism as both physical and psychological violence. As an example, for a business, an act of vandalism might physically restrain what is possible until repairs are completed. This would be considered the physical violence. On the other hand, psychological elements will be at play, such as diminished work morale, the eyesore of damaged property, or

the fear of being in the office when the physical violence occurs again.

We can now move to define personal and structural violence, of which physical and psychological violence are a sub-type. Again, personal and structural violence are not mutually exclusive by any means. Personal violence refers to violence where there is a clear actor committing the act. An individual (at the micro level, person to person) or the state (at the macro level, nation to nation). The existence of a clear actor is what allows personal violence to be easier perceived than structural. The violence in the latter may be built into a system, and may not need a direct perpetrator

“We must understand that the personal violence of our nation cannot be reduced to ‘hooliganism’ and ‘criminality’ but stems from a long history of perverse structural violence.”

for it to be perpetuated. It is likely to be built into the structure, and the perpetrators merely rotate, as they are indoctrinated into abnormal societal norms.⁴ Structural violence tends to lack in spectacle; I call this 'the spectacle of personal violence'. It can't be so easily recorded on a cellphone, or is less likely to be reported by your local newspaper. It lacks the inherent shock or entertainment value often found in personal violence.

South Africa: A Culture of Violence

Let us take a moment to delve deeper into our understanding of structural violence. Unsurprisingly, with our Apartheid history and contemporary inequality issues, South Africa is very much a poster child of structural violence. South Africa has some of the highest inequality levels in the world. Galtung explicitly states that the general formula behind structural

violence is inequality. He moves on to discuss what factors other than personal violence, and/or the threat of personal violence (South Africa pre-1994) tend to maintain inequality. He finds six factors common to structural violence that tend to uphold inequality. I will focus on those very particular to the South African case.

The first is *Linear ranking order*. A linear ranking order refers to an immutable ranking of actors operating in a given societal structure. A linear ranking order is one some might describe as a society lacking in upward mobility. A lay person could easily identify the linear ranking order in South Africa as revolving around race. The linear ranking between whites and non-whites is generally straight forward. Whites are generally at the top of the rank. For our particular case study, whites generally have access to superior education (largely through access to finance), education centred around their European heritage and education allowing them to learn in their mother tongue. We note here the number of Afrikaans based schools and universities. Thus it is obvious why protest action has revolved around fees, as non-whites are, in essence, priced out of tertiary education.

Galtung also describes *Acyclical interaction patterns*, where actors are connected in one way throughout society. Apartheid also set the tone for the actor interaction across societal structures. The basic Apartheid premise is that white people are superior, therefore the only correct white and non-white interaction is top-down. We note here the negative responses to the discourse of #FeesMustFall from white citizens, and non-white citizens who have embedded themselves into the upper-class structure alike. Greater access to tertiary education, and revised Afro-Centric curriculums, would disrupt the ranking order and the top-down interaction that is a staple of South African society.

Galtung further discusses *Concordance between the ranks*. If an actor ranks high in one aspect of society, they will rank high in other aspects. Apart from perhaps in politics, we can see this in almost every other aspect of South African society. From

education, to healthcare, to wealth, to land ownership, to general affluence, whites tend to rank high in all aspects of South African society they operate in. Perhaps it is not surprising that the National Party was willing to release political power during the transition, with the full knowledge they had the monopoly on almost every other aspect of South African society.

Galtung argues that in order for a society to achieve a sense of holistic peace, the absence of one form of violence is not sufficient. South Africa has managed to achieve neither negative peace nor positive peace. Negative peace refers to the absence of personal violence. Clearly this is not the case in South Africa, with our extreme crime rates, and non-stop outbursts of political violence. Neither have we achieved positive peace, as our appalling inequality statistics indicate. I am of the opinion that personal violence in South Africa stems largely from structural violence. In essence, core issues are in general ignored, and our focus is on achieving only negative peace. The reason we emphasise negative peace, over positive peace I believe is due to our long history of state-sponsored personal violence.

However it is clear South Africa is in dire need of addressing structural violence. While many South Africans may long for negative peace, so that they might rest easy at night, our excess structural violence makes that achievement highly improbable. I would even go as far as saying the interaction between structural and personal violence in South Africa has deteriorated to a state of being banally circular, in almost every sector, from mining to tertiary education. Galtung illustrates this phenomena with a triangle, and describes the legitimisation of structural and personal violence in the citizen psyche as Cultural Violence.⁵

#FeesMustFall demonstrates this circular interaction. The inability to dismantle Apartheid structures within tertiary education leaves contemporary students of colour disillusioned and discontented. This in itself is nothing new as evidenced during the Apartheid era with protests against Bantu Education, where the students took on

the rhetoric of Anti-Apartheid freedom fighters, and acclaimed African philosophers, engaging in peaceful protest to voice their concerns.

As this is a structural issue it is largely ignored or dealt with lazily by university executives and government. We note here the issue of structural violence and rotating actors. Many university executives are people of colour. However, they have managed to claw their way to high powered positions, and they seek to keep them. We also note that in the tertiary education system, executives are not necessarily the highest rank. Universities require funding, much of it private. Who in the South African financial ranking order, and international systems ranking order has the funds for these universities?

“While many South Africans may long for negative peace, so that they might rest easy at night, our excess structural violence makes that achievement highly improbable.”

Government faces the same dilemma. Many black elites who have clawed their way up the ranking, in doing so have taken on the job of maintaining the structure of their Apartheid forbearers. Again we can wonder who ranks higher financially, the government or white capital? Perhaps not to place too much blame on the South Africa's white rich elite, we can also ask, what stake do black elites have in tertiary education reform? If more students are educated does this not increase competition for government positions? Similarly what would curriculum reform mean for elites? Systemic change that might upset those who rank higher, such as foreign investors, or Western donors who rank higher in the international system.

From the incumbent African

National Congress' perspective there is a slight conflict of interest between a highly educated populace and winning elections. Increased access to tertiary education may well have a strong effect on voter behaviour. Struggle rhetoric can only go so far against a well-educated mind. A disruption of voter behaviour via education could severely disrupt the political power ranking.

Ignored and demonised by elites in the structure students step up protest efforts with more disruptive means, such as university shutdowns. Here the state and university executive response is a standard of elites who rank high in the structure. The police and private security are sent in to 'deal with the situation'. Personal violence erupts throughout the country. Eventually the students are violently 'defeated', and negative peace is restored. However, the structural violence is still present, putting us right back where we started, waiting for the next nationwide incidence of personal violence, or possibly worse, violence on a large scale. This is the whirlwind of cultural violence South Africans find themselves within. Without seeking positive peace, the crisis in tertiary education is likely to continue in this robotic fashion forever. I would argue the same for many other aspects of South African society such as the mining sector. Events such as Marikana will repeat themselves *ad nauseam*, further numbing the South African psyche.

The Role of the Media: Structural Maintenance

The media can play a strong active role in guiding the eyes of citizens to acts of personal violence, over structural violence. Many mainstream South African news outlets appear to follow a top-down reporting approach, and one might speculate on the possible reasons for this. In *On The Role of The Media for World-Wide Security and Peace*, Galtung discusses the problems involved in media reporting that is heavily influenced by government and corporate interests, where reporting ends up following the agenda set by elites, rather than being about truth and in-depth understanding of issues. Galtung

further notes that one-sided reporting shifts the media from observer to active participant.⁶ The mainstream reporting on #FeesMustFall appeared to function in this manner, where students were repeatedly dehumanised, lumped together, and denied agency. This then flamed the fires of the #FeesMustFall clashes, and led to disturbing vindictive commentary from citizens, despite some clear acts of police brutality. Student leader Shaera Kalla was shot nine times in the back with rubber bullets. One cannot generalise about all South African citizen responses; however, many online civilian responses were utterly despicable. The speed and anonymity of the internet make it difficult to formerly reference or codify these responses. I would however recommend searching though footage on social platforms (notably, YouTube and Twitter) and glancing over comments and responses. Despite what may well be internet 'trolling', what struck me the most was a lack of sympathy from many citizens on two counts.

Firstly, it appeared that those who interfere with the police, or protest in a disruptive manor (disruptive protest is lawful under the South African Constitution) were deserving of any level of violence meted out in retaliation. Second, and most certainly linked to our history of police massacres, damage from stun grenades and rubber bullets is viewed as perfectly acceptable. The shocking argument here is that the victims were not fatally injured or killed. Many commenters did not even consider the psychological violence that occurs when one is shot, or engulfed in the explosion of a stun grenade.

The widespread acceptance of the militarisation of campuses follows the same disturbed logic. It is terrifying to think that many citizens were comfortable with the deployment of private security on university campuses. Writings on private military companies often note their problematic nature, as they are not accountable to the state, and are lenient in who they hire.⁷ For example, it is well documented that South Africa's own Executive Outcomes was constituted largely from the Apartheid Era Special Forces 32nd

Battalion nicknamed "The Terrible Ones". Many of the individuals involved were later implicated in a 2002 Coup in Equatorial Guinea. The Coup was largely orchestrated for the personal gain of those involved. Executive Outcome members are also known for engaging in illicit arms and diamond dealings on the African continent.⁸ Naturally Executive Outcomes is one of many, but caution and attention to the literature is important when dealing with such entities. Citizens may mistakenly find themselves rooting for war criminals on their campuses.

Over-Emphasis on Personal Violence

The majority of South African media seem more focused on personal violence and virility than anything else. I refer back to the 'spectacle of personal violence'. While it may not 'sell newspapers' there may very well be value in reporting on more than negative events, and reporting on the slower, and at times boring, inner workings of structural violence.⁹ While there was much intellectual discourse happening within and around the #FeesMustFall movement, the intellectual aspects of the movement were largely ignored to report on personal violence (university shut downs, arson, vandalism, clashes) and viral videos. Little attention was placed on student executive negotiations either. Negotiation may lack the 'spectacle of personal violence' but reporting on it may help citizens understand the conflict better. For one, reporting on negotiation, most specifically demands, proceedings, concessions, can help to humanise actors. Humanisation of actors assists in conflict understanding. Citizens can see that even the most 'violent' of actors are capable of intellectual thought and discourse.

Asymmetrical power relationships (Government and University Executive versus student is essentially a David and Goliath power relationship) and their complex inner workings may also be exposed. Negotiation is a long process, so assisting citizens in understanding why the processes are slow is important. For example, negotiation actors can be disingenuous. Of the few articles I found dealing with negotiation, a

number demonised student negotiators as belligerent, unwilling to accept negotiation terms, and the main stallers of the negotiation process. However, no concrete facts were given. No actual terms, or conditions were described in these articles. To illustrate the dubious nature of this approach, imagine I am the National Party and you are Nelson Mandela. I, as the National Party, the Goliath, might offer you a set of peace terms, and say to you, and all media outlets, "I offered Mandela a great deal, but he refused; thus negotiations stalled." However my idea of a great deal (as the Goliath) might differ greatly from Mandela's idea of a great deal. It is in fact very easy for the Goliath to offer weak deals, conceding little or no power, or offering short term-solutions to long-term issues. Hence the importance of more negotiation reporting, and more thinking about how to report negotiation.

Much of the reporting was also completely ahistorical in both in the short-term and long-term. Very few instances of student personal violence were analysed within the larger framework of South Africa's Apartheid regime, and the aftermath left and built into the current tertiary education structure. I would call this the long-term. Very few instances were analysed according to recent events either. I would call this the short-term. For example, most clashes were reported as simply that, clashes. Analysis around, the pre-cursors, and catalysts of these clashes were largely absent in big media. In order to understand most of the clashes, an individual needed to seek out independent media, as well as first hand student accounts, and footage of events pre-clash that were rife on social media platforms. I found these first-hand accounts and footage to in fact be superior to those provided by big media, as they allowed for closer analysis of events, and illuminated actual catalysts.

Unitary Blocs: The 'Student Protestors'

"This disjunction takes two forms: first, actions 'on the ground' often seem more related to local or private issues than to the issues driving the war; second, individual and local actors take

advantage of the war to settle local or private conflicts often bearing little or no relation to the causes of the war or goals of the belligerents".¹⁰

Another disturbing point was a lack of actor analysis. The term 'student protestors' was thrown around haphazardly. Thus, when seeing reports on a specific incident, many times it was impossible to even decipher whether the student actor involved was in fact a part of the movement, let alone how much clout they actually held in the movement, or to which faction of the movement they belonged. Usually in the dehumanisation process, the group being dehumanised is lumped into one bloc. This betrays the complexity of factionalism, and unilateral conflict action.¹¹ This is a very dangerous style of reporting as divisions and disputes within the movement might be neglected. Terrifyingly enough, reports on 'student protests' barely separated students of different universities, let alone different political affiliations or socio-economic backgrounds.

In discussing the complexity and ambiguity of Civil War, Kalyvas notes there is often a disjunction between actions at the top and actions at the bottom. I feel this theorem applies to protest action equally. By failing to identify different student actors the media betray citizen's ability to properly understand the #FeesMustFall protest movement. Citizens find themselves incapable of deciphering between personal acts of violence that are in fact linked to the #FeesMustFall movement at the top, or local actions taken for other reasons. In reporting on the torching of five staff vehicles at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, after blanket blame had already been assigned to 'student protestors', it was noted that a scorned private security member was suspected of being involved. No efforts were made to rectify or follow-up on these allegations, or to clarify to citizens who in fact did what, where, and to what end (Qukula, 2016).¹²

During the Braamfontein clashes of Johannesburg in October 2016, Father Graham Pugin of the Holy Trinity Catholic Church was shot in the face with rubber bullets by the South Africa Police Service (SAPS). One of South

Africa's more reputable news sources, *The Mail and Guardian*, noted some interesting aspects of these clashes. "The pastor of the Holy Trinity Catholic Church next to Wits University, Father Graham Pugin, was shot in the face at close range by a South African Police Service officer, enraging students and sparking further violence in Braamfontein". "The shooting also enraged Wimpy Sello, a 27 year old who lives on the streets and collects scrap material, and moved him to start pelting police with rocks. Sello has been homeless for eight years and said he receives food, clothes and medical care from the Holy Trinity Church and its free clinic".¹³

We note from these two quotes the complexity and ambiguity of a clash generalised to students vs police. How much of the personal

“A more responsible media, schooled on peace literature, and operating independent of corporate and political influence might assist in properly educating citizens.”

violence which occurred can we truly attribute to #FeesMustFall as a movement? Braamfontein is a public area at the end of the day. Christianity is the dominant religion in South Africa, so understandably the shooting of a priest would be an insult to many. Most South African city centres have a large amount of homeless present at any given time. Often abused by police, there is an inherent animosity towards law enforcement. Making matters worse, South Africa has some of the highest crime rates in the world. If we are to describe the event in Braamfontein as a riot, as the media have, we must also accept the inherent complexity and ambiguity of any riot occurring in a city centre, before we can make binary assumptions.

Conclusion

We South Africans have a long way to go if we truly wish to establish a strong and lasting peace. Our excessively violent past is a very poor barometer by which to measure the success of our democracy. We need to dig deep into the literature on peace, learn from our own, and the mistakes of other nations, with long violent histories. More emphasis needs to be placed on positive peace, and eliminating the inequality issue. We must understand that the personal violence of our nation cannot be reduced to 'hooliganism' and 'criminality' but stems from a long history of perverse structural violence.

The media play a large role in framing issues to citizens. A more responsible media, schooled on peace literature, and operating independent of corporate and political influence might assist in properly educating citizens. However the media play only one role, and South Africans (public and private sectors both) should deeply consider 'aggressive' and long-term peace and reconciliation programmes in all facets of society. Emphasis in such programmes should be on improving class and race relations. There is no forgetting, or solving a violent history overnight. South Africans need to understand this. All countries with violent histories are ceaselessly haunted by them, as that is the insidious nature of every violent act. Violent histories must be used to educate, inform, and justify long-term conciliatory action, and as caveats against promoting arbitrary human divisions. ■

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THROUGH A CREATIVE LENS

These two poems by Govan Pahad resonate with themes which continue to come up in this journal. The first is the issue of identity, and a person's right to self-identify, refusing labels imposed by others. This has been explored by several contributors, and notably, in this volume and the previous one, by Clyde Ramalaine. The second is related to the articles in the same two volumes, exemplified by the contributions of Michael Prior. In this volume he says that neoliberalism provided access to personal debt finance to promote consumption.

I am not an African

By Govan Pahad (November 2009)

I am not an African, despite the growing craze,
for I know well how national pride has served this world in bygone days.

I am not a Muslim, nor Christian or Buddhist.
How could I be one of these, when they do not exist.

To clothe myself in hollow words and false dichotomy
would but construct for you a world that leads you far from me.

The need for self-identity through norms externally defined
makes one so easy to manipulate. The blind now lead the blind.

And so my friends I cast this line to those in pride confused,
that you may free your mind from chains and be no more abused.

Your desperate clutching at the moon reflected in the well
will only ever drag you down into the pits of hell.

The things you own

By Govan Pahad (January, 2017)

Food and clothes are all I need,
Lest my heart give in to greed.
A house and bed in which to sleep.
A cupboard for my cups to keep.
My cup is full, yet somehow still
My cupboard seems with things to fill.
Perhaps a storeroom is required,
To keep my house as is desired.
A laptop and a big TV
Could only bring more joy to me.
Did I say me? I meant my kin,
It is for them that I will win
From strangers walking in the street
By far the biggest piece of meat.
Though I am but a humble saint,
For those I love, I'll show some taint.
And if it brings this world some strife,
I'll say it's for my darling wife.

Fancy shoes and diamond rings,
A palace full of shiny things.
Oh lovely stuff, am I free yet?
Perhaps I need a jumbo jet.
If only I had sweets and cakes
And some champagne with golden flakes
Maybe I wouldn't feel so sick!
Oh poor, decrepit, city hick,
The vast advert that you live in
Will take what's real, what's fake is given.

All you see but stars above,
Was set to steal your heart from love
And sink it into weakness deep
Your aspirational soul to keep
In pride and insecurity:
The wealth of your new slavery.

Once the very earth breathed green
To keep your heart and spirit clean
The sky did sing on feathered wings
To keep your mind on higher things
But humans crafted their own gloom
By trading life in living womb
For death in concrete, plastic tomb,
A dead world is the spirit's doom.

Oh sacred fire please contain
The spreading of this human stain,
Lest it consume the earth again,
Defiling every heart and brain.
Free us from the tyranny
Of inanimate company
And purchased self-identity
Till naught remains but you and me.
And echo wisdom's distant plea
In this mirage, this fantasy
There is but one thing that is true
The things you own, own you.



Govan Pahad is currently completing his PhD and lecturing in zoology at the University of Johannesburg. He loves spending time with his wife, son, family and friends; reading, camping and practicing kung fu and tai chi. He is passionate about nature and philosophy, and is deeply concerned with the growing nihilism of neoliberal capitalism. Every now and then a poem creeps into his head.

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