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Conversations with the
President



Effective early learning is the best investment in our future

■ By **PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA**

LAST YEAR, our country achieved a record matriculation pass rate of 87%. This is a welcome sign that efforts to transform our education system are bearing fruit.

However, too many learners drop out of school before writing matric and others struggle to get good marks, in part because they do not get the grounding they need in the early learning years.

Last week the 2030 Reading Panel, which was set up to look into early-grade level reading skills, released a report showing that 80% of Grade 3 learners cannot read for meaning in any language, including their

home language. Similarly stark findings for South Africa were revealed in a recently published study that surveys Trends in International Mathematics and Science capabilities in Grades 4 and 8.

Mastering basic skills in reading and maths at foundation level often determines how a learner will perform later in school and beyond.

That is why the Basic Education Sector Lekgotla held in Gauteng last week focused on expanding Early Childhood Development (ECD) and improving numeracy and early grade reading.

One of the most damaging ef-

fects of Bantu Education was the deliberate neglect of black children when it came to the provision of foundation years learning. One study published in 1992 found that during apartheid only 6% of black children had access to quality ECD programmes, compared to one third of all white children.

We have spent the last 30 years trying to correct this. This effort has now received greater impetus with the passage of the Basic Education Laws Amendment Act. This Act makes Grade R, the reception year before Grade 1, compulsory.

Through an enhanced focus on ECD, the Act will help ensure that young children are better

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prepared for formal schooling. Early Childhood Development plays a critical role in developing early literacy, early numeracy and social-emotional skills during an important time in a child's cognitive development.

Children who attend quality pre-primary programmes tend to have larger vocabularies, better number awareness, stronger perceptual skills, improved social skills and greater curiosity.

Quality ECD provision promotes social equality. Children from poor families benefit most from access to ECD. As the learning journey progresses, quality ECD is also linked to better transitions into high school, lower repetition and dropout rates, and better academic performance overall.

The Basic Education Sector Lekgotla discussed how best to realign the existing education curriculum to strengthen foundational learning, including through ongoing assessments, scaling up teacher training and development, and expanding the provision of ECD learning and teacher support material.

In addition to its negative impact on future learning, weaknesses in early literacy and numeracy narrow the careers options that learners will have later in life.

It is widely recognised that investing in science, technology, engineering and mathematics education is key to economic growth, job creation, productivity and economic competitiveness. Such education prepares young people for a diverse range of occupations that are most needed by a growing economy.

A recent report by the World Economic Forum on the future of jobs shows that the need for science, technology, engineering and mathematics related jobs are fast outstripping 'traditional' occupations, which are on the decline in the face of technological advances. Our basic education system has to produce learners that are able to find work in an ever-changing knowledge and technology based global economy.

The efforts of the Department of Basic Education to strengthen the provision of technical and

vocational pathways to learners in high school are therefore to be welcomed. Even in more industrialised economies than ours, technical and vocational training is recognised as a solid pathway to employment and entrepreneurship.

The World Bank's recent South Africa Economic Update pointed to basic education as a key enabler of inclusive growth in South Africa. It highlighted a set of potential reforms, including prioritising foundational years and focusing on building numeracy and literacy capabilities.

Better educational outcomes in basic education are linked to broader social and economic development. Education is a powerful tool to break the cycle of poverty, to uplift individuals and communities, and to bringing about a more equitable society.

As was evident from the Basic Education Sector Lekgotla, all stakeholders in the education space are committed to prioritising foundational learning as the most effective means to enable young South Africans to succeed and thrive far into the future.

The Role of Young Leaders in Advancing the National Democratic Revolution in the 21st Century

■ By **THLOLOGELO COLLEN MALATJI**

THE National Democratic Revolution (NDR) stands as the guiding philosophy of our struggle, representing the present stage of the broader revolutionary movement aimed at liberating the historically oppressed masses. It is a revolutionary process that seeks to dismantle the remnants of colonialism, apartheid, and capitalism, while striving to achieve the objectives outlined in the Freedom Charter. The NDR is not merely a struggle for political freedom but a comprehensive movement for the emancipation of all oppressed people, ensuring a non-racial, non-sexist, democratic, and prosperous society.

The roots of the NDR can be traced back to the historical alliance between the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) and the African National Congress (ANC), which, in 1962, articulated the “*South African Road to Freedom*.” This program highlighted the unique nature of colonialism in South Africa, where the colonizers and the oppressed coexisted within the same territory, creating a system of exploitation and racial oppression known as Colonialism of a Special Type (CST). This system entrenched



capitalism and apartheid, necessitating a revolutionary strategy that addresses both national and class oppression.

Throughout the 20th century, the movement witnessed intense debates on revolutionary strategy and tactics. The ANC Youth League, as the vanguard of young revolutionaries, was at the forefront of these ideological contestations. Notably, the 1980s debate between Peter Hudson

and Joe Slovo centered on the understanding of social formations and the path to ending national and class oppression. Hudson questioned whether a democratic process alone could achieve the ultimate goal of socialism, emphasizing the need to address both national and class contradictions. This debate reinforced the understanding that the NDR must simultaneously tackle national oppression and the exploitative capitalist system.



The crafting of the Freedom Charter at the 1955 Congress of the People in Kliptown, and its reaffirmation at the 1956 Bloemfontein Congress, marked a pivotal moment in the struggle. The Charter articulated a vision for a South Africa free from racial and economic exploitation, calling for the redistribution of land, wealth, and power. Importantly cementing the imprint of African nationalism as not mutually exclusive from the constitutionalism as argued that, there is *“No government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will...”* It recognized that the apartheid system was intrinsically linked to capitalism, which perpetuated inequality and oppression. Today, the neoliberal framework of the state continues to serve the interests of the ruling class, necessitating a revolutionary approach to transform the economic patterns that sustain inequality.

In this context, the role of young leaders in advancing the NDR cannot be overstated. South Africa’s youth, who constitute 60% of

the population, are the torchbearers of the revolution. They carry the responsibility of challenging the capitalist system, organizing for transformative change, and ensuring that the legacy of colonialism and apartheid is eradicated. The youth must remind the capitalist class of its moral obligation to society, as articulated by Adam Smith in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, which emphasized the duty of businesspersons to contribute to the welfare of their communities. Under the current system, however, capitalism continues to prioritize profit over people, exacerbating inequality and social exclusion.

The youth must integrate into the broader struggle for a non-racial, non-sexist, democratic, and prosperous society. This requires a deep understanding of the economic patterns that perpetuate inequality, where 10% of the population controls 95% of the wealth.

While unity among all races is essential for building a non-racial society, the youth must also con-

front the resurgence of narrow African nationalism, which excludes white South Africans and undermines the principles of the Freedom Charter. The NDR calls for a broad, inclusive nationalism that recognizes all who live in South Africa, regardless of race, as part of the African family.

The United Nations defines youth as the transition from dependent childhood to independent adulthood. This transition must be supported by the state through access to land, education, and employment. The youth must recognize that fighting for the eradication of colonial and apartheid legacies does not preclude the embrace of non-racialism. In today’s South Africa, race remains a proxy for inequality, poverty, and unemployment, underscoring the need for a revolutionary approach that addresses both historical and structural injustices.

However, the youth must guard against misleading conceptions of Africanness and revolution.

Being African does not automatically make one revolutionary, nor should Africanness be defined narrowly by race or genealogical origin. As Ali Mazrui argued, Africans can be defined both by race and by their connection to the soil. The Freedom Charter provides a more inclusive definition, recognizing all who live in South Africa as Africans, irrespective of race. This inclusive nationalism is essential for advancing the NDR and building a united, democratic society.

As young leaders advance the NDR, they must critically assess the role of the ANC Youth League in the broader struggle to end national oppression. The Youth League must champion the interests of the historically oppressed while also addressing the challenges faced by those who have been integrated into the system through transformative policies like affirmative action. The youth must remain vigilant against co-optation and ensure that the revolutionary spirit of the NDR is not diluted.

In conclusion, the youth are the driving force of the National Democratic Revolution in the 21st century. Their energy, creativity, and commitment to justice are essential for achieving the vision of a non-racial, non-sexist, democratic, and prosperous South Africa. By embracing the principles of the Freedom Charter and uniting across racial and class lines, young leaders can ensure that the NDR remains a powerful force for transformative change.

The struggle continues, and the youth must lead the way.

Thlologelo Collen Malatji is President of the ANC Youth League.

The Shale Revolution and Trump's 'Drill, Baby, Drill' Might Be Short-Lived for the Oil and Gas Market

■ By **PHUMZILE MGCINA**

SOUTH Africa has a well-developed petroleum industry engaged in importing, producing, and distributing petroleum products for both domestic and international markets. The sector plays a crucial role in the South African economy, contributing R163 billion (3.2%) to GDP, supporting 247,772 jobs, and attracting R94 billion in capital investment.

The U.S. has been leading with the oil production ahead of Saudi Arabia, China, Russia. And for some time now Donald Trump has been saying that is not enough. During his campaign trail, he said they will turn America around the

oil and gas companies must drill more oil.

In 2024, the global crude oil and natural gas market navigated a complex environment shaped by controlled OPEC+ supply, fluctuating demand, geopolitical tensions, macroeconomic instability, and the ongoing energy transition. This year, Donald Trump assumed office in the United States, and both before and after his election, he made clear assertions urging oil and gas companies to expand production aggressively, rallying behind the slogan “drill, baby, drill.”

However, this call has not been



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fully embraced by oil companies, many of which are maintaining or even reducing capital expenditures. Chevron, for instance, announced at the end of 2023 that it would be lowering capital spending for 2025, marking its second consecutive year of cuts. In South Africa, Chevron has been divesting assets to Glencore, which is rebranding its retail business under the name Astron.

By prioritizing high-return investments and focusing on production efficiency, oil and gas companies have sustained strong financial performance and retained investor confidence. Over the past four years, industry capital expenditures have risen by 53%, while net profits have increased by nearly 16%.

Meanwhile, some companies are channelling investments into low-carbon technology projects to hedge against the volatility of traditional oil and gas markets. These initiatives are positioning them as key players in the future energy landscape.

Over the past 15 years, the oil industry has experienced significant volatility, leaving investors wary after previous downturns. The U.S. shale industry, has been severely impacted since 2014 by the collapse of the commodity supercycle driven by China's slowing economy. Then, in 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic sent oil prices plummeting into negative territory, resulting in mass layoffs and heightened investor caution.

The fact of the matter is that Chinese economy has been driving oil demand over the last couple of decades and now is tapping off. And currently the China's economy is weak and there is a big shift with energy transition in

China where there's huge take up in EVs which are denting demand for gasoline in the country. There is a lot of supply in reserve. OPEC+ has about 6million barrels waiting to put back in the market. So there is a lot of supply in the market.

For South Africa over the years there has been declining in the oil production including the investment in exploration has been in decline, particularly in South Africa, where exploration spending has fallen from 25% of total industry investment a decade ago to just 1% today.

Despite BP's better-than-expected performance, the key question remains: What does the growth of transnational oil giants like Shell and BP mean for ordinary citizens?

Shell, one of the world's largest oil and gas companies, operates in approximately 80 countries, producing around 3.7 million barrels of oil per day with reserves totalling 19.95 billion barrels of oil equivalent. The company is vertically integrated, meaning it controls the entire supply chain – from exploration to refining, transportation, and retail sales. In

South Africa, Shell and BP jointly own the 165,000 bbl/d Sapref crude oil refinery in Durban, the largest in the country.

In early 2024, major oil and gas companies experienced increased profitability, primarily due to efforts to rebalance supply and demand, as well as the continued reopening of the global economy. However, this boom may be short-lived. In 2024, several major energy companies, including BP and Shell, shifted focus back to oil and gas to capitalize on near-term profits, slowing down or reversing previous climate commitments. This retrenchment suggests that the industry's current growth phase may be temporary, especially as the world continues its transition toward a low-carbon energy system. Additionally, global investment in the low-carbon energy transition reached a record \$2.1trillion in 2024, indicating significant momentum toward sustainable energy solutions.

According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), oil demand is projected to decline between 2022 and 2026, particularly if governments maintain policies aimed at shifting away from car-



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bon-intensive energy sources. The U.S., having rejoined the Paris Agreement in 2021 after a four-year hiatus, has set ambitious climate targets under President Biden, including full power grid decarbonization by 2035 and net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. But currently with Trump is not ascertain of the U.S. policy position in relations to Paris Agreement However, Trump's return to office shifted this trajectory and this will make the oil investor to be doubtful in investment in the oil and gas industry as they are no ascertain about future administration should Democrats take over, they will change the policy position.

Global temperatures have already risen by 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, while Southern Africa has warmed at an even faster rate, reaching 2°C. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) warns that South Africa, along with parts of Namibia and Botswana, will experience some of the most severe temperature increases globally.

Finally, despite the persistence of the fossil fuel energy system, the conversation must shift toward a holistic transition that balances climate action with the energy needs of developing countries that remain heavily dependent on coal, oil, and gas. Policymakers, citizens, and industry leaders must engage in meaningful dialogue to ensure an energy transition that does not compromise economic development or environmental sustainability.

Phumzile Mgcina is Deputy Minister of Mineral Resources and Petroleum and ANC Youth League Deputy President.



■ By **SOLLY PHETOE**

THE National Minimum Wage (NMW) has been one of the most important poverty alleviation interventions by government led by the ANC in the recent past.

On 1 March we welcomed the NMW's increase by inflation plus 1% bringing it to R28.79 an hour. The NMW was one of the clarion calls of the Freedom Charter 70 years ago. This progressive demand made during the darkest days of apartheid when workers, overwhelmingly African, Coloured and Indian as well as women, were paid little more than slave wages.

This has been a demand that COSATU and our predecessors campaigned for over many decades with its legislation into law shepherded by the Federation with the active support of the ANC and now President Cyril Ramaphosa.

The trend of millions of workers, urban and rural, predominantly in the private sector, earning so little that they are condemned to lives of absolute misery has continued de-

spite the legal ending of apartheid.

Prior to the introduction of the NMW in 2019, farmworkers were paid as little as R6 an hour, domestic workers were similarly paid peanuts.

The NMW Act was a product of extensive engagements over two years at Nedlac between government, business and labour with consensus reached on a NMW of R20 an hour that would be overseen by a Commission consisting of representatives from social partners and academic experts.

The Nedlac engagements took on board international best practice, in particular from leading industrial economies, e.g. Brazil, Germany and the United States; where a NMW has helped reduce poverty and inequality as well as stimulate inclusive growth and jobs.

Since then, it has been adjusted annually to protect it from inflation and ensure it retains poverty alleviation and inequality reduction effects. COSATU has been able to ensure through its submissions to and engagements at

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the NMW Commission that it has risen from R20 to R28.79 overall. We have also been able to lift 1 million farmworkers who were originally pegged at R18 and 1 million domestic workers at R15 respectively to the NMW level.

In simple terms, farmworkers who a decade ago needed to work two hours to buy a loaf of bread can now nearly buy two loaves a bread with an hour's wages.

Critics of the NMW argued that it would lead to a bloodbath of job losses, especially for vulnerable workers. This is why farm and domestic workers were pegged at 90% and 75% of the NMW for the initial roll out phase, allowing employers time to adjust. Independent research has shown that it has not led to job losses and in fact has been a critical source of economic stimulus as workers spend their wages on goods.

Critics argue that a NMW is an inhibitor to economic growth and jobs, yet they cannot explain why this growth and jobs were not there before the introduction of the NMW six short years ago, let alone why the apartheid regime that thrived on an economy free of labour protections and low wages, yielded the world's highest rates of inequality, poverty and unemployment; a legacy we are still battling to overcome today.

If we are to boost economic growth then we need to ensure that not only do employers comply with the NMW, but that workers are paid a living wage. Workers cannot be expected to be productive when they are forced to walk for long hours to work as they cannot afford public transport or the basic foods, medication and shelter needed for their bodies to remain healthy. Neither



can economy grow if consumers, e.g. workers, cannot afford to buy the goods it produces.

Whilst economic growth is key to creating jobs and better wages, it is critical that the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition finalise regulations for the Companies Amendment's provisions requiring listed and state-owned companies to disclose their wage gaps, and the salaries of their highest and lowest paid employees, as part of nudging companies to reduce the obscene differences in what they pay those on top compared to those on the bottom.

Government must reinforce the various elements of the social wage, e.g. subsidised public transport and housing, free basic services, no fee schools and NSFAS funding for tertiary education, VAT exempted essential goods and social grants for 27 million citizens. These have cushioned millions from absolute poverty but have shown strain from recent budget cuts.

Whilst COSATU celebrates these hard-won gains, and a NMW raising the wages of over 6 million workers, we are deeply angered by numerous employers who break the law and ignore the NMW as well as other progressive labour rights.

Although all laws experience offenders, we cannot condone such behaviour. At the heart of this is the high rate of unemployment and employers willing to exploit workers' desperation and poverty.

The Act allows employers who genuinely cannot afford the NMW to apply for limited exemptions.

The Department of Employment and Labour increased the number of labour inspectors in 2020 by 25% to 2 000. Plans to increase these to 20 000 by 2026 have started with the recent advert for 10 000 inspector posts to be funded by the UIF. These will be a massive boost to ensuring workplaces abide by our labour laws, from the NMW to health and safety, paid leave, overtime requirements and compliance with pension fund and third-party payments.

COSATU will be strengthening its partnership with labour inspectors to ensure workers' rights are protected.

Parliament and the President recently assented to the Employment Equity Amendment Act requiring companies doing business with the state to be in compliance with the Employment Equity and the NMW Acts. This will be a powerful incentive for those who abide by our labour laws and a disincentive for those who don't.

Similarly, we need to hear the voice of Organised Business urging their members to respect workers' legally enshrined rights. Change is not easy, but these are the foundations for a more just and equal society.

Solly Phetoe is General Secretary of COSATU.

SOUTH AFRICA'S G20 PRESIDENCY AN OPPORTUNITY TO BRIDGE DIVIDES AND HEAL THE PLANET

■ By **RONALD LAMOLA**

Last week, the world's top diplomats gathered in Johannesburg, at the National Agriculture Sports Recreation Events Centre (Nasrec), a place where history and hope intersect. Built to bridge the apartheid-era divides between Johannesburg's north and south, Nasrec is more than a venue – it is a symbol of what humanity can achieve when we choose unity over division, progress over stagnation.

Just a stone's throw away lies Soweto, South Africa's largest township, a place born of segregation but now a beacon of resilience. It is home to two Nobel Peace Prize laureates, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela, whose legacies remind us that even the deepest divides can be overcome.

Nasrec's location is no accident. It stands as a powerful metaphor for the work ahead: bridging divides – historical, economic, and geopolitical – to create a world that works for all.

As South Africa assumes the G20 presidency, we carry this spirit of unity into our mission. Our theme – **Solidarity, Equality and Sustainability** – is not just a slogan;



it is a call to action for a world at a crossroads.

The urgency of this moment cannot be overstated. We are halfway to the 2030 deadline for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), yet UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has issued a stark warning: we are *"leaving more than half the world behind"*.

His recent report paints a grim picture: only 12% of SDG targets are on track, while 30% have

stalled or regressed. Without immediate action, the 2030 Agenda risks becoming an epitaph for what might have been.

The challenges we face are not isolated; they are interconnected and escalating. Geopolitical divisions are widening, economic tensions are rising, and the devastating impacts of climate change are accelerating.

These crises threaten to derail progress on poverty eradication, gender equality, and global



peace. The G20, as a forum for international economic cooperation, must rise to the occasion.

South Africa's G20 presidency is guided by the philosophy of *ubuntu* – a profound African concept that means “*I am, because we are.*” It speaks to our shared humanity, our interconnectedness and our collective responsibility to one another.

Solidarity demands that we recommit to multilateralism and dialogue. In a world increasingly fractured by trade wars, ideological divisions, and political intolerance, we must find common ground.

Equality requires us to confront the stark disparities between the Global North and South. Africa, for instance, contributes the least to climate change yet bears its harshest consequences.

Climate-related costs consume up to 5% of the continent's GDP, yet Africa received a mere 2% of global clean energy investments between 2015 and 2022.

The G20 must prioritise financing for development, debt relief and

the transition to clean energy. High financing costs and unsustainable debt burdens are stifling progress in developing economies, diverting resources away from critical development needs.

We must reform the global financial architecture to ensure no country is left behind. The G20 has a unique opportunity to shape a more equitable and sustainable world.

By focusing on solidarity, equality, and sustainability, we can address the root causes of global instability and inequality.

First, we must recommit to the principles of multilateralism. The UN remains the primary forum for maintaining international peace and security, protecting human rights, and promoting sustainable development. However, the UN must be reformed to reflect the realities of the 21st century. This includes revitalising the UN General Assembly, ensuring equitable geographical representation in the secretariat, and reforming the Security Council to make it more representative.

Second, we must prioritise conflict

resolution and peace building.

South Africa is deeply concerned by the conflicts in Africa, particularly in Sudan and eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. The recent loss of 14 South African soldiers serving in the DRC is a stark reminder of the human cost of conflict. We call on the G20 to support efforts to “*silence the guns*” in Africa.

Third, we must address the global debt crisis. The current system is fundamentally flawed, with high financing costs and debt service obligations diverting resources away from development needs.

South Africa is committed to playing a bridge-building role between the Global North and South. The challenges we face are immense, but they are not insurmountable.

In the words of Nelson Mandela, “*It always seems impossible until it is done.*” Let us seize this moment to bridge divides, heal our planet, and create a future of dignity and opportunity for all.

Ronald Lamola is the minister of international relations and cooperation



ANC KZN's Path to Renewal: Reconnecting With Communities

■ By **JEFF RADEBE**

THE ANC moved from 63 per cent in 1994 to a high of 65 per cent in 2009 and now to a mere 40 per cent nationally. In KwaZulu-Natal, the ANC moved from 31 percent in 1994 to 62 percent in 2009 and now we slipped to 17 percent in 2024. This means our KZN ANC component has had its overall support base decline from 20 per cent ten years ago to 10 per cent today.

These disastrous election outcomes largely reflect that the ANC has become increasingly alienated from the communities we serve, with many parts of our government becoming arrogant.

As we reflected on why we lost

the elections, it was ordinary people who told us that we had lost our way and they are the ones telling us to renew, to change, to humble ourselves as we rebuild our structures to be instruments for communities, rather than instruments for elections.

That is why our reconstituted team has been designed by the NEC to be inclusive and focused on mobilising people rather than inviting them to internal election meetings.

And so we know that recovering our voting support base will require:

- An ANC promoting transparent government which is developmentally oriented and

which has competent officials serving our people,

- Stopping all of those raiding the government's finances through corrupt actions,
- An ANC engaging directly with our people at a community level as we rebuild our branches, and;
- Harsh consequence management where there are transgressions regardless of who is involved.

Our task as the new Leadership Core may seem complex and large, but we know that we can turn our support base around by sticking to the basics. These include in the first instance retaining our existing support base and regaining the support of

those ANC supporters who voted against us in 2024. We will invite them to join our membership as we revitalize our branches. But in the second instance, we must engage with all who live in our communities and must be active in building structures of civil society, including respecting our Traditional Leadership and Religious Sector.

Whilst our renewal programme has been in place for several years, it is clear that the most basic level of our organization – the branches – need significant attention to reinvigorate them to become instruments working for communities rather than at times inward focusing on issues like who becomes the councillor, etc.

To do this we have established subcommittees to engage with and about communities of interest such as gender and economic transformation, education and health, safety and security, international relations, etc who will reach out to help champion these areas.

The team is also deployed across the whole province to work with governance and other issues in the 10 regions and eThekweni. In all of this, we aim to reach out to the private and public sectors and community-based structures to work with them in the progressive causes they lead. And in all of this, we want to see change and a focus on solving problems and implementing these solutions.

We will also work very closely to turn around the major municipalities in our province in which the ANC plays a major role. We cannot have the 8 largest municipalities not spending R7,5 billion of their adjusted budget in 2023/24 and R2,6 billion unspent in planned capital works.

We cannot have some 40 out of 54 municipalities listed by the National Treasury as having serious financial problems which should lead to interventions.

We will be calling on all our ANC Councillors to work closely with like-minded parties to turn the situation around.

This Leadership Core that I lead is ready to deal decisively with internal challenges such as factionalism and corrupt practices and people have no place in this new collective. We will not allow anyone to use their leadership positions to gain material advantage by any corrupt means.

We are all committed to rebuilding the ANC, working closely with our allies and all progressive forces to ensure that we build a better KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa and the world.

We know the challenges we face as a country and whatever we do must continue to show the world that we are not scared to face up to the economic, social and environmental challenges currently facing the world.

We are committed to the founding principles of renewal.

All must lead through example, they must be active members of the ANC in good standing, and they must know the Constitution and Policies of the ANC.

They must not act as Leaders but as People's Champions. Communities must come first, community-based development must be prioritized and they must build social cohesion at a local level.

I am fortunate to have been asked to convene this group of ANC activists. We have all played important leadership roles, in many different areas for the ANC to date. But our current project is not about us as leaders, but it is about us acting to serve the communities we disappointed. And this is what we will do in the days and months ahead.

I am proud that the ANC Leadership, recognizing our mistakes, has called upon us to pick up the spear and return our party, the ANC, to being one that is community-based, service-oriented and works collectively to address the challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

Jeff Radebe is the Convenor of the ANC KZN Provincial Task Team.



Leadership, Unity, and the Future of the ANC in the Dr WB Rubusana Region

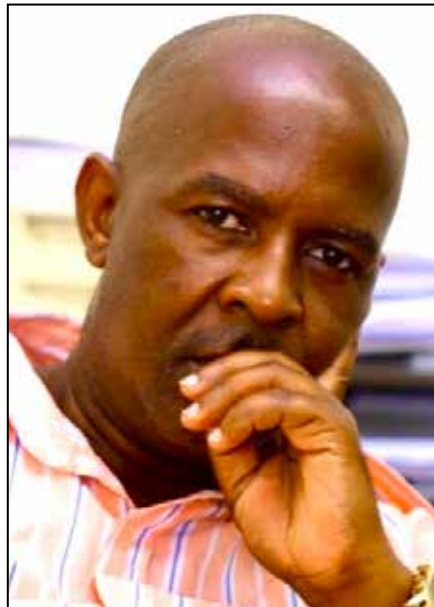
■ By **THABANG MASEKO**

LAST night, I spent hours in a spirited political discussion with ANC Youth League branch leaders at my home. What struck me most was their independence, a fearless, youthful bravery that promises much for the future.

Our debate covered the role of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) as a cornerstone of South Africa's political framework, the upcoming ANC Dr WB Rubusana regional conference in May 2025, and strategies to revive Mdantsane's political activism, once a stronghold of the Border Region in the 1980s.

As we prepare for the regional conference, a pressing question emerges: what key principles should guide our understanding of the state and revolution? The NDR offers a foundation emphasizing democratic governance, economic justice, and social transformation but applying it today requires confronting new challenges.

One such challenge is the factionalism plaguing our region, epitomised by the rivalry between two lobbying groups dubbing themselves "Sun and Rain" ("*Nomalanga hamba uyobalanda*" and "*Mayine Imvula*").



Their metaphor, loosely translated as "*without the sun's heat and light, life on Earth would not exist; rain makes modern life possible by providing water*" suggests a complementary duality. Yet, in practice, these "*two bulls in one kraal*" threaten unity. The ANC regional Chairperson, Princess Faku, and her Secretary, Antonio Carels, occupy strategic positions to bridge this divide.

Both have a critical role in uniting the branches of Dr WB Rubusana. Historically, leadership contestation has been part of the ANC's organisational culture think of the debates during the exile years, which, though fierce, were largely managed.

So, when did leadership transitions become a problem, and why? Many point to the post-1994 era, when the stakes of power grew alongside access to state resources, turning contests into zero-sum battles. The manifestations are clear: factionalism, intolerance, and a shadow culture that stifles debate.

This erodes the ANC's ability to pursue its mission, especially in a province like ours, where the 2026 municipal elections loom large. A coalition government in our last remaining Metro Municipality is a risk we cannot afford.

The leadership in the province must act decisively bringing all lobbying groups under one roof and consolidating them into a unified list. But unity alone isn't enough; we must draw clear lines between right and wrong and enforce organisational guidelines. Factionalism breeds disruptive conduct shouting down dissenters, even descending into violence which risks alienating members.

If unchecked, many may disengage, letting their memberships lapse, or worse, allowing opportunists to seize control. This would spell disaster for the ANC and the revolution itself. The blur-

ring of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour is a persistent problem.

Take corruption: our policies condemn it, yet in practice, we often fail to act, shifting goalposts depending on who's involved. This ambiguity undermines our

credibility, ceding the moral high ground we once held.

To reclaim it, we must align our actions with our principles punishing transgressors, fostering open debate, and restoring the vibrancy that has long been the lifeblood of the ANC.

The road to May 2025 is a test. Can Princess Faku, Antonio Carrels, and the broader leadership rise to the occasion? Can we turn the "Sun and Rain" into a force for renewal rather than division? The answers will shape not just our region, but the ANC's future as a revolutionary movement.

What Does It Mean to Be An ANC Branch In Good Standing?

■ By **KETSO TOTO MAKUME**

"The Branch shall be the basic unit of activity for members."

ANC CONSTITUTION RULE 23.2.4

"At the risk of seeming ridiculous, let me say that the true revolutionary is guided by a great feeling of love.

It is impossible to think of genuine revolutionary lacking this quality"

ERNESTO "CHE" GUEVARA

INTRODUCTION

The ANC was founded in 1912 and its primary purpose was to defend and advance the rights of the Africans. This was after their independence was destroyed by the white supremacy.

The founding of the ANC was also as a result of the creation of the "white only" Union of SA,



whose purpose was to pursue white interests, white hegemony and white everything. It was not an accident of history but a continuation of the protracted struggle against apartheid colonialism.

In the process of attaining its objectives the ANC had to be organised and therefore developed a programme (which was later popularly known as the National Democratic Revolution-NDR)

It (ANC) also adopted policy positions and principles, tactics and strategies in order to advance towards its main objective.

It also managed to ensure that majority of democratic and progressive organisations rally behind it with the sole purpose of attaining its primary objective

It was not an accident of history that it earned the name “*the people’s parliament*” and in some quarters it’s been referred to as the leader of the society.

This was because the ANC was rooted amongst the people, it was always advancing the demands and aspiration of the people because it was living amongst and within the people. Every outcry or grievance was turned into the demands of the struggle by our people.

The manner in which the ANC was structured and designed made it easy for it to be in touch with the people who, in turn had derived such strength and resilience from the structures referred to as AMASEBE (Branches). There were also revolutionary practices, values and principles which assisted the ANC to be strong and visible among our people.

Strong branches were amongst others pillars that assisted the ANC to attain some elements of political power after the democratic breakthrough.

The ANC used to have unquestionable influence in the society and thanks to vibrant branches which ensured that every issue was turned into a clarion call of our struggle.

Therefore, the above historical



experience does without any doubt clarify the importance of the branch in the life of the ANC.

How does the ANC Constitution define the branch in good standing?

Under the definitions in the ANC Constitution a branch in good standing is defined as “**A Branch that is recognised by the ANC to be fully compliant with its OBLIGATIONS in terms of the Constitution and whose members are paid up.**” It is **unfortunate** that our definition, more often when we address the subject about a branch in good standing, is only limited to the “**paid up membership**” aspect and ignore the Obligations aspect as dictated by the ANC Constitution.

Rule 23.2.3 further defines the branch as the “**place where members exercise their basic democratic rights to discuss and formulate policy (positions)**”. The critical question is: Do we still have branches that allow members to feel and be proud that theirs is a place of discussions and formulation of policy? Or we have branches that have turned out to be places where unfortunate families

will collect their family members’ corpses or injured bodies? Or branches that have turned out to be gossip grounds for some against others?

Rule 23.2.4 also assists us to define the branch as “**the Basic unit of activity for members**”. Are we comfortable that our branches are a basic unit of activities for us members or are just playing grounds for political thugs and crooks who steal from our people?

From the above it is clear that a branch in good standing is more than just about paid up membership, it is more than just about electing delegates to conferences, it is more than just about being connected or having closer proximity to leadership in some top echelons and it is bigger than we could imagine.

Later I will share my thoughts added to the definition above, about what does a branch in good standing mean

WHY are we discussing the subject?

The ANC Constitution gives the branches of the ANC some seri-

ous powers to exercise:

Rule 4.4 ***“Applications for membership shall be considered by the Branch Executive Committee (where such exists) in consultation with the Branch General Meeting, and by the Regional Executive Committee, if no Branch Executive Committee exists. The Branch Executive Committee from time to time to decide on applications, may accept or refuse any application for membership provided such acceptance or refusal is subject to review by the next higher organ of the ANC.”*** The branch of the ANC therefore becomes our *“through the eye of the needle”*. It is this basic unit of the organisation that decides who comes inside the ANC family. So why is there an outcry when criminals are having a day in the ANC?

Rule 23.1 ***“Every member of the ANC shall belong to a branch, which is the basic structure of the Organisation.”*** There is no exception even for the ANC President and NEC, PEC, and REC members, all of them are expected to be members of the branch. Therefore, before you can become any kind of a leader in the ANC, you MUST belong to a branch.

Rule 10.1 ***“The National Conference is the supreme ruling and controlling body of the ANC.”*** This is the body that authorises or reverses any decision taken in between conferences, the body that elects the National Leadership, adopts policy positions, formulates plans, reorganises the structures and redesigns the organisational position and analyses the balance of forces in the globe and here at home. Therefore, Rule 10.1.1.1 declares: ***“At least 90% (ninety percent) of***

the delegates at conference shall be from branches, elected at properly constituted branch general meeting”. This means branches of the ANC are so significant that they may decide the future of the ANC including to decide that the ANC should cease to exist. It is branches of the ANC that give the citizens of this country the leadership they produce in the conference.

The historical mission of the ANC has always been to liberate our people but with our people being the active participants of their own liberation struggle. It is precisely the reason why in the declaration we commit ourselves to make *“ANC an even more effective instrument of liberation in the hands of the people”*. This implies that our organisation must always be strong on the ground, and this means strong branches. We need to continuously secure the support of the masses through organisational strength, ideological sharpness, high quality leadership and programmes of action that are rooted amongst our people. The masses are history makers, and therefore branches should be their authentic homes to oil and sharpen their readiness to advance their struggles, aspirations and demands.

The current state of our branches also leads to the discussion of the subject matter: Is the state of our branches ready to advance the National Democratic Revolution in order to build a democratic society which is non-racial, non-sexist, and united? Can our branches stop the patronage networks, factionalism, selfishness, dishonesty, and arrogance within the movement? Can our branches be independent from the powers that be and be able to stand up and speak truth to pow-

er? Can our branches genuinely rise against the abuse of power and authority exerted on them by some in the national, provincial, and regional leadership? Can our branches stand up and fight against corruption and crime within our ranks and all levels of state including state parastatals and SOEs? If the answer to these questions is NO, then there is an urgent necessity to discuss this subject.

What is the reality on the ground (the kind of branches we have)?

The reality of the matter is that many of our branches are not branches in good standing. Many of our branches are non-existent, very few that exist are weak and very, very, very fewer are just operational as dictated by the ANC Constitution. There is a historical account to this gloom picture and if time allows, we'll come back to this subject.

However here are the kind of branches we have today or currently in the ANC:

- **Contact persons BRANCH:** These are kind of branches that are either controlled by few individuals either the Chair and/or Secretary. These kinds of branches do not bother to call BEC meetings. They do not have constant contact with the general membership. Regional and Provincial leadership even administrators know these anomalies. They all know that for everything to 'pass' in that branch you just need to CONTACT these individuals. Every conference, general council, or any organisational platform these individuals are delegates. Everything about the branch is only limited to them. And

these branches are many in the ANC!

- **Ka-Mina Ka-Wena BRANCH:** These ones are not so different from the Contact persons, but the scope is now widened or extended to the entire BEC. They too do not have any contact with the membership and the community at large. Do you think they find something wrong with that? Nope! it is by a calculated design and move to have this kind of a branch.

More often, there is a *ka-mina ka-wena* delegation process to different organisational meetings. They share amongst themselves as the BEC who will attend what and when. More often the Chair and Secretary will attend the National and Provincial Conferences and do not expect any report except that we elected so and so to be the Provincial chair and beyond that nothing.

- **Present but Absent BRANCH:** these branches only find life when regional, provincial and national leadership is around. They do call BEC and membership when asked to do so. They are not active when there is no leadership visit. Amongst our people they are absent, but when leadership is around they are present. They are not interested in the ward where they are based but only obsessed with impressing the leadership.
- **Municipality Branches:** These ones are only alive when it is time to nominate councillors. Their obsession is about who must be in the council so that they stand to benefit at the end of the pro-

cess. Membership growth of these branches is always witness during this period. These are branches where you always find physical infighting because general membership is recruited, organised and mobilised along municipal positions coupled with unfortunate promises to get some people jobs after the LGE

- **Business or Tenderpreneur Branches:** Not so much different from the municipality branches but these ones' interests are more on community projects. More often members of the BEC are bogus emerging businesses people. Quick fixers of note these ones and they don't even specialise in certain trades. They just run a branch to call a company that has been awarded a contract to allocate certain share of the scope of work to them. Name droppers of note these ones
- **Conference branches:** These ones year in, year out we have been discussing

them and they are not getting tired. They continue to be active during nomination of delegates and literally fade away once that process is done. These branches are at times referred to as voting foders, they don't care of many things about conferences but to nominate delegates. They care less about the report thereafter. These kinds of branches are responsible for many wrong outcomes of the conferences.

- **Wheelbarrows branches:** these are branches which usually elect the laziest, and members are also lazy too. For them to do any task of the branch they need to be pushed. And if no one is pushing them they are as quiet as dead and no activity at all until the pushers come and push then again.
- **Table Spoon Branches (*Icephe liphatha-liphethwe*):** these are kinds of branches who are always boasting and bragging about being in



CURRENT AFFAIRS



charge of the branches but only to find out that they are badly remote controlled. In these branches no member is expected to exercise their democratic rights unless allowed by their masters or those who control them. In Xhosa they are referred to as “*Uphatha Uphethwe*”.

- **Ghost branches:** You can't see them, you can't find them, you can't hear them but they are there. You will be told that they have elected a delegate or a candidate but never heard anything before and thereafter.

Many of the things that are taking place in these kinds of branches are as follows:

- Most of these branches are dishonest. I mean dishonest not only to the members, communities and ANC itself but also to themselves;
- Most of these branches are not accountable and they can't hold anyone accountable as well;
- Most of these branches hard-

ly renew their mandate as per the constitution biennial meaning once after two years;

- Most of these branches are turned into physical battlefields and shebeens and taverns.
- In Most of these branches there is generally lack of discipline or no discipline at all;
- Most of these branches lack a leadership armed with clarity of thought and ideological consciousness;
- Most of these branches do not have a program of action and the lack of political education and understanding is prevalent;
- Most of these branches also lack the understanding of the primary reason why is the have is in existence.

Our branches should not be:

- Havens for despicable villains.
- Harbour for criminals.
- Battlefields to injure, hurt and kill each other.
- Turned into places where men find pleasure in controlling and manipulating women.

What kind of the ANC branches in good standing do we envisage?

1. It must be a branch with paid up membership.
2. BEC (or any interim structure) Meeting every fortnight as per the constitution.
3. Calling BGMs as per the constitution.
4. Develop a pragmatic POA which is aimed at addressing the needs, concerns, and aspirations of the community around.
5. A branch with functioning departments and constant reporting to the BEC, membership and communities.
6. A branch that has a good working relationship with the councillors, both PR ward Councillors.
7. A branch with at least the following campaigns: ID campaign, Cleaning and Environmental campaign, GBV campaign, Letsema Campaign, Anti-Crime and Corruption Campaign, Education Campaign, Health Campaign and Know your residents Campaign, etc.

8. A branch must keep its records in a more secure place.
9. A branch must have both political education and Organising programmes as nucleus of the organisation but also to assist the movement to grow its political consciousness (quantitatively) and to grow its membership (quantitatively).
10. The branch must once in a month report to the region about its activities.
11. The branch must have a good relationship with the cl, ward committees and EPWP, CDW and PPO.
12. The branch of the ANC must be worried about the non-existence of the ANCYL and ANCWL.
13. The branch of the ANC must have a strong relationship with organs of people's power SGBs, FBOs, NGOs, CPFs, Health Committees, Ward and street Committees.
14. The branch of the ANC must be a listening branch – through listening we are able to learn. We draw significant lessons from listening. We must listen to community members as a branch in the same way drivers listen to Maria (the lady who is instructing us to turn left or right when we use GPS), if she says turn right and you decide to turn left you are definitely going to get lost.
15. The branch of the ANC must always have contact with the masses. Why should we sign a social contract with them but move far away from them after elections?
16. The branch of the ANC should internalise reporting back to committees on the progress and challenges in relation to commitments.
17. The branches of the ANC should be the first to advance

and the last to retreat against all the ills in the society: corruption, crime, gender-based violence, etc.

18. The branch of the ANC should be the shield and spear against any abuse of power and authority irrespective of who is exerting it.

Any branch that can perform all the tasks mentioned above will be doing what Ernesto “Che” Guevara referred to as a great feeling of love. A branch that loves its membership, community members around, a branch that loves its service to the people and the country. We should strive not to be a branch that lacks a quality of love.

We should not be a branch that consists of the kind of people that a Revolutionary leader, Amilcar Cabral once said the following about: *“Some comrades, even amongst those seated in this room, have a tendency to seek comfort in step as their responsibilities grow. It seems that some comrades spend several years waiting for responsibilities in order to make the mistakes*

which others have made in the position. We must combat this courageously, for the struggle is demanding, and our party is constantly more demanding. And we must throw out those who do not understand, however much it hurts us.” [Amilcar Cabral, **Unity and Struggle, Speeches and Writings.**]

We don't have any luxury to repeat the mistakes that others made, our responsibility is to correct those mistakes and advance the National Democratic Revolution in order to build a United, Democratic, Non-racial and Non-sexist South Africa.

We must truly be proud when we sing the song “*amandla ase-masebeni*” knowing that no one will dare undermine our branches and our communities.

AMANDLA! MATLA!

ALL POWER!

Ketso Toto Makume is a member of the Free State IPC.





SHIFTING SANDS IN AFRIKANERDOM

From Apartheid to Dakar to Washington: No place to go except South Africa

■ By **DR. MICHAEL SUTCLIFFE**

THE negotiations and establishment of our Constitution in 1996 was a seminal moment for our country establishing for the first time ever a rights-based framework of political, social, economic, developmental and other rights. Whilst there can be no doubt that the vast majority of South Africans accept the overall intentions contained in that document to redress the terrible effects of particularly colonialism, sexism, racism and other forms of discrimination writ large on our landscape, a few have used every means possible to return us to a period of conflict and hatred.

Leading that pack of course is Afriforum, established in 2006 to call up Afrikaners. They claim to “follow a double strategy with actions and campaigns that it undertakes on national and local level to manage

and influence the current political realities on Afrikaners. At the same time, Afriforum establishes sustainable structures through which Afrikaners can ensure their survival in an independent manner.”

Importantly, no recognition is made by Afriforum that indeed Afrikaans is a black African language, first developed in a written and spoken form by particularly slaves in the Western Cape. Since then, it has remained a language spoken mainly by black South Africans.

I raise this upfront because growing up on the south coast of Durban, I first encountered Afrikaners as a white “tribe” and throughout my early school days I saw them as our enemy. In the school playground a white line divided us English speakers from

Afrikaans children and teachers ensured that we did not go over the line. In my own memories of that time, I recall moments when, if the teachers weren’t looking, one or two of the Afrikaans kids would sometimes sneak over and take a swing at us. I also realised that another area of division was that ‘their’ sport was boxing and ours was the game of cricket.

These divisions between white English and Afrikaans speakers dominated much of my school life, with us English-speakers often feeling that all problems resulted from the Afrikaners who were now moving in to our areas through strategies by the National Party to bring in voters to unseat the United Party. New old age homes were built, houses provided and even a new Afrikaans school built next to our

new English high school. We dubbed it “cardboard college” because it took many years for it to move beyond just a few prefabricated classes.

The history I learnt at school was fashioned to reinforce a view that the National Party had saved all whites, that white boys must be brought up to be leaders of all, and that Afrikaners had brought civilisation before any black people “arrived” in our country. Nowhere did I hear of the existence of black Afrikaners, except for those who worked on farms or in other servile relationships who had to know the language.

Only at University did I start seeing a slightly different reality, but even there banned documents could only be studied in a reserve room if one signed a form stating who you were and for what purpose you wanted to read such a document. Outside the University I started seeing the bigger picture though: with workers, civics and then students leading the way in struggling for their rights. I also engaged with some unions whose black membership was largely Afrikaans. But these peaceful protests were only met with brutal repression.

Only when I studied for my PhD in the USA did I start understanding our real history, one of dispossession and conflict by external and internal colonialists, all white. As I met outstanding academics such as Ben Magubane in exile, I started seeing the truth.

What amazed me, and still amazes me, is that in all my politics I have been greeted by so much love from black people, and even when they often corrected me, did it in the nicest possible way! Some of these people walked



Thabo Mbeki and Frederick van Zyl Slabbert during the Dakar meeting of the ANC with Afrikaners.

thousands of kilometres into exile and in all their lives, in spite of so many hardships, they stuck to a principle that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white. In contrast, the option the apartheid government gave us all was filled with hatred and division by race and language.

As the mass movements of all those who opposed apartheid continued to rise up in opposition I quickly had to change my view of Afrikaners, as many of those I worked and struggled with were black and white Afrikaners, all united in their abhorrence of the things that divide (and killed) our people.

In that period of bannings, the Freedom Charter particularly formed the basis of our deliberations. As I first met many of our leaders in Lusaka in the mid-1980s I realised the importance they placed on particularly Afrikaner leaders, something of importance given the dominating operations of the secretive Broederbond on occupying all parts of civil society and government.

The leadership by President Oliver Tambo and Thabo Mbeki led

to meetings such as the one in July 1987 where IDASA co-convened the historic meeting between sections of the Afrikaner community and the ANC in exile to discuss strategies to build a united, democratic SA.

Space does not allow me to mention the full range of ways in which the leadership of the black oppressed continued to reach out particularly to white Afrikaners. One such instance I remember, was travelling with President Mandela to a youth rally at Ezakheni in 1996 during the World Cup Rugby. He had just met the Springbok team, in Cape Town. At the end of his speech he took out the Springbok rugby cap they had given him. For ten minutes he spoke to this audience of tens of thousands of young black South Africans in a dusty village about the importance of us all embracing that World Cup and rugby, in spite of the fact that, except in the Eastern Cape, very few black South Africans even knew about rugby.

I was honoured later, too, to be appointed by President Mandela as part of a technical committee



chaired by Zam Titus to look at the issue of Orania in a democratic South Africa. It allowed me to realise that even in that context there are people who see themselves as Africans first, and who saw Orania as also providing an opportunity for white South Africans to stay in South Africa and not leave for other shores.

However, throughout our democracy we have found small groups using every means possible to take us back to the past of division and hatred. Now in 2025 we find organisations like AfriForum and Solidarity approaching President Trump and his racists to impose sanctions and turn our clock back. The stupidity of these people though is that no sooner had they been to Washington, Trump produced an Executive Order making English the official language of the USA! And yet we are the only country in the world where Afrikaans is an official language.

It begs the question, why doesn't AfriForum promote a campaign to ensure that in every school where Afrikaans is taught, equal resources are made available to

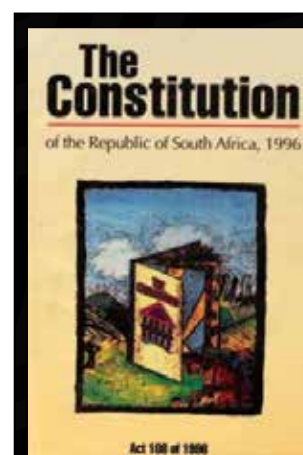
ensure isiZulu, Tshivenda, etc are also taught at those schools?

There is no doubt that the vast majority of South Africans are disgusted at the action of AfriForum, Solidarity, etc. A few may of course try and use this for their own political advantage, with some favouring AfriForum and others showing the negative consequences of AfriForum's approach for Afrikaners as a whole. But this would be short-sighted as we see from the votes of Afrikaners post-1994: shifting from the National Party to the Democratic Alliance to the FF+ taking voters from the DA, and so on. All of that is like shuffling the chairs on the decks of the Titanic.

This is because these narrow actions ignore the fact that the material reality is such that whites in general and white Afrikaners in particular enjoy an average households income of four to five times greater than black South Africans. The divisions within the Afrikaans community are even greater with only a small minority being the supporters of AfriForum and the majority of mainly black Afrikaners remaining poor.

Their attempts to focus on issues like the land question, education and employment equity are also naïve, as the opposites of these issues – theft of land, bantu education and job reservation – were implemented over many decades and are still amongst our greatest challenges to resolve.

We know the national question must be part of the national dialogue so that we can take stock particularly on why the economic and spatial divide in our country is still largely one of race. My respectful advice to AfriForum and their cohorts, though, is to stop acting like the Security Branch of the pre-apartheid period, spreading hatred and violence. Instead, they should be focussing on the fact that if Afrikaans is to survive, it must be founded on, and provide material change to, the black African base that created it.



**We, the people of South Africa,
Recognise the injustices of our past;
honour those who suffered for
Justice and Freedom in our land;
Respect those who have worked
to build and develop our country; and
Believe that South Africa belongs to all
who live in it, united in our diversity.**

Preamble to the Constitution of the
Republic of South Africa, 1996

DREAMS COME TRUE FOR LIMPOPO COMMUNITIES AS NEWLY BUILT SCHOOLS ARE HANDED OVER

■ By **MAVHUNGU LERULE-RAMAKHANYA (ANC PEC/PWC member)**

AS the MEC for Education in Limpopo, I'm thrilled to share the progress we've made since declaring 2023 as the Year of Infrastructure. Our team's tireless efforts have yielded remarkable results, addressing the backlog of aged buildings and storm-damaged schools dating back to 2014.

We've been handing over newly constructed schools since February, with an impressive rate of 2 schools per day and 4 per week. As of now, we've opened 8 schools, and many more are on the way. In April 2025, we'll be handing over new sites to contractors for refurbishment and construction.

What's truly heartening is our progress in implementing the BELA Act at Primary School level. Every primary school we've handed over features a grade R block, complete with waterborne toilets, sick bays, and play areas. This achievement aligns perfectly with the **ANC's Manifesto, Pillar 4**.

As a member of the Provincial Working Committee of the ANC and the Provincial Executive Committee of ANC in Limpopo,



I'm proud to be part of the 7th Administration under Premier Dr. Phophi Ramathuba's leadership. Our collective efforts are trans-

forming the education landscape in Limpopo, and I'm excited to see the impact on our communities.



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

IWD 2025: A Call for accelerated action and African Solidarity

■ By **PRECIOUS BANDA**

AS we commemorate International Women's Day this year, I would like to honour and celebrate the indomitable spirit, unwavering resilience, and unrelenting determination of African women. These remarkable women have been the driving force behind Africa's progress, pushing boundaries, defying stereotypes, and shattering glass ceilings.

Thirty years ago, the world came together to adopt the Beijing Platform for Action, a ground-breaking agreement that recognized the pivotal role of women in achieving sustainable develop-

ment. Today, as we reflect on the progress made and the challenges that remain, we are reminded that the fight for gender equality is far from over.

African women are the embodiment of strength, courage, and hope. They are the farmers who cultivate the land, the entrepreneurs who drive innovation, and the leaders who shape the destiny of their nations. They are the unsung heroes who have borne the brunt of colonialism, patriarchy, and economic inequality, yet continue to rise above these obstacles to create a brighter future for themselves and their communities.

Despite these remarkable achievements, African women still face significant barriers to equality. According to the African Development Bank, women make up a huge minority of the continent's parliamentarians, and majority of women aged between 20—24 have experienced physical or sexual violence. These are scary lived experiences of women and girls. Moreover, women's economic empowerment remains a distant dream for many, with women's labour force participation rate still being minimal compared to men.

However, we must not be deterred by these challenges. Instead, we



must draw inspiration from the countless African women who have defied the odds to achieve greatness. From the women who have formed cooperatives to support each other's economic empowerment, to the young girls who have bravely spoken out against child marriage and female genital mutilation, African women are rising above the challenges they face to create a brighter future for themselves and their communities.

In Somalia, women are leading the charge in rebuilding their communities after years of conflict, providing vital services such as healthcare and education. In Nigeria, women are driving innovation in technology and entrepreneurship, creating jobs and economic opportunities for themselves and others. In Egypt, women are advocating for their rights and challenging patriarchal norms, inspiring a new generation of young women to demand their rightful place in society.

These remarkable stories are a testament to the unstoppable power of African women. They are a reminder that, despite the challenges we face, we have the

power to create positive change and shape our own destiny.

To young African women, I say: you are the current and the future of our continent. You are the ones who will shape the destiny of Africa and create a brighter future for yourselves and your communities.

Do not be afraid to dream big, to

challenge the status quo, and to demand your rightful place.

As we commemorate International Women's Day, let us recommit ourselves to the cause of gender equality and women's empowerment.

Let us work together to create a continent where women are valued, respected, and empowered to reach their full potential.

To my fellow Africans, I say: let us celebrate the achievements of the women and girls, and let us work together to create a brighter future for all. We owe it to ourselves, our daughters, and our continent to unleash the full potential of African women.

Let us march forward together, with courage, determination, and a shared vision for a brighter future.

Precious Banda is President of the Young Women of Africa and former ANCYL National Political Commissar.



Taking SOPA to the People: A Spectacle or Real Change?

■ By **AYANDA BANS**

 On February 26 and 27, 2025, the usually quiet and dusty town of Beaufort West became the unexpected epicenter of political activity as it hosted the Western Cape State of the Province Address (SOPA). For a town grappling with extreme poverty, rampant inequality, and a severe unemployment crisis, this event was an opportunity to spotlight the struggles of the Central Karoo. But was it a genuine effort to address these urgent issues, or merely a political spectacle?

The Premier's address painted a picture of a province that is "moving forward." But moving forward for whom? Certainly not for the communities of Beaufort West, Murraysburg, Laingsburg, and Prince Albert, where unemployment stands at a staggering 29.9% – the highest in the province. Certainly not for the 42.2% of Beaufort West residents who cannot afford a basic meal or the 44.1% of households classified as indigent and unable to afford essential services. Where is this so-called progress for the people who remain excluded from economic opportunities?

SOPA may have been brought to the people, but the people of the Central Karoo remain without answers. No clear solutions were offered to address the dire state of service delivery, joblessness,

and food insecurity in the region. Instead, the event amounted to political pageantry, devoid of any real commitment to change.

Beaufort West was once the economic hub of the Karoo, yet today, its residents struggle to access basic services such as SASSA, Home Affairs, and even grocery stores. The lack of affordable and reliable transport further deepens this hardship. While the MEC of Mobility, who hails from the dusty streets of Beaufort West, made a token gesture of donating bicycles, what the people truly need is affordable public transport – buses and taxis to connect the region. The DA-led provincial government must move beyond

symbolic gestures and implement real economic interventions that uplift rural communities.

The DA's much-publicized R1 billion safety plan conveniently excludes the Central Karoo and other non-metro municipalities. Despite crime being a major concern in these regions, especially with the growing drug crisis, the deployment of LEAP officers remains confined to areas in the City of Cape Town. Premier Winde frequently touts his government's reliance on evidence-based policymaking, yet conveniently ignores the well-documented links between poverty, inequality, and crime. Instead of using community crime fighting structures like





the neighborhood watches as political tools, the provincial government must develop a robust anti-drug strategy and ensure that all communities – not just affluent suburbs – benefit from safety initiatives.

Poverty is not just an economic issue; it is the deliberate outcome of a governance system that prioritizes the elite over the majority. The closure of the Murraysburg Old Age Home forced elderly residents as far as Ashton, stripping them of their community ties. At Huis Johannes, one of the worst-run facilities in the province, elderly residents endure unhygienic conditions, sleep on unkempt beds, and lack nutritious meals. Where is the dignity in this? Where is the accountability?

Social grants play a critical role in national efforts to combat poverty, yet the DA has never supported them. This is evident in the provincial government's reluctance to assist the thousands of SASSA beneficiaries in the Western Cape facing ongoing challenges. Yet now, the DA hypocritically seeks credit for policies they never believed in.

The Beaufort West Municipality,

already under a financial recovery plan, was rescued by a national ANC minister's intervention, which prevented total collapse by writing off its debt. Yet instead of formulating genuine recovery plans, the DA prioritizes revenue collection in a region where thousands are unemployed. Currently, 6,800 households have had their electricity cut off due to unaffordability. How does the DA expect an economically crippled population to pay for basic services?

Additionally, the termination of temporary worker contracts due to budget constraints left a financial gap of approximately R120,000 to pay these workers. Meanwhile, the DA-led council resolved to pay an estimated R600,000 to a single councillor. This exposes their true priorities: political self-enrichment over people's livelihoods.

Children out of school, underfunded crèches, and youth forced to beg on the streets – this is the reality of the Western Cape under DA rule. Even law enforcement acknowledges that homelessness contributes to rising crime rates. Where is the Department of Social Development's plan to intervene before young lives are

lost to crime and drugs? Where is MEC Londt's urgent response?

Promises have been made and broken repeatedly. In 2018, MEC Simmers promised housing for Murraysburg residents. Seven years later, those homes remain unseen. The DA must be held accountable for its pattern of neglect and deceit.

The ANC will not rest until this province belongs to all who live in it – not just a privileged few. From the Cape of Storms, we are building a Cape of Good Hope – one that stands for inclusion, transformation, and justice. The struggle is far from over.

The SOPA in Beaufort West was an opportunity for the provincial government to listen, respond, and act. Instead, it became yet another empty display. The people of the Central Karoo do not need speeches; they need action. And until real change comes, we will continue to hold the DA accountable for every broken promise and every abandoned community.

Ayanda Bans is ANC Chief Whip in the Western Cape Provincial Legislature.

Queen Nanny: A Buffalo soldier in the heart of America

Her unparalleled enthusiasm, resilience and courage

■ By **AMBASSADOR PHATSE JUSTICE PIITSO**

THROUGHOUT history, generations of humanity have declared the universe our creation, the living horizon of our existence. We dwell within its vastness – its divinity, geography, and history – stretching beyond the unimaginable depths of its edges. We envision its magnificent oasis, fostering the bonds of its diversity and the promise of a future filled with hope.

We marvel at the splendour of its spectacular landscapes, its magical skies and stars, the seas, oceans, and rivers, the valleys and mountains – the Massachusetts of the Antilles – its enchanting rainforests and majestic deserts. We are its humanity, the crown of its creation.

What sets us apart from the rest of creation is the abundant wealth of consciousness bestowed upon us – the ability to discern what is right and what is wrong.

The fundamental question we must ask is whether our humanity, the living creation of the universe, is prepared for the unknown future. Our task is to transform the universe into a peaceful home for all creation.



Queen Nanny

Yet, the savage kingdom of capitalism is turning the wheels of history against modernity. The genocidal crimes once committed against enslaved people for centuries are today being perpetrated against the innocent people of Palestine.

Our geography and history have not forgotten the atrocities of the transatlantic slave trade, just as they shall not forget the genocide inflicted upon the people of Palestine. We must give birth to hope, harmony, and fraternity among the peace-loving people

of the world.

The renowned Chilean poet, politician, diplomat, and Nobel Prize laureate for literature, Pablo Neruda, in his poem *A Song to Bolívar*, dreams of the return of Simón Bolívar – his living creation – rekindling the ideals that define our present struggles for freedom and dignity.

He writes:

*I met Bolívar one long morning
In Madrid, at the front of the Fifth
Regiment.*

INTERNATIONAL

“Father,” I said, “are you or are you not, or who are you?” And looking toward the Headquarters of the mountain, he said: “I wake up every hundred years when the people awake.”

This poem envisions Bolívar’s ideals as a guiding light, illuminating the pathways of our struggles, shaping the momentum of our quest for a just and peaceful future.

Today, I dream of Queen Nanny, the warrior enslaved woman of the Antilles, the mother of Jamaica’s struggle for freedom. I dream of her unparalleled enthusiasm, immense courage, and acts of resilience and ingenuity.

I dream of her return to her living creation, rekindling the aspirations of our present world – the achievement of peace and prosperity among nations. I dream of her vision for a peaceful Jamaica, a peaceful hemisphere, a peaceful Africa, and a peaceful world.

She stands in the annals of history as the noblest example of greatness, a living embodiment of heroism, a legendary figure who belongs to humanity. Our profound thoughts continue to cherish her legacy, for, like Bolívar, she awakens every hundred years when the people rise.

Upon their arrival on the shores of the Antilles, European colonial expeditions encountered indigenous peoples who had inhabited the hemisphere for centuries. Yet, driven by their geopolitical ambitions and the pursuit of economic dominance, the colonisers seized their lands and forced them into slavery.

For centuries, European intellectuals have sought to distort history,

crafting a false narrative to downplay the impact of the genocidal crimes committed against native peoples in former colonies and semi-colonies. European colonialism exterminated millions of indigenous peoples across the world, expanding its hegemony under the guise of economic growth.

The demand for labor to sustain industrial capitalism, driven by the European and American markets’ growing appetite for sugar, cotton, coffee, and rice, led to the mass enslavement of Africans. The first contingent of enslaved Africans arrived in Jamaica from the Canary Islands in 1494. As demand surged, the numbers escalated, fuelling one of the most horrific chapters in human history.

Historians trace Queen Nanny’s origins to the African continent. She is believed to be a descendant of the Akan people from the Ashanti Kingdom, in present-day Ghana. There are differing accounts of her enslavement: some suggest that her father, an Ashanti prince, was betrayed and sold into slavery, while others claim that she was forcibly taken

by slave merchants.

Enslaved people endured unimaginable atrocities at the hands of their oppressors. They were stripped of all rights, reduced to property, and subjected to inhumane treatment. Marriage was forbidden, and those who bore children often saw them sold into the brutal system of slavery. Many women resorted to abortion rather than subject their children to this relentless cycle of suffering.

Jamaica’s strategic location in the Caribbean made it a battleground for European colonial powers. Tensions between the British and Spanish escalated into full-blown war, culminating in the British conquest of Jamaica in 1655. During this period, many enslaved people escaped captivity, seeking refuge in the Blue Mountains, where they formed Maroon communities.

Queen Nanny emerged as a formidable leader, uniting the Maroons into a cohesive force. She established a self-sufficient community, mastering guerrilla warfare and



outmaneuvering British forces through superior tactics. Legends of her spiritual and supernatural abilities – catching bullets with her hands and throwing them back at her enemies – spread fear among the colonial soldiers.

Her troops were trained in discipline, stealth, and survival. British soldiers who mistook camouflaged warriors for trees met their demise at close range. Queen Nanny's mastery of herbal medicine allowed her to concoct substances that incapacitated enemy forces, rendering them defenseless.

The prolonged conflict devastated Jamaica's economy, forcing the British to negotiate peace.

The resulting treaty granted the Maroons autonomy, making them the first enslaved community to successfully resist colonial rule and win their freedom. However, the British later violated this agreement, undermining the hard-fought peace.

Karl Marx famously described slavery as a system where capital dripped from every pore, soaked in blood and suffering. European capitalism was built on these horrendous crimes, with enslaved Africans chained like livestock, enduring unspeakable cruelty.

Bob Marley, the descendant of enslaved Jamaicans and king of the Rastafarian movement, immortalised their struggles in his song Buffalo Soldier:

*There was a Buffalo Soldier In the heart of America,
Stolen from Africa, brought to America, Fighting on arrival,
fighting for survival.*

If you know your history,



*Then you would know where you coming from,
Then you wouldn't have to ask me,
Who the heck I think I am.*

*I am just a Buffalo Soldier, In the heart of America,
Stolen from Africa, brought to America,
Said he was fighting for arrival, Fighting for survival,
Said he was a Buffalo Soldier,
Winning the war for America.*

The enslaved generation fought for the freedom of the New World, carrying the hope of the universe on their shoulders. The legacy of Queen Nanny and her people is forever etched in the annals of history.

They remain an enduring symbol of resistance, a tapestry of courage and sacrifice woven into the struggle for human dignity. Their inspiration echoes through time, like Buffalo Soldiers in the heart of America – fighting for arrival, fighting for survival.

They are our humanity, the living creation of the universe – the beautiful flowers in the gardens of our America, the blossoming roses of the Massachusetts of the Antilles.

Ambassador Phatse Justice Piitso is a member of the African National Congress. He writes this article in his personal capacity.



The Big Con: How the Consulting Industry Weakens Our Businesses, Infantilizes Our Governments, and Warps Our Economies

(Book by Mariana Mazzucato and Rosie Collington, 2023)

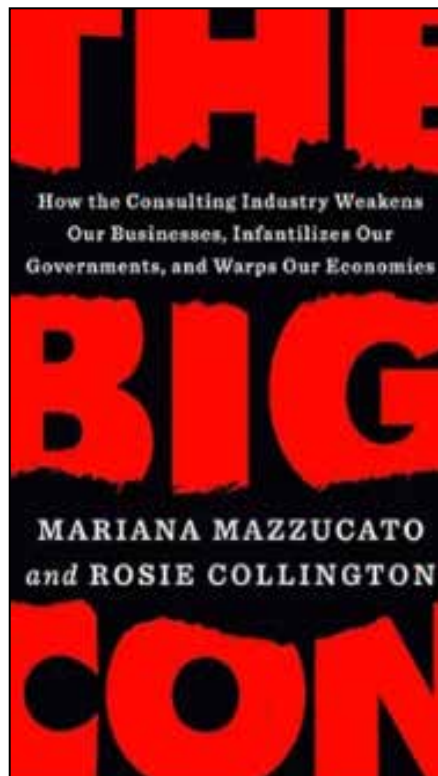
Introduction

President Cyril Ramaphosa's office has issued a cautionary statement expressing dissatisfaction with the inclusion of McKinsey and Bain & Company in the B20, the business workstream of the G20. The Presidency asserts that:

"Whilst the Presidency or government has no control over the B20 processes, it does not endorse the appointment of McKinsey in this regard. Similarly, the Presidency does not condone the inclusion of Bain in supporting the activities of NECOM."

South Africa's complex and often fraught relationship with the consulting industry has been extensively documented, particularly through the findings of the State Capture Commission and the Nugent Commission, both led by Justice Zondo. These investigations revealed troubling interactions between major consulting firms and government institutions, particularly Bain & Company's role in undermining the South African Revenue Service (SARS), which exacerbated the broader crisis of state capture.

The controversy surrounding McKinsey intensified when the firm agreed to repay R1 billion for its involvement in dubious contracts with Eskom. McKinsey's ties to the Gupta brothers, who allegedly leveraged their relationship with former



President Jacob Zuma to secure lucrative public contracts, further highlight the ethical concerns associated with consulting firms in governance. As South Africa continues to grapple with these revelations, it is essential to reassess the role of consulting firms in public administration to prevent further erosion of state integrity.

The Rise of the Consulting Industry

In *The Big Con*, Mariana Mazzucato and Rosie Collington provide

an in-depth analysis of how the consulting industry has entrenched itself within both the public and private sectors. They trace the origins of the modern consulting industry to the early 20th century, with the emergence of McKinsey, Boston Consulting Group, and Bain & Company. By the 1960s and 1970s, firms such as EY, PwC, KPMG, and Deloitte had become dominant players in the field.

Consulting has since grown into one of the largest global industries by market capitalization. The authors highlight that in 2021, Deloitte ranked as the third-largest private company in the United States, followed closely by PwC in fourth place. Accenture, which earned \$17.4 billion from consulting services, was ranked as the fortieth largest company in the world by market capitalization, surpassing corporations such as Royal Dutch Shell and Boeing. This reinforces Mazzucato and Collington's assertion that consulting firms prioritize revenue growth and profitability over sustainable solutions.

The New Public Management Model

A central argument in *The Big Con* is the impact of the New Public Management (NPM) approach, which promotes the restructuring

BOOK REVIEW

of government operations to mirror private-sector business models. Mazzucato and Collington argue that this shift has led to a decline in public sector capacity, as reliance on consulting firms has become the norm. This dependency has weakened public institutions, eroded decision-making authority, and diminished public servants' confidence in their ability to manage projects without external assistance.

The authors illustrate how outsourcing major capital projects and IT services to consulting firms has created a cycle of dependence, where governments rely on consultants for feasibility studies, project management, contract drafting, and execution. This, they argue, effectively hands control of critical government functions to private firms, undermining public sector autonomy.

Outsourcing and the 'Third Way'

Mazzucato and Collington use the example of the failed HealthCare.gov project under the Obama administration to underscore the risks associated with outsourcing government functions. The Affordable Care Act, a cornerstone of Obama's healthcare reform, relied on consulting firms to develop its online enrollment platform. However, upon its launch on October 1, 2013, the website encountered critical failures, prompting widespread political backlash and calls from Republicans to repeal the act.

The authors argue that the failure of HealthCare.gov was primarily due to the government's over-reliance on private contractors, who faced no real accountability. They highlight that the cost of the project ballooned to \$1.7 billion by 2014 due to the flawed contracting model, which allowed firms to pass additional costs onto the government. This, they argue, is a systemic issue inherent to the outsourcing model employed by many governments worldwide.

The Business-Like Government Model

Mazzucato and Collington explore how the consulting industry has shaped government reform efforts, particularly through the promotion of public-private partnerships (PPPs) and private finance initiatives (PFIs). They argue that these models, which were extensively used during the Thatcher and Blair administrations in the UK, have led to an increased privatization of public services.

The authors highlight how Blair's government relied heavily on consulting firms to design and implement PFI contracts, with firms such as Andersen Consulting playing a key advisory role. This approach was justified under the guise of improving efficiency, but in reality, it entrenched private sector involvement in public administration and led to long-term financial burdens for the government.

Digital Outsourcing and Technological Dependence

The book also examines how governments have outsourced their digital infrastructure to private firms, leading to long-term technological dependence. Mazzucato and Collington highlight how Denmark resisted outsourcing its IT systems until the late 1990s, maintaining in-house technological expertise through Datacentralen. By contrast, other governments, including the United States and South Africa, have increasingly turned to consulting firms for digital transformation projects.

The authors highlight the case of Oracle securing a nearly R1 billion contract with South Africa's National Treasury to develop an Integrated Financial Management System (IFMS). Despite the presence of the State IT Agency (SITA), which was established to centralize government IT infrastructure, corruption and mismanagement have led to persistent reliance on external

consultants. This has entrenched private sector control over critical government functions, undermining the state's ability to manage its own technological development.

Conclusion

Mazzucato and Collington provide a compelling critique of the consulting industry's pervasive influence on both the public and private sectors. They argue that the increasing reliance on consulting firms has weakened government institutions, distorted decision-making processes, and perpetuated a cycle of dependence that benefits private firms at the expense of public interest.

By examining historical trends, case studies, and financial data, *The Big Con* offers a rigorous analysis of the structural problems created by the consulting industry. The book is a vital contribution to the debate on the role of consultants in governance and provides essential insights for policymakers, academics, and business leaders seeking to understand the broader implications of consulting-driven reforms.

Ultimately, Mazzucato and Collington call for a fundamental reassessment of the role of consultants in public administration. They advocate for rebuilding internal government capacity, reducing reliance on external firms, and implementing policies that prioritize long-term public interest over short-term financial gains. Their work serves as a powerful reminder of the need to critically evaluate the influence of consulting firms in shaping the future of governance and economic policy.

Nyiko Ashley Mabasa is a PEC member of the ANCYL Gauteng responsible for Policy and Political Education and holds two Masters in Economic and Labour Sociology focused in the Energy Policy, and Masters in Governance and Public Policy focused in Data Governance

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

8–14 March 2025

Source: SA History Online, O'Malley Archives, Africa Today/Yesterday, The Africa Factbook and Amazwi SA Museum of Literature

8 March 1986 Moses Mabhida dies in Maputo



Moses Mbeki Mncane (Baba Mabhida, trade unionist, politician, Umkhonto weSizwe commander and Secretary-General of the SA Communist Party, died of a heart attack in Maputo, Mozambique, and was buried there in a temporary grave on 29 March 1986. In 2006, Mabhida's remains were transferred to South Africa by the South African government for reburial at his home in KwaZulu-Natal. The eulogy at his funeral was done by then ANC President Oliver Reginald Tambo, and he said: "We have gathered here today to bid farewell to a warrior. We have converged from all corners of the globe to pay homage to a revolutionary. We have convened on this grieving piece of the earth to salute a patriot. We who have walked with the giants know that Moses Mbheki Mabhida belongs in that company too. We who

have failed among the ranks know that he was proud to count himself a foot soldier. A colossus because he was supremely human. Like the pure note of a bungle, (his) voice rose from the depths of the Valley of a Thousand Hills, and multiplied. It rose and grew and multiplied, reverberating from Durban's Curries Fountain until it was heard in Dar es Salaam and Havana, Moscow and Managua, London and Jakarta, Beijing and Rio de Janeiro, Prague and Washington. And in Pretoria the centres and symbols of oppression and repression – the Union Buildings and the Voortrekker Monument – heaved and trembled as they received his message: *Death to Fascism! Down with Fascism! Freedom for my People!*"

9 March 1947 Three Doctors' Pact signed



The signing of the '**Three Doctors' Pact**' between president of the African National Congress, Dr. AB Xuma, Natal Indian Congress president, Dr. GM Naicker and Dr. Yusuf Dadoo of the

Transvaal Indian Congress, taking forward unity of all oppressed and non-racialism.

9 March 2015 Chumani Maxwele ignites the #RhodesMustFall Movement at UCT

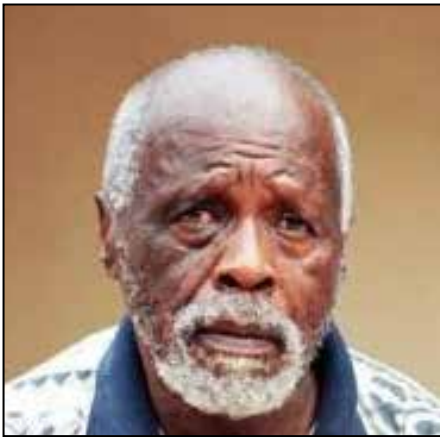
On 9 March 2015, Chumani Maxwele threw human excrements at a statue of Cecil John Rhodes, situated on the University of Cape Town campus. This became a catalyst for heightened student activism and movements throughout universities in the country, and the birth of what became known by the collective name #FeesMustFall movement. Maxwele's protest, staged as a political performance, was in response to the lack of attention given to the symbols of White supremacy and Black oppression that is rooted in South Africa. By taking human excrement from Khayelitsha, his action sought to make a connection with the lack of human dignity given to Black people living in townships. Dressed in running shoes and tights, a pink construction hat and carrying a whistle, a drum and a placard reading "*Exhibit White @ Arrogance U.C.T.*", Maxwele's performance was a radical protest against UCT's institutional racism and the lack of transformation on campus. By midday Maxwele was joined by other students, resulting in the birth of #RhodesMustFall.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

10 March 1922 Miners' strike turns violence

A white mineworker's strike, which started in December 1921 turned violent, with workers occupying police stations, railway stations and mines in the Witwatersrand, attacking a power station and main post office. The strike became known as the Rand Revolt, leading to certain positions in mines being reserved for whites, called *Job Reservation*.

10 March 1926 Artist Michael Zondi born



On 10 March 1926, Michael Gagashe Zondi, a South African sculptor was born in Msinga, Greytown. He was trained in woodwork at the Swedish Lutheran Mission Trade School. During the late 1950s, he received instruction in Fine Arts at the UN Pietermaritzburg. He obtained certificates in building construction and design and worked at the Appelsbosch mission hospital in Natal, executing the design, construction and decoration for the hospital chapel, whilst doing his sculptors. In 1965, he became only the second black artist to exhibit at the Durban Arts Centre, during the height of apartheid. He worked for the Department of Information until 1972, after which he moved to Johannesburg. Zondi had several exhibitions of his

work, and his sculptors are part of art collections across the country and internationally. He has been described as "*one of the greatest South African sculptors of the 20th century.*" Michael Gagashe Zondi passed on 15 March 2008, and was buried in Mtulwa.

10 March 1978 Journalist Percy Qoboza released from detention



Percy Qoboza, editor of the banned newspaper, *The World*, was released from detention, together with nine other Black leaders seized in security raids in October 1976. Qoboza was freed as result of an international campaign for his release. After his release, Qoboza remained in the country for another three years and joined the Black weekly, *The Voice*, which was later also banned. He then joined the *Post Transvaal* and *Sunday Post*, two newspapers established to replace the banned *World*. Qoboza finally succumbed to the government pressure and left the country to live in United States.

10 March 1990 Welcome Ncita wins International Boxing Federation title

Mdantsane born Welcome Ncita became the first South African to win the International Boxing Federation (IBF) world bantam weight title on 10 March 1990, when he beat Israeli Fabrice Benichou in

Tel Aviv, Israel. Known as "*The Hawk*", Ncita went on to defend the title seven times. He lost the title to American, Kennedy McKinney in 1992.

11 March 1870 King Moshoeshoe passed on



King Moshoeshoe, founder and first paramount chief of the Basotho nation died and was buried on Thaba Bosigo.

11 March 1982 Soweto students, Mary Loate and Khotso Seathlolo sentenced

Two former Soweto student leaders, Khotso Seathlolo, 25, and Mary Loate, 23 were given long term imprisonment under the Terrorism Act. Seathlolo was given 15 years and Mary was given 10 years. The two were convicted for events related to the 16 June 1976 uprising. Seathlolo faced additional charges. These included leaving South Africa illegally and being a member of a banned organisation in exile.

11 March 1998 Jazz legend Basil Manenberg Coetzee passed on

Legend jazz musician and saxophonist, Basil 'Manenberg' Coetzee died on this day. Born in District Six, Cape Town Coetzee

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY



started playing the penny whistle, went on to drums and flute and eventually saxophone. His family was forcefully removed from District Six to Manenberg. As a factory worker during the 1960s and 70s, he continued his music part-time, and with others of his generation forged the unique sound of South African jazz. He played at the launch of the United Democratic Front (UDF) in Rocklands, Mitchell's Plain in 1983, and recorded two albums, *Sabenza* and *Monwabisi* under Mountain Records label.

12 March 1868 British annexed Basotholand

Now the Kingdom of Lesotho, it was annexed as a protectorate on request from Moshoeshoe, credited as the founder of the Basotho Kingdom. This happened after invasions by the Boers from the Orange Freestate in 1867 and 1868. King Moshoeshoe appealed to the British for protection, and on 12 March 1868 his country became a British protectorate, and the current borders of Lesotho were established. Most of their previous territory was lost, specifically fertile farming area west of the Caledon River, which was ceded to the Boers. Lesotho only regained its independence from Britain, over 100 years later, in 1966.

12 March 1968 Mauritius Independence Day



The African island state of Mauritius gained independence from Britain and became a republic in 1992, on this day. The island was first colonized by the French in 1767. Mauritius is described as a 'melting pot of different nationalities – descendants of African, Chinese, Indian, and European immigrants and slaves.' Since independence, the island state has moved from a low-income, agriculturally based economy to a high-income diversified economy with growing industrial, financial, ICT and tourist sectors. In 2018, Mauritius had a higher education enrolment rate of 40.8%.

12 March 2005 Pioneer tomato farmer Bertie van Zyl buried in Mooketsi

Bertie van Zyl (72), founder and owner of ZZ2, the biggest tomato growing operation in the country and one of the largest in the world, was buried in Mooketsi, Limpopo. The funeral was attended by top government officials, amongst them Thoko Didiza, the minister of agriculture, Tito Mboweni, the Reserve Bank governor, Mbhazima Shilowa, the premier of Gauteng, MECs and farmers. Thousands of farm workers also attended the service. Didiza said Van Zyl played a crucial role in the development of emerging farmers.

13 March 1980 Lillian Ngoyi passed on



Lillian Masediba Ngoyi, one of the four leaders of the 1956 Women's March passed away on this day. Born in 1911 in Pretoria, she worked as a nurse, a short stint as a domestic worker, and later as a textile worker, where she joined the Garment Workers Union. She was amongst the founding members of the ANC Women's League, and became active in the Defiance campaign of the 1950s. She served on the ANC Transvaal executive, and was the first woman to be elected to the National Executive Committee of the ANC in 1954, a decade after the ANC opened full membership to women. She was elected the first president of the Federation of South African Women, and a leader of the 1956 Women's march. She was one of the 156 Treason Trialists, and was detained and banned by the apartheid regime; newspapers were not allowed to quote her. Throughout her life, she remained active in the liberation struggle and an icon of the women's movement.

13 March 1888 De Beers Consolidated Mines formed

The hitherto monopoly over South African diamond trade was registered in Kimberley, with Barney

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

Bernato at the helm. Cecil John Rhodes in 1871 bought shares into De Beers, and in 1929 Ernest Oppenheimer became De Beers board chair. Anglo America became the largest shareholder in De Beers in 2011 when it bought into the Oppenheimer family stake of 40%. At some point, De Beers controlled between 80-90% of the rough diamonds trade in the world, but with new entrants, this is now 30-40%, and is still regarded as the world's 'leading diamond company.'

13 March 2004 Dullah Omar passed on



Dullah Mohamed Omar was born in Observatory, Cape Town on 26 May 1934 and grew up in District Six. After matric he did a law degree at UCT, became involved in the New Unity Movement and after gaining his LLB in 1957, went on to practice law, taking on political trials and human rights issues. He was active in the New Unity Movement, but later joined the Rylands Civic Association and the National Association of Democratic Lawyers (NADEL) – both became affiliates of the United Democratic Front (UDF) in 1983. As a human rights lawyer, he represented Pogo, PAC, ANC, BCM and student activists, and was

detained, surveilled and banned by the regime. He was elected as the UDF W.Cape chairperson and Vice President of Nadel in 1987. Omar was the first Minister of Justice of the new South Africa and was later appointed Minister of Transport by President Thabo Mbeki. He died of cancer on 13 March 2004 and is survived by his wife and three children.

14 March 1982 ANC London offices bombed

On this day the ANC headquarters in London, England, was bombed. General Johann Coetzee, former head of the South African security police, and seven other policemen, claimed responsibility and applied for amnesty before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Coetzee's accomplices were Craig Williamson, John McPherson, Roger Raven, Wybrand du Toit, John Adam, James Taylor and Eugene de Kock.

13 March 2009 Afro Samurai unveiled

The original artwork of popular anime character Afro Samurai who first appeared in a manga in 1998 was unveiled at the Japan Society in Tokyo. The Afro Samurai anime was a creative collaboration between Samuel L. Jackson, Takashi Okazaki, and Gonzo, with the music scored by RZA of the Wu-Tang Clan.

14 March 1984 Koeberg nuclear power station became operational

Located on the West Coast, Koeberg provides Western Cape with electricity, contributing at some point 6.5% of South Africa's electricity supply (in 2018 down to 4%).

According to Eskom (owner), it is the only nuclear power station in Africa, with the largest turbine generators in the Southern Hemisphere, and the most southerly-situated nuclear power station in the world. The power station is surrounded by a 3 000-ha nature reserve owned by Eskom, with over 150 different species of birds. The power plant's original lifespan was until 2024, but recent upgrade puts it in commission until 2045.

13 March 1989 Pop icon Yemi Alade born

Nigerian Afro-pop singer and actress was born in Abia state. Top artist during the 2010s and 2020s, she was the first African female artist to reach one million YouTube subscribers in July 2019.

14 March 1979 Lira born



Lerato Moipone Molapo, known as the singer Lira, whose music is a fusion of soul, funk, jazz and African, was born in Daveyton, Gauteng. She is a multi SAMA winner, with a number of platinum sellers.

14 March 1991 Famished Road published

Ben Okri's first book in the Nigerian trilogy, The Famished Road is published. The book was followed

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

by Songs of Enchantment (1993) and Infinite Riches (1998)

14 March 2018

Stephen Hawking passed on

English theoretical physicist Stephen Hawking, best known for his work on the physics of black holes and for the book *A Brief History of Time: From the Big Bang to Black Holes* (1988), died at age 76.

14 March 2019

Cyclone Idai hits Mozambique

One of the most powerful storms to hit Mozambique, Cyclone Idai struck with winds up to 177 km per hour, causing 6 meters deep flooding and devastating the port city of Beira.

14 March 2021

Grammy Awards for Nigeria

Nigerian music stars Burna Boy wins Best Global Album for Twice as Tall and Wizkid for Best Music Video for Brown Skin Girl.

VERBATIM

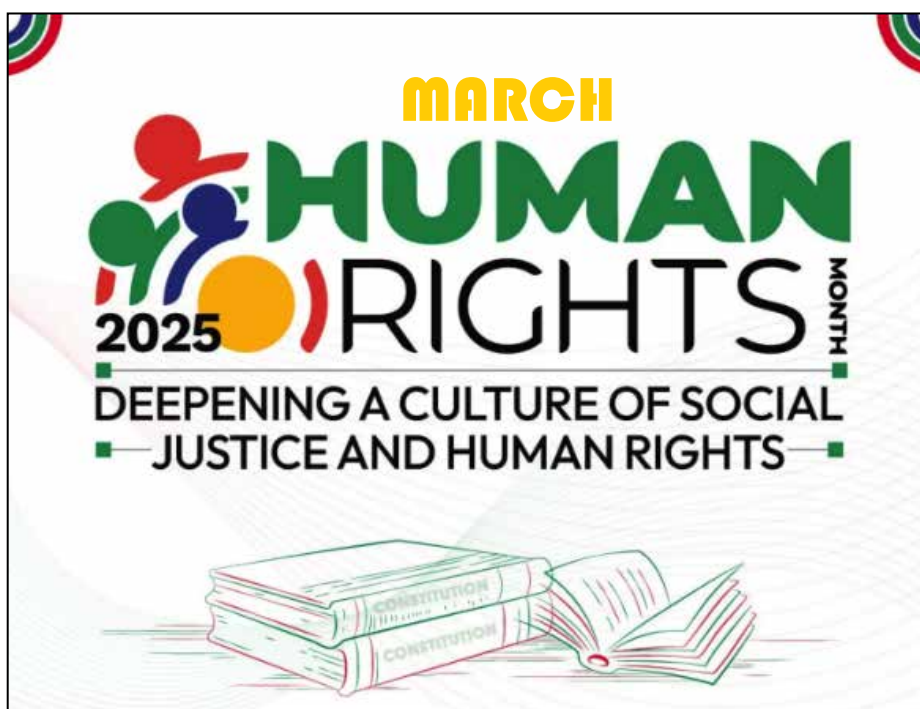
The size of your dreams must always exceed your current capacity to achieve them.

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf
Former President of Liberia

INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL DAYS

8 – 14 March 2025

Source: www.un.org, www.au.int, *The Africa Fact Book* (2020), www.daysoftheyear.com



8 March

International Women's Day

International Women's Day has its origin in a strike and march by over 15,000 women in New York in 1908, demanding better pay, shorter working hours and the right to vote. In 1910, at the International Conference of Working Women, Clara Zetkin proposed that it be celebrated as International Women's Day, and the first celebration of the day was held in 1911. The day has been used by women to organise and mobilise against their social, political and economic exclusion and exploitation, and to celebrate the achievements that women have made. A



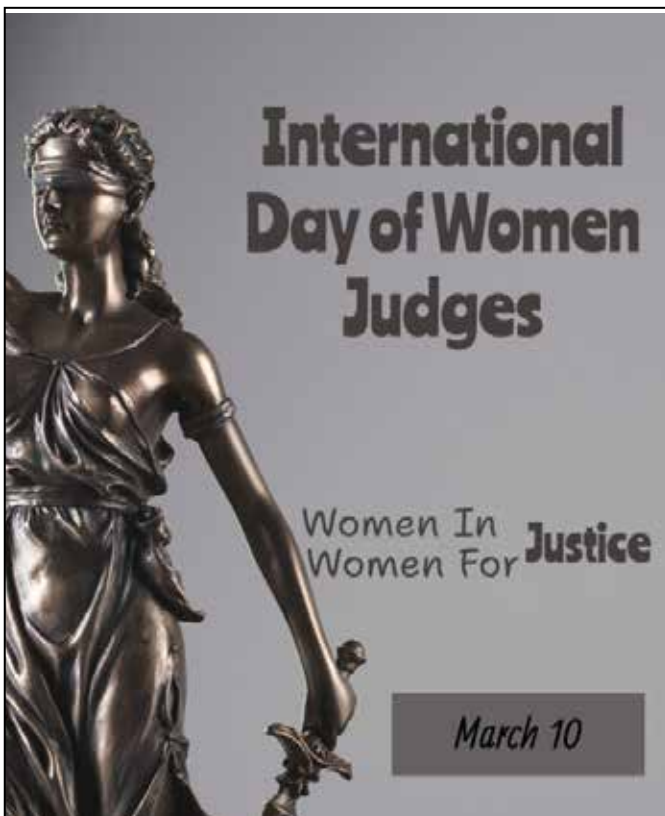
THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

century later, the struggles against gender-based violence, for equal pay for equal work, for representation, and for the recognition of women's rights as human rights are ongoing. The theme for 2025 International Women's Day is **Accelerate Action**. Focusing on the need to Accelerate Action emphasizes the importance of taking swift and decisive steps to achieve gender equality. It calls for increased momentum and urgency in addressing the systemic barriers and biases that women face, both in personal and professional spheres.

10 March

International Day of Women Judges

Achieving gender equity in all spheres of public life is an important part of the struggle for a non-sexist world, and the judiciary is no exception. In 2017, 40% of judges were female, in comparison with just 5% in 2008. In South Africa, by September 2020 there were 134 male judges (58,5%) and 95 female judges (41,5%). During the recent interviews by the Judicial Services Commission for the position of Chief Justice (the most senior judge in the country), only one out of four candidates was a woman, and she scored the highest. In Africa at the moment, there are, currently just six women Chief Justices, in Ethiopia, Niger, Lesotho, Sudan, Côte d'Ivoire and Zambia.



10 March

International Commonwealth Day



The Commonwealth referred to all the countries and colonies that used to be part of the British Empire, Commonwealth day (second Monday in March) also used to be known as Empire Day. In the UK, an Anglican church service is held in Westminster Abbey, attended by Queen Elizabeth II, the Secretary General of the Commonwealth and other Commissioners. The Commonwealth consists of 56 former colonies or territories of Britain who have gained independence, although 16 still regards the British Queen as their monarch. #CommonwealthDay highlights unity, collaboration & shared progress. The theme for this year is **'Together We Thrive!'**

11 March

World Plumbing Day

The day is celebrated by the World Plumbing Council (WPC) since 2010, to draw awareness to the important public health role played by plumbing and plumbers, by contributing to access to clean water and sanitation. According to the WPC, 1 billion people in the world gained access to piped water between 2000 and 2015; but there are still 900 million school children across the world who have no hand washing facilities, critical to prevent the spread of disease. On this day, plumbers and plumbing companies across the world volunteer their services to raise awareness.

12 March

Plant a Flower Day

Plant a Flower Day takes place on the 12th of March every year. This day encourages people of all ages to put their green thumbs to work and plant flowers. This day also serves as a reminder of the beauty of flowers and the importance of looking after the environment. There are about 400,000 different species of flowers on the planet.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

12 March

Mauritius National Day



The African island state of Mauritius, located in the Indian Ocean celebrates this day, when in 1968 it gained independence from Britain, and on the same day in 1992 when it became a Republic.

13 March

World Kidney Day



World Kidney Day aims to raise awareness of the importance of our kidneys to our overall health and to reduce the frequency and impact of kidney disease and its associated health problems worldwide. Chronic kidney disease (CKD) is estimated to affect approximately 850 million people worldwide. If left undetected and not treated timely, CKD can progress to kidney failure, leading to severe complications and premature mortality. By 2040, CKD is projected to become the 5th leading cause of years of life lost, highlighting the urgent need for global strategies to combat kidney disease. People at high risk for kidney disease should undergo targeted testing. The major risk factors for kidney disease are: Diabetes, Hypertension, Cardiovascular disease, Obesity and Family history of kid-

ney disease. Early detection policies for individuals at risk should be implemented globally to reduce the healthcare costs associated with kidney failure and improve quality of life. Primary care clinicians and frontline health workers should be trained to integrate CKD testing into routine care for high-risk populations, even when time and resources are limited. CKD testing should be integrated into existing community interventions (e.g., those targeting maternal health, HIV, tuberculosis, and other non-communicable diseases) to decrease cost and enhance efficiency. Testing may also occur outside of medical settings, such as in town halls, churches, or markets, depending on local regulations and available resources. Efforts should also focus on raising awareness among the general population, promoting health, and implementing education programs that empower patients.

14 March

International Day of Mathematics

Mathematics plays an important role in such areas as artificial intelligence, climate change, energy, economics, business, social and sustainable development, and to improving the quality of life in both the developed and the developing worlds. The day is also celebrated as World Pi Day, which refers to Pi, a symbol used in mathematics to represent a constant. It is the ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter which is approximately 3.14.

14 March

Ask a Question Day

On the day of the birthday of theoretical physicist, Albert Einstein, asking questions and being inquisitive (not intrusive) is encouraged, in order to learn, gain knowledge and understand our world and each other better. As Einstein said: *“the important thing is not to stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existing.”*


14 March

International Day for Action for Rivers

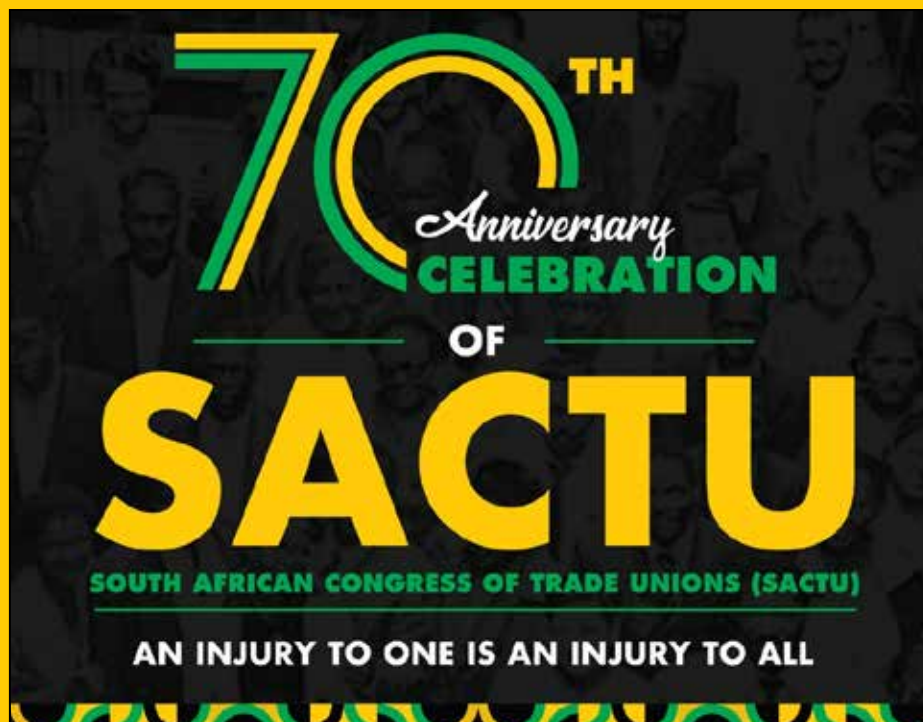
Rivers provide water for irrigation, domestic supply, power generation and industry as well as a range of other ecosystem services and biodiversity. Wikipedia lists over 200 rivers in South Africa, although some of them are really spruite, which is what *“small, often dry tributary streams”* are called. A report by government in 2019 indicated that only 15% of our rivers are ecologically healthy.

Celebrating 70 years of the South African Congress of Trade Unions

Joint communiqué issued by
COSATU and the ANC Veterans League

 On Wednesday, March 5th, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the ANC Veterans League came together to mark the 70th anniversary of the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), with an event that highlighted the enduring legacy of SACTU and its transformative role in the struggle for workers' rights and social justice. The occasion was broadcast live by SACTU Online Television, bringing together prominent leaders from COSATU, the ANC, the SACP, and the ANC Veterans League, as well as veterans from the liberation struggle and trade union movement.

The 70th anniversary celebration saw the presence of leading figures in the political and trade union movements, including senior current and former leaders of the liberation and trade union movement, including former Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe, Ronnie Kasrils, COSATU President Zingiswa Losi, General Secre-



tary Solly Phetoe, and veteran trade unionists such as Bheki Ntshalintshali, Thozamile Botha, and Sydney Mufamadi. The event was also graced by the Secretary General of the ANC Veterans League, Ilva Mackay Langa.

Throughout the occasion, the audience was moved by the reflections of SACTU Veterans, some of whom were part of the underground movement

during the apartheid era and were instrumental in the formation of SACTU. These veterans shared gripping personal stories, shedding light on the origins of SACTU, their underground activities, and the sacrifices they made for the liberation of the working class.

One of the anti-apartheid veterans, Brenda Wall, who co-authored the iconic book *Organise or Starve*, shared a profound



quote: *“In the darkest hours of apartheid, when hope seemed a distant dream, we understood that organising was not just a choice – it was survival. To organise was to fight, and to fight was to survive. This principle became our guiding light, and it is as vital today as it was then.”* These words captured the essence of the struggle and underscored the deep commitment of SACTU’s founding members to the cause of workers and liberation.

In her opening remarks, Losi emphasised the enduring legacy of SACTU and the role of trade unions in the ongoing fight for workers’ rights. *“SACTU laid the foundation for the labour movement in this country. It was born in the heart of oppression, yet it stood as a beacon of hope and solidarity. As we celebrate 70 years, we honour the past and look toward the future,”* she said.

Losi acknowledged the continuing challenges facing workers, particularly in sectors such as mining, transport, and energy. She called for renewed efforts to rebuild and strengthen unions, ensuring they remain a powerful force for change in South Africa’s evolving political and economic landscape.

Kasrils, a renowned anti-apartheid activist, reminded the audience of the crucial role that SACTU played in challenging the oppressive apartheid system. *“SACTU was not just a trade union; it was a revolutionary movement. It brought together the working class to confront the injustice that sought to exploit us all. The road to freedom was long and fraught with danger, but it was a road paved by the efforts of brave men and women who fought for dignity and justice.”*

Former General Secretary of

NUM, ANC, and Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe spoke about the political and economic landscape in which SACTU was formed, praising its vision and commitment to worker liberation. *“We cannot ignore the immense contribution SACTU made to the political struggle against apartheid. The fight for workers’ rights was inseparable from the struggle for political freedom. SACTU was a critical part of our victory over apartheid,”* said Motlanthe.

Bheki Ntshalintshali, COSATU’s former General Secretary, shared his reflections on the labour movement’s evolution. *“We stand on the shoulders of giants. SACTU gave birth to COSATU, and as its successor, we must ensure that we continue to fight for the dignity of workers. Today, we face a diverse set of challenges, but the spirit of solidarity and unity that defined SACTU*

CELEBRATION

must guide us in this new era,” Ntshalintshali emphasised.

Thozamile Botha, a long-time trade unionist, spoke about the need for unity within the labour movement. *“The unity that SACTU fostered between workers, irrespective of race or sector, is something we must continue to nurture. Our strength lies in our collective action,”* said Botha.



Sydney Mufamadi, COSATU's first Deputy General Secretary, spoke about the need to renew and strengthen the union movement. *“SACTU's founding principle of ‘one industry, one union, one country’ must continue to resonate with us. We must remain vigilant in the face of political and economic pressures that seek to divide us,”* said Mufumadi.



Solly Phetoe, COSATU's General Secretary, delivered the closing remarks, urging all workers and trade unions to unite in the ongoing fight for economic justice and workers' rights. *“As we mark 70 years of SACTU, let us not forget the sacrifices made by those who came before us. We must carry their legacy forward, ensuring that the fight for dignity and equality continues for future generations of workers,”* said Phetoe.



In her vote of thanks, Ilva Mackay Langa, the Secretary General of the ANC Veterans League, expressed gratitude for the work of COSATU and the ANC Veterans League in ensuring that the legacy of SACTU en-

dures. “We are proud to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with you in the fight for workers' rights. The road ahead is long, but as long as we remain united, the future is bright,” Langa said.

As the event concluded, the speakers called for continued solidarity and collective action

to tackle the pressing issues facing South Africa today. *“Our work is not done,”* said Losi.

“We must unite, strengthen our movement, and fight for the future of our children and grandchildren. The spirit of SACTU is alive, and it is more important than ever.”