

New Unity Movement



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EDITORIAL

February 11 is an important day in the annals of the official history of South Africa. It was the day on which Nelson Mandela was released from Victor Verster Prison (now Groot Drakenstein Prison) in 1990. The African National Congress (ANC) and other liberatory organisations had been unbanned shortly before and all these happenings prepared the way for the transition to the "new", "democratic" South Africa of the present. It was, therefore, an historic and nostalgic occasion when Jacob Zuma recently delivered his State of the Nation address to parliament on the 20th anniversary of that day. The normal parliamentary procedure was amended to make this possible.

WHERE WERE YOU WHEN?

A senior cabinet minister (Trevor Manuel) enthused that "as with all other great historic moments, the question most frequently asked is: 'Where were you when Mandela was released?'" Unfortunately, when one considers the unpleasant way that the "new democracy" has turned out for the majority of South Africans in the twenty years since that day, the appropriate answer to that question would be; "Where were we when Mandela was released? We were then exactly where we are now: poor, unemployed, victims of crime and abuse in run-down townships, suffering under horrendous social conditions, seeing our children going to ruin, with little hope of relief."

In fact, even as the 20th anniversary celebrations were taking place the people of Siyathemba township in Balfour, Mpumalanga, were protesting against their unbearable circumstances and were being brutalised by members of the South African Police Service. Sometimes, the more things change, the more they stay the same.

WHAT WENT WRONG?

The question that we need to ask with great concern is; what has gone wrong? How did the dream of our people become a nightmare? The answer is not very hard to find if one looks at the historical context of the events that ushered in the new era.

The important points to note are the following:

- There is a striking resemblance between what happened in South Africa in 1994 and what happened throughout the rest of the African continent from the 1950's already. What happened in Ghana, Kenya, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (the Belgian Congo then), Tanzania (Tanganyika), Zambia (Northern Rhodesia), Zimbabwe (Southern Rhodesia), Somalia, Eritrea, etc, etc, had such a common pattern. It cannot be an accident, a strange coincidence.
- Starting from 1957 (in Ghana), there was a "regime change" in most of the African countries. They were granted "independence". The new policy was to hand over colonial rule to governments elected from the local populations of these colonies. The former colonial power government officials, army, navy and police, the insignia, etc, of Britain, Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, and Portugal were withdrawn. "Independence" had arrived!
- This adjustment in colonial policy was implemented by the colonial authorities, the "mother countries", themselves because of the hostile opposition to their colonial rule by the populations in these countries. The old system of colonial rule had become ineffectual, very expensive, and costly in British soldier casualties. The profits of the companies operating in the colonial countries had diminished and their possessions placed in jeopardy.
- In the early fifties representatives of the colonial governments visited their colonies in order to acquaint them with and to sell this policy. For example, Harold Macmillan of the British Empire visited the British colonies (including South Africa) to tell them

about the "winds of change" that were sweeping through the length and breadth of Africa and to get them to accept the fake independence manoeuvre.

- To make the new governments acceptable to their populations, "struggle heroes" were frequently released from prison to make them available for the elections. Nkrumah in Ghana, Kenyatta in Kenya ... Other prominent local persons who accepted the fraudulent manoeuvre were also co-opted to occupy very well-paid posts in the new parliaments.
- There were a few countries where the settler populations refused to accept the change. They were a reasonable large minority who were enjoying the fruits of colonial exploitation too much to give them up. Southern Rhodesia (under Smith) and South Africa (under Verwoerd) were notable among these.
- A few decades later, however, their settler ("white") populations were finally forced to implement a similar "winds of change" policy when the opposition of the oppressed majorities once again became too difficult to subdue. This is the true history of the "new", "democratic" South Africa: a fraudulent manoeuvre to enable the exploitation of the people to continue under a new management that would bring about an easing of the growing popular resistance.

THE LOOTING CONTINUES

The most important fact for us to be aware of is that the real reason for the change of colonial strategy was that the colonial powers were determined to hold on to the considerable wealth that they received from the economic looting of the colonial peoples. They had discovered that it was not necessary to be physically present in order to achieve this looting. All that was needed was to install a caretaker government of prominent locals whom they had co-opted onto their side. This new government would pretend to be a government of the people. Their true role would be to safeguard the possessions and

exploitative structures of the colonial powers and their corporations. (See, for example: Patrick Bond, *The Looting of Africa*.)

This then has been the recent political history of the plunder of Africa by capitalism-imperialism. The consequences for the close to a billion people inhabiting the continent have been horrendous:

- poverty (in spite of the abundant mineral resources and fertile land);
- hardship and conflict that result directly from that plunder. South Africa has belatedly been implicated within this strategy, which was imposed on the other countries of Africa many decades earlier.

The participation by the governments of former colonial countries in the exploitation and oppression of their own people has now become an international phenomenon. It is at once one of the most treacherous and most vicious betrayals in the history of humankind.

CAPITALIST-IMPERIALIST PLUNDER AND OPPRESSION

The majority of the countries of the world live under this curse. While the labour of their people makes the superclass of capitalists ever richer. Their own populations live in unbearable penury and incessant conflict. Their wealth is extracted for the benefit of foreigners. Their governments prop up the system for a share in the spoils. Their thirty pieces of silver!

Take, as an example, just a brief glimpse at the case of Ecuador, as revealed in John Perkins's book *Confessions of an Economic Hitman*. Huge oilfields were discovered there and should have provided a boost to the economy of that country and relief from poverty for its people. This is what happened instead:

"Ecuador is in far worse shape today than she was before we (agents of the USA) introduced her to the miracles of modern economics,

banking, and engineering. Since 1970, during this period known euphemistically as the Oil Boom, the official poverty level grew from 50 to 70 percent, under- or unemployment increased from 15 to 70 percent, and public debt increased from \$240 million to \$16 billion. Meanwhile, the share of national resources allocated to the poorest segments of the population declined from 20 to 6 percent.

"Unfortunately, Ecuador is not the exception. Nearly every country we have brought under the global empire's umbrella has suffered a similar fate. Third World debt has grown to more than \$2,5 trillion, and the cost of servicing it – over \$375 billion per year as of 2004 – is more than all third world spending on health and education, and twenty times what developing countries receive annually in foreign aid. Over half the people in the world survive on less than two dollars per day, which is roughly the same amount they received in the early 1970s." (*Confessions*, page xviii)

More recently and nearer home we read of the experience of Madagascar. An article in the *Mail & Guardian* of 22 – 28 January 2010 tells of multinational companies investing in mineral deposit extraction in Madagascar. The Australian company Rio Tinto had invested more than \$800 million in the development of a titanium oxide mine; the French oil company Total was investing in a tar sands project (for oil production) and several oil companies had begun exploration for oil off the coast. These economic activities had already brought about an annual growth rate of 7%. However, more than 70% of the people of Madagascar live on less than a dollar a day. (That means that a family of five lives on less than \$160 (approximately R1 300) a month.)

Is there anyone who doubts that this is the real nature of our own "liberation" in 1994? If there are any such people who cannot see that our state – including parliament, provincial and local government and

public and private institutions – is nothing more than an agency that runs South Africa for the benefit of the international class of imperialist exploiters and the small class of local (mainly “white”) capitalists, then consider the following facts:

- About 85% of our land is still owned by the “white” settler class;
- About 95% of the companies listed on the Stock Exchange are owned by that class;
- Only a small minority of wealthy South Africans have access to quality education, quality residential areas and housing, quality health care, physical safety and security, food security, in fact, all the urgent, basic needs of life.
- Unemployment and under-employment increase year on year as more than one and a half million new job seekers annually enter the job market and very few new jobs are available.
- The difference between the income of the (very small) wealthiest section of our population and the (very large) poorest section is the largest in the world.
- The huge salaries paid to top business executives, top government officials, the obscenely rich BEE stockholders, and the considerable accumulations of corrupt managers who have access to public funds – all these vast incomes come at the expense of and out of the toil of the poor. The more the fat cats put into their pockets the less there is for everyone else.
- It is now sixteen years since the new “democratic” parliament came into “power” and year after year there are promises of fundamental change and year after year, nothing happens. In fact, things get worse! (For example, the number of informal settlements (slums?) has increased from 300 in 2005 to 2 600 in 2009.)

By now we should feel deeply insulted and despised if we have any more State of the Nations addresses, national budget speeches, or medium term expenditure presentations that make huge promises. We should know by now (if we do not deserve to be treated like

idiots!) that the people who make these promises know, even as they speak the words, that they have no intention whatsoever of carrying out any of the projects. These promises are particularly obscene if one bears in mind what a heavy burden of misery millions of people suffer under. Surely false promises that give them futile hope are a supreme insult!

Under capitalism-imperialism, there can never be any dispensation other than a huge rich-poor division of the population. For heaven's sake: this is what the system is all about: the endless labour of the many pour boundless wealth into the pockets of the few. Once again, we say; if you are not prepared to take our word for it, if you have so much instinctive faith in your leaders, then look at the world around you. And the worst suffering of all is on our very continent!

If you will not be convinced for your own sake, please be convinced for the sake of your children!

2. ANC: LEFTIST POSTURING?

The ANC recently made a number of public statements which left the impression that it might have taken a leftist turn. Its stormy young petrel, Julius Malema, recently said that certain sections of the economy have to be nationalised, namely the mines and the South African Reserve Bank. The President subsequently claimed that the statements made were not ANC policy, but he also maintained that what Malema said was open for debate. Is this a genuine turn to the left on the part of the ANC, or is this merely an exercise in deception while South Africa remains firmly entrenched in the capitalist system?

COMMITTED TO THE SYSTEM

One needs to bear in mind that many ANC members serve on the boards of mining companies. They have been co-opted in order to give the exploitation of mine workers some credibility, under the deception that South Africa's mining wealth is being re-distributed. It is highly unlikely that such well-paid mining directors would suddenly become altruistic (or socialistic) and allow the mines to be nationalised since that would cause them to lose their lucrative positions when the workers take control.

Furthermore, the nationalisation of the mines – or any other sector of the South African economy, for that matter – cannot take place while the capitalist mode of production is firmly established – as is the case in South Africa. The South African constitution, which was negotiated in the run-up to the “democratic” elections of 1994, firmly entrenches the capitalist system and allows foreign investors complete freedom to exploit workers and to take their profits back home to the First-World countries. It does not allow for any nationalisation.

President Zuma has in fact, on many occasions confirmed the fact that that nationalisation would amount to a breaking of the law. For example, on his recent state visit to the United Kingdom (in early March 2010) he claimed that, “there is no law that authorises the South African government to nationalise mines or mineral resources”. (*Cape Argus*, 5 March 2010) He assured the British investors that nationalisation is not government policy at all and that nothing has changed in this regard. At a banquet, Zuma even pleaded for British Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the light of South Africa's policy stability and predictability.

YOUTH WILL BE YOUTH

On the first day of the three-day visit, Zuma initially defended the ANC Youth League for starting the debate on nationalisation. But he repeatedly emphasised that the South African government is totally against nationalisation and in favour of capitalist, free market, policies.

He says, somewhat patronisingly: “It's not a time bomb. It is not a new element. The Youth League has been like this all the time. Some of them are now people who are respected worldwide. At some stage, they were like Julius. Take nationalisation, for example. The Youth League feels: ‘Let's debate it.’ It's not anarchy; it's something they feel strongly about. We are going to sit down and debate it. There's going to be a serious debate. You can't say the youth must not raise and debate issues. The ANC became militant because of the youth. We engage Malema properly to help him but people want us to engage him publicly.” (*Sunday Times*, 21 February 2010)

THE GOOSE THAT LAYS THE GOLDEN EGG: DON'T KILL IT

The nationalization of the mines in SA requires a more robust debate, according to Kuseni Dlamini (*Sunday Times* 26 July 2009); this debate needs to look at the kind of economic system in which nationalization operates and whether nationalization of the mines will be able to solve the problems of poverty. Another question is: Then what would be the most suitable economic system for SA in the context of rampant globalization?

It is, therefore, important to acknowledge the contribution of the mining sector towards the SA economy:

- The mining sector makes an accumulated contribution of 17% towards the GDP.

- It generates 31 % of foreign exchange via the export of primary mining merchandise (raw materials).
- In total, it accounts for more than 50% of foreign exchange by means of secondary (manufactured goods).
- It employs half a million workers directly and another half a million people indirectly, i.e. a total of 1 million jobs and a total of 10 million relatives relying on the income of mine workers.
- The mining industry also attracts foreign direct investment that will go a long way to reduce South Africa's growing trade deficit.

The question is; how could the mining sector be leveraged to address the problem of poverty, unemployment, poor service delivery, and climate change, health, education, and water efficiency? Will it be possible for the proceeds of the country's mineral resources to be shared much more widely, i.e. among the poverty-stricken masses? The answer is in the negative as the basis of capitalism is to exclude the vast majority from making a decent living and to provide maximum profits for shareholders.

The same basic contradiction holds true for Bill Gates' "creative capitalism", which seeks to empower poor stakeholders based on the idea that companies are unable to function in the context of abject poverty. This is an exercise in deception as it negates the very foundation of capitalism.

The South African Communist Party (SACP) in the person of Jeremy Cronin said that the kind of nationalization envisaged should be spelt out and an examination made of whose class interest it would serve. He claims that the state would not only formally and legally own the mines, but that it would be democratised and controlled by the people. This would then be in line with the context in which the Freedom Charter was written.

The SACP suggests that legislation can be introduced that can be used as leverage for developmental benefit. (That is, some of the profits of the mining sector would be given for development.) You need therefore, not nationalise the mines. The SACP further argues in favour of a "shared multi-class, strategic, and patriotic convergence". This is similar to Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) that is supposed to create a "trickle-down" effect. It, however, only serves to build a "black" middle class, which acts as a buffer against any political opposition on the part of the oppressed people.

It now appears as if both the ANC and the SACP are in favour of change from "white" to "black" management of the economy, in particular the mining sector. This, however, will mean that it will be "business as usual" under "new management".

The SACP itself admits that not every promotion of "black-owned" capital advances "national liberation". It will in fact swell the ranks of the already newly created bloated middle class.

HOW SINCERE IS THE DEBATE?

With corruption rife within most government departments, it seems unlikely that this debate could lead to anything positive for the ailing majority of the population. One only needs to look at some of Malema's enrichment through corruption and profiteering to be able to unmask the deception that goes on among officials.

- He benefits handsomely from state tenders,
- His lifestyle is bankrolled by lucrative government contracts to his companies.
- One of his small engineering firms profited from more than R130 million worth of tenders in two years.

- His lavish lifestyle is in the form of luxury homes, Brand Name clothing and watches, expensive whisky and champagne, and he also has a fleet of luxury cars. (*Sunday Times* 21 February 2010)

The suffering of the majority of the population will increase while officials lead them to believe that they are debating what will be of advantage for them.

NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE

There has been much discussion in the ranks of the ANC and government of a plan to introduce a National Health Insurance scheme (NHI). There is no doubt that the Public Health Care System (PHCS) is in dire need of a complete overhaul as it lacks efficiency in many of its departments. It requires, among other things, well-trained personnel at every level to maintain its integrity. It also requires sufficient infrastructure and advanced medical equipment. It is, in fact, grossly under-resourced.

THE AILING HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

Over the past fifteen years, we have seen the health system in the country decline into:

- Overburdened hospitals and clinics with multiple problems such as funding, staffing and equipment.
- The inability to treat people with illnesses and diseases that could have been prevented or treated locally by qualified health workers.
- The inability to conduct training in hospitals (as happened before) as these institutions are now run-down and in a state of disrepair.
- The incentive to doctors to leave the country because of the shabby treatment of health workers and the shabby state of the health sector.

As long as there is poverty and inequality, providing proper health care is impossible. Proper health care will only be possible if there are

proper social standards, such as, proper sanitation, clean drinking water, and good housing.

In order to achieve some degree of equity in South Africa, there will have to be a massive increase in annual expenditure on public health, from the current 8% to 16% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This would push South Africa right up to the levels of the United States of America (15% of GDP). South Africa would only be able to achieve this level of investment if the public and private health care systems pooled their resources. Is this possible, in the light of the government's policy to privatise public health care and in the light of the aggressive profit motive of the private health industry?

The obvious major flaws revolve around basic problems like:

- Where would the funds come from?
- Would the private sector become part of a system without huge profits?
- Would medical aid schemes plough their premiums into a profitless NHI?

HIV/AIDS AND "FREE MARKET" DISTORTIONS

Further anomalies that must be borne in mind are:

- a big chunk of the health budget is spent on fighting the HIV/Aids pandemic and
- the "free market" leads to distortions in the health care system and causes it to become dysfunctional.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEFICIENCIES

Other factors that have a major impact on the health crisis in South Africa include socio-economic determinants, such as, poor nutrition, poor sanitation, inadequate housing, dysfunctional education, massive unemployment, rampant poverty and so on. These

fundamental causes of the serious flaws of the health care system are not even part of the transformation equation as the NHI merely hopes to address problems experienced by the PHCS. And yet, if the basic social problems are not addressed, the NHI will be an exercise in futility, throwing billions of rands down a deep, dark hole without any real gains.

Underlying this whole debate, is the central fact that capitalism in all its neo-colonies does not allow any free social services, such as education, health care, housing, etc. These services are not provided by the state but are subjected to the market mechanism, which means, in practice, that big multi-national companies render these services and make six times more profit than in their own (First-World) countries.

MORE GRAVY FOR CORRUPT OFFICIALS?

It would be interesting to predict what is likely to happen to the current public health care system once it is converted into the NHI. Would the PHCS improve conditions, or will the entire South African population of 50 million be taken for a ride and become subjected to a much worse system, while each working person pays a few hundred rand per month and is ripped off in the process? Will the NHI simply be another (health) tax that will disappear into the pockets of corrupt officials of the health department and other spheres of government? Will government's fiscal policy lead to a reduction in the health budget and even less money being available to run big hospitals, such as, Tygerberg, Groote Schuur, Livingstone, etc.? Is this possible whilst government is pushing towards the privatisation of public health care, which is presently gaining momentum?

The answers to the above questions could mean that the South African population would be paying a health tax in addition to their current income tax contributions – **without any real benefits.**

CAPACITY

It should also be borne in mind that the global recession – which more and more seems to be a recurring crisis in the capitalist system – is further compromising – and will continue to compromise – the ability of the South African government to establish proper standards of efficiency in the provision of public health care. But a major concern is whether the government has the capacity to deliver primary health care of a suitable level.

THE HEAVY HAND OF FISCAL RESTRAINT

Underlying both issues – nationalisation as well as the NHI – is the pressure imposed on the South African state (and most other "developing" states) by the agencies of capitalism (the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and so on) to reduce expenditure on vital social services (education, health, housing, etc.) in order to reduce the taxation on companies and to pay the interest on – as well as capital amounts of – foreign debt. The South African government in 1996 instituted this policy of fiscal restraint in the form of the Gear policy. This led, among other things, to the annual reduction in the health budget, which led especially to provincial hospitals receiving less money, under the pretext that the savings made in this way would be spent on community health centres (day hospitals, public health care clinics in the "townships") to "take health care to the people".

The result of the above-mentioned has been that public health care actually became inaccessible to the vast majority. At the same time – also in accordance with pressure applied by the agencies of capitalism (under the terms of the 'Washington Consensus') – the government continues to push towards the privatisation of health care facilities. Private hospitals are mushrooming.

CONCLUSION

The ANC thus creates the impression that it has taken a leftist turn, while the reality is that South Africa remains firmly entrenched in the grip of capitalism-imperialism. Our conclusion is that, far from being a leftist turn, these manoeuvres are intended to deceive and build up support among the poverty-stricken masses. The numerous, frequently violent, service delivery protests of recent months – over 500 in the past year – have damaged the image of the ANC and serve as evidence that a groundswell is busy developing. The ruling party realises this and is trying to create the impression that it is doing something to alleviate the plight of the poor. For the poor the danger is that their minds will be put at ease so that a fresh round of investment and super exploitation can further ravage their wretched lives.

3. POVERTY IN AFRICA

According to the World Bank, poverty is defined as having to survive on \$US1 a day or less per person. Although it is often defined in these absolute terms, poverty is not only a question of low or no incomes, but can also be relative, and comprise a lack of access to education, health, and other essential services, or what is called the *basic needs dimension*. (This is according to Jonathan Hobbs, Environmental Policy Advisor, UK Dept for International Development.) He further explains that poverty could also be a lack of self-respect and dignity that poor people experience, or the *social exclusion dimension*. Or, it could be the vulnerability or the likelihood of falling into poverty, insecurity, and a relative exposure to sudden shocks such as drought or floods. From an environmental perspective, he reminds us that it is important to appreciate that the poor suffer disproportionately from environmental degradation.

Poverty in Africa is the sole cause of hunger, disease, Aids, and squalor. It is well known that the colonisation of African countries by European powers, which forced the continent to be largely dependent on these European super powers, was the origin of this devastating poverty. However, decades after “independence”, African countries continue to be plagued by the legacies of colonialism, namely, dependency and the crippling effects of poverty. In fact, recent studies indicate that the gap between rich and poor has widened (particularly in South Africa).

Along with Brazil, South Africa has become one of the most unequal societies in the world. The Gini Coefficient index shows the level of income inequality. A value of 1 reflects complete inequality, while a value of 0 reflects complete equality. A value of 0.5 is “unacceptably high”. According to figures based on Statistics South Africa’s income and expenditure survey (2005/06), South Africa’s Gini Coefficient index currently stands at 0.679! One only needs to consider the often-immense differences between high wage earners and workers’ salaries in South Africa: According to the 2008 Bargaining Indicators report released by the Labour Research Service, CEOs of large companies on average earn 298 times more than an ordinary worker. In other words, it would take that low waged worker more than 6 lifetimes to earn what a CEO earns in one year in South Africa. The oppressive, exploitative relationship that needs to exist in order for this to occur should be considered here – the CEO can only earn as much if the ordinary worker earns as little.

CONSEQUENCES OF POVERTY IN SOUTH AFRICA

The socio-economic condition of SA is characterised by two broken, irreconcilable, twisted, and relentlessly conflicted worlds that exist within one horrifyingly schizophrenic space. Peter Kagwanja (www.allAfrica.com) aptly distinguishes these “two different

countries", where the first country "visibly white and wealthy, signifies South Africa's dramatic successes in pulling back from racism, violence and human rights abuses of the apartheid era to political stability anchored on a liberal constitution, relatively impartial courts, faster economic growth than under apartheid, and inflow of foreign investment". He continues to describe the second "country" as manifestly black and impoverished, and characterised by economic woes, widespread poverty, unemployment, huge inequalities, violent crime, and anger.

The failure of the ANC government to close the gap between these "two different worlds" is reflected in a myriad of consequences. One glaring consequence is the spate of xenophobic attacks that hacked its way onto the pages of our history in the recent past. Largely unfounded claims in defence of hate attacks on (African) foreign nationals were that they were responsible for spiralling crime and 'stealing' jobs and houses. Official statistics do not seem to support these claims. However, the inhumane and cruel attacks on fellow Africans were indeed propelled by some blinding fury. A fury seeded in the daily need to compete for scarce resources in order to survive and face another bleak day. A fury fuelled by a sense of frustration and helplessness that is so completely dehumanising, it easily lurches into the insanity of misplaced rage, infecting the impoverished consciousness with a terrifying quickness. Sadly, the story of the most vulnerable turning on one another while the civilised watch on in shock and horror, is as old as the hills. Here a sense of what Tochukwu Asiegbu (www.allAfrica.com) expressed as the *worst form of poverty*, 'the poverty of the mind', is understood. He further reflects that poverty "can come in different ways", and that not only is Africa afflicted by this worst form of poverty, but Africa suffers from *all* forms of poverty.

A few quick facts highlight this:

- 315 million people – **one in two of people in Sub Saharan Africa** survive on less than one dollar per day.
- Worldwide over 1.2 billion people live in abject poverty. Half this figure comes out of the **population of sub-Saharan Africa**.
- Roughly 45% of South Africa's 47 million people, vastly 'black', are impoverished and unemployment stands at 40%.
- 184 million people – **33% of the African population** – suffer from **malnutrition**.
- During the 1990s, the average income per capita **decreased in 20 African countries**.
- Less than 50% of Africa's population has **access to hospitals or doctors**.
- HIV/Aids is now the most common cause of death in Africa.
- In 2000, **300 million Africans** did not have access to safe water.
- The average life expectancy in Africa is **41 years**.
- Only **57% of African children are enrolled in primary education**, and only one of three children complete school.
- **One in six children dies before the age of 5**. This number is 25 times higher in sub-Saharan Africa than in the OECD countries.
- Children account for half of all **civilian casualties in wars** in Africa.
- The African continent **lost more than 5,3 million hectares of forest** during the decade of the 1990s.
- Less than one person out of five has electricity. **Out of 1 000 inhabitants 15 have a telephone line**, and 7,8 out of 1 000 people surf on the Internet.

Source: www.food4africa.org

The irony of this hell is not lost on the fact that Africa possesses some of the most abundant natural resources and mineral-rich land on the planet. Consider the fact that Botswana, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and South Africa together **produce 50% of the world's diamonds**, and Ghana, South Africa and Zimbabwe together **produce nearly 50% of the world's gold**, and countries like Algeria, Egypt, Libya, and especially Nigeria have major

petroleum & natural gas reserves. Yet, Africa is home to 32 of the world's 38 'Highly Indebted Poor Countries'.

WHY IS AFRICA DYING OF POVERTY?

Status Quo

Why does the downward spiral continue and why do colonialism's most devastating legacies continue to ravage the continent decades after many African states have gained "independence"? One of the most obvious reasons is the large-scale corruption and sense of entitlement plaguing most African nations. Asiegbu highlights that "the kind of leaders that most African countries produced after independence did not help matters, as they were mainly interested in personal aggrandizement rather than being sensitive to the needs of their people". Yet, a greater, more organized, global force is at play that no doubt exploits and rewards the greed of these African elite. Neo-colonialism has swiftly replaced the colonial white elephant. As Kwame Nkrumah argues, it (neo-colonialism) is simply the process through which the colonizers still maintain economic control of such nations through helping favourable regimes to attain power. And the "Rainbow Nation" has indeed acquired a "favourable regime". This is most evident when one considers the nature of the economic policies adopted since the advent of South Africa's 'democracy'. Structural adjustment policies such as the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (Gear) policy are widely known to have been implemented at the behest of a parasitical First World. For more than a decade, the ANC has pursued the market-friendly GEAR policy adopted in 1996 to attract foreign direct investment and make South Africa a competitive trading nation. However, Gear has "failed to narrow the gap between the rich and the poor parts of Africa's wealthiest economy" (*Business Report*, Feb 3 2010). As mentioned earlier, many dimensions influence the scales of poverty, and proper

housing, access to quality education and health has always been the most powerful agents of change. Yet, the new South African government has consistently failed to provide quality education, health, and housing to the masses. Generations of young South Africans are systematically being dumped down by an education system that only benefits those who can afford the privilege. One figure in the Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) world has even been quoted as saying that, "education is the biggest leveller", but in South Africa, "the education system is a genocidal attack on black children". Beyond this, the government's policy of BEE adopted to "deracialize" the economy and close the gap between whites and poor blacks has "only benefited a small number of politically-connected black South Africans, producing a tiny group of BEE-millionaires". (*Business Report*, Feb 3, 2010).

The African snapshot is reminiscent of a grotesque and expensive piece of art; it shouldn't make any sense, but somewhere just beyond the luminescence of innocence, it does. And alas, to a greater or lesser degree, the design always makes sense to the painter and his patrons. The social activists inspired by the hope of an 'African Renaissance' fight tirelessly and happily with the blunt spears thrown their way in the form of foreign aid and the rest of the bright objects that litter the landscape of civil society. Heads of State look busy and concerned hobbling around the continent on pan-African crutches like NEPAD. The meek middle-class remain content with the incapacity to fathom such collusion and continue to work hard because, we create our own destinies after all. The impoverished remain. And all the while, the architects of Africa and the third world continue to extend glistening hands from afar gloved in local songs of freedom... not to change, but *always* to maintain.

IN A DIFFERENT TIME – Peter Harris (2008)

A TWISTED TALE OF BETRAYAL

The book is mainly about the real-life political careers of four ANC/MK soldiers, the "Delmas Four": Jabu Masina, Ting Ting Masango, Neo Potsane, and Joseph Makhuru. It covers their insurrectionary activities, arrest, torture, trial, conviction, conversion of sentence and eventual release. Peter Harris, one of the two lawyers (the other was Bheki Mlangeni) who represented them throughout, as they fought for recognition that "they are not killers, they are not criminals, and in a different time they would be normal citizens, tells their story. It is the country (South Africa in the '70s and '80s – our insertion) that has criminalised them; it is not their fault." (p 80) (NB: Quoted words are those of the author, unless otherwise stated.)

Since they reject the authority of a criminal court to charge and try them, the men refuse to participate in any way in their trial. They are found guilty of murder and three are sentenced to death and the fourth to life imprisonment. Peter Harris now fights against time to save them. He needs to be able to prove that there are (apartheid) government hit squads violently active inside South Africa as well as beyond its borders and that his clients were soldiers defending their comrades against those bands of assassins. They would claim therefore, the same immunity for their actions as would be granted to members of the police and defence forces.

IN A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

But another reading of the story is unavoidable. The dramatic tale spans the period of the South African changeover from the apartheid regime to the current "democratic" set-up. Quite incidentally and accidentally, but nevertheless revealingly, the book produces a stark exposé of the fundamental character of the regime-change. It enables

us to understand how it came about that the vast majority of South Africans today still suffer intense poverty, hardship and misery in a country that is not so new and not so democratic. What becomes unmistakeably clear is the fact that the negotiations leading up to the change were not conducted between equals or with honest intentions. It was essentially a horse-deal of convenience struck between masters and servants, bosses and underlings.

BELETED ADOPTION OF THE "WINDS OF CHANGE" PARADIGM

Thirty years have passed since the "winds of change" policy had begun to transform the African landscape into a continent of neo-colonial/neo-liberal political states from the late '50s onwards. These countries have experienced the continuation of imperialist exploitation and are today wastelands filled with poverty-stricken and violence-and conflict-ridden populations.

Now, from the South African viewpoint, those intervening years had clearly proven the success (for the exploiters) of the new dispensation. The rulers of South Africa now finally also took that road.

And today, for us, sixteen years later the proof of the fraudulence of the "deal" struck in 1994 is equally clear. South Africa today is the sickening scene of huge and worsening inequality. There is a minority of very wealthy people (still mainly "whites", but with a smattering of "blacks" – many of them former "struggle heroes" and "freedom fighters") and millions upon millions of desperately poor people. Unfortunately, the ANC leadership, who claimed to be representing the majority of the people in the negotiations that led up to "transformation" had not learnt the lessons of the intervening thirty years – or, maybe, they just did not care!

ANTI-HERO

The anti-hero of the story is Dirk Coetzee. He comes into the narrative via Almond Nofomela. Dirk Coetzee was the commander of one of the South African Police Force hit squads of which Almond Nofomela was a member. Nofomela has been abandoned by his new commander, Eugene de Kock, after being found guilty of killing a "white landowner". He is due to hang soon and in his desperation to save his life, he decides to confess all his vicious activities. This leads to Coetzee also deciding to make a full confession. Independently conveyed, the accounts by the two men corroborate each other and consequently underline their authenticity.

Steve Katzew (a fellow lawyer) says; "Pete, this guy, the commander Dirk Coetzee, is chilling, a complete killer and, you know what, Nofomela loves this guy. There is a real bond there. I'm telling you, these guys come from a different place. Nofomela's the real thing. He is scary. This is not a concocted story; there are too many names and places. He gave me details about the murders of people I've never even heard of." (p 232)

"Captain Dirk Coetzee, commander of a police death squad, has told his story and revealed his involvement in a trail of murder, bombing, sabotage, and assault. He provides corroboration on important aspects of Nofomela's claims." (239)

Later, another squad member, David Tshikalanga, also breaks cover. His version of events bears out the two already given.

IN THE FLOOD OF BLOODSHED, TALKS ABOUT TALKS

At about the same time, there is a huge gathering of 80 000 people in the FNB stadium in Johannesburg to welcome the recently released Robben Island prisoners, among them Walter Sisulu. Nelson Mandela remained incarcerated.

"At the same time, there is no denying that a process has begun. Once the ANC leadership is released from Robben Island and returns from exile, there will be negotiations. Talks about talks. I've heard that already there've been meetings at a leadership level, but for the moment this is speculation by the hopeful." (266)

But at the same time as these "hopeful" developments, there is no end to the violence. This widespread carnage was obviously known to and agreed to by the Minister of Defence, Magnus Malan, the Minister of Law and Order, Adrian Vlok, and, in particular, the President, FW de Klerk. The mayhem and murder seem, in fact, to be escalating:

"Apart from the revelations of Coetzee, Nofomela et al, police inquiries have also uncovered evidence of hit squad activity which de Klerk can no longer ignore." (262)

Harris is sure that the field of carnage has, in fact, been extended.

"And always at the back of our minds is the escalating conflict between Inkatha and ANC-aligned organisations in KwaZulu-Natal where the daily death toll is excessive. There are massacres of innocent villagers and township dwellers by unknown bands of men armed with guns and pangas. We suspect that these attacks are fuelled by what the press term a 'Third Force'. To me this simply means the police or right-wing elements in the police. But, again, I cannot prove it." (266)

The revulsion for the state-induced chaos in the country is clear in the ANC's demands: "The ANC has set out its preconditions for negotiations, namely the release of all political prisoners, the lifting of bans on restricted organisations and individuals, the ending of the state of emergency, the withdrawal of the troops from the townships, and an end to political executions." (235) The question is whether

these demands were made from a position of strength, or whether they were treated with contempt.

THE COVER-UP

In the midst of this genocidal onslaught, De Klerk announces that the ANC, PAC, SACP, Umkhonto we Sizwe and the Black Consciousness movements as well as 30 other banned organisations were now unbanned.

And then, eventually, Mandela is also released: "But I am deeply relieved that Mandela, the icon, is finally free and that whatever may befall us, the process is now close to irreversible. That man cannot be put back in prison, the country would burn." (267)

But the sad thing is that the country was already burning!

De Klerk appoints a judicial commission under Mr Justice Louis Harms to investigate the evidence of Dirk Coetzee, Almond Nofomela and David Tshikalanga. Harris and Mlangeni are optimistic:

"Harms does not share the shocking reputation of some right-wing judges who can always be relied on to do the State's bidding. This, coupled with President de Klerk's promise that the commission will 'cut to the bone' to reach the truth about the alleged death squads, raises our hopes that, finally, here is someone who will take no nonsense and who will conduct a proper and fair enquiry."

But the hopes are dashed when Judge Harms turns out to be extremely biased against Coetzee at the hearing in London. He finds no evidence of government agency involvement. This is the official outcome of the commission.

De Klerk's cover-up extends to the report of a similar investigation that had been made by McNally and Conradie. In spite of persistent requests, De Klerk at no stage releases the findings of this report.

"In late November 1989, McNally hands his report to President de Klerk. We wait for it to be made public. The government remains silent under intense international pressure. Even the normally loyal Afrikaans press supports the call for a judicial commission of inquiry as more rumours of hit squads operating within the security forces are voiced." (248)

De Klerk keeps Vlok and Malan at the head of Law and Order and Defence.

CONFIRMATION OF GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT

Then Brigadier Floris Mostert conducts an investigation into the death of David Webster. He finds that the hit squads had a definite political bias.

"Ferdie Barnard tells Brigadier Mostert that he is 'a member of a secret organisation committed to a strategy of violently intimidating the radical left'. Mostert soon establishes that Barnard had been in contact with Donald Acheson on at least two occasions before Anton Lubowski was killed. Furthermore, he suspects that there is a link between Barnard and military intelligence.

STATE INSTRUMENTS OF MURDER

"We are taken by surprise by these revelations, having thought that the Vlakplaas squad, which we know is still operating (January 1990 – our insertion), was responsible for David Webster and Anton's death. We have not been aware of the existence of a second organisation or squad, potentially linked to the defence force and mandated to eliminate internal opponents of the government. Although we knew that the special forces of the defence force were carrying out destabilising raids and killings in Angola, Mozambique, Botswana, and Lesotho, we've never considered that they might be

assassinating people inside the country. We thought that grisly function fell to the police or the right wing. We were wrong." (263)

In early February 1990, Brigadier Floris Mostert reveals something else in a further court affidavit. 'I established that the aforesaid secret organisation was responsible for different incidents of murder, arson, bomb explosions, assaults, and intimidation. From questioning Ferdi Barnard and Calla Botha, I established that the aforementioned secret organisation was actually a unit of the South African Defence Force that was known as the Civil Cooperation Bureau (CCB).(264)

THE GRISLY TRUTH ABOUT THE BIRTH OF THE "NEW" SOUTH AFRICA

The evidence is now quite conclusive that, even while talks were taking place to effect a change in government in South Africa, government forces, clearly with the knowledge and consent of the top leadership, were running amok.

De Klerk was, thus, by no means the "man of integrity" that Nelson Mandela later made him out to be – and Mandela knew this. While this blatantly murderous assault on the members of the liberatory movements was to be expected of a De Klerk, being, as he was, the leader of a viciously oppressive and exploitative ruling class, what is very surprising was that the leadership of the liberatory movements took no action to register their extreme revulsion for the massacre of cadres which the ruling class was perpetrating. The talks went ahead! Was it possible that the ANC leadership was threatened that, unless they agreed to transformation on the terms that the De Klerk team demanded, the killings would continue...and continue... and continue? Did they obediently comply?

Rank and File Mistrust

Jabu Masina shows some glimmer of understanding when he says: "Personally I don't trust this government. I mean, how can they

negotiate in good faith with people they have called terrorists and communists? They hate us. Do you think that they will just give it away? It's not going to happen. Look at what happened in Sebokeng two months ago when the police opened fire on an ANC march, killing twelve of our people. That was after Mandela and our leadership had been released. It's a joke, these talks, and people are still dying.

"His voice has risen in anger. I share his scepticism. At the same time as the ANC is being allowed to organise and exiles are returning, the security forces have become tougher and the violence intensifies. With each passing month, there are massacres by masked gunmen and drive-by shootings outside factories and at bus stops. In fact, more people are dying now. One the one hand there is fear and tension, on the other elation as people catch the faint scent of freedom for the first time." (298)

Jabu Masina, Neo Potsane, and Ting Ting Masango are reluctant to apply for indemnity until they have information from the ANC on the basis on which the agreement (the negotiated settlement) between the government and the ANC was reached. "We started this with honour, Pete, and we are going to end it with honour. There is no reason for us to make compromises now that we did not make when we were in a weak position and at their mercy. So why change now when we are in a much stronger position?"

The leadership went ahead with their surrender to the neo-colonial regime.

The Final Humiliation!

It is an extreme tragedy for the sincere and committed members of the liberatory movements – those who lost their lives as well as those who survived – that one by one the perpetrators of the pre- and post-1994 lethal onslaught on them were granted amnesty by the Truth

and Reconciliation Commission. There was to be no South African War Crimes Tribunal!

"Dirk Coetzee was granted amnesty at the TRC in August 1997 and now (2008) works in a private security firm in the Johannesburg area." (p 320)

The final tragedy is what we are all suffering today: an extended stay for exploitation and oppression.

CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS - 2010

HEALTH

Conference notes that:

- 1) Despite accepting policy documents like the Batho Pele Principles of health care delivery and a Charter of Patient Rights, the reality is that there has been a decline in the health status of the majority of people. In addition, most people suffer appalling health outcomes due to infrastructural deficiencies, insufficient hospital beds, insufficient health personnel, and huge budget deficits.
- 2) There is an exceedingly high incidence and prevalence of largely preventable diseases in South Africa.
- 3) There is a shocking state of health indicators for the population like Life Expectancy at Birth that is 50 years for males and 53 years for females, the Probability of Dying under the age of 5 years of 69/1000 and an Infant Mortality Rate of 56/1000.

Conference declares that:

- 1) The South African government's claim that it is committed to health care as a right for all South Africans is contradicted by the

fact that healthcare is a commodity to be purchased by many and it is plagued by inaccessibility for the majority.

- 2) The National Health Insurance system (NHI) proposed by the government serves only to fool the people into believing that the government cares about the health of the nation and it will not be able to solve the crisis in the health system.

Conference therefore resolves to:

- 1) Mobilise communities to become involved in protests around demands for a free and equitable healthcare system.
- 2) Build a movement that will strive to put in place the only economic and political system that can bring those demands to fruition.

NATIONALISATION

Conference notes that:

1. The ANC Youth Wing leader's call for the nationalisation of the mines in South Africa is in direct opposition to the ANC's policy of wholesale privatisation of state-owned assets.
2. This call for nationalisation has nothing to do with employing the proceeds of the mines for the benefit of the people but more with opportunities for the black elite to further increase their already bloated bank balances.
3. The recent bailout of the failed American banking system by the American government is nothing but a form of nationalisation.

Conference declares that:

1. The idea of nationalisation of business and industry is an accepted practice by capitalism-imperialism.

2. Nationalisation is one of the secrets of the independence trick which capitalism-imperialism has pulled in many African countries.

Conference therefore resolves to:

1. Inform the people that the nationalisation of the mines and any other industry in South Africa is not linked to the socialisation of the economy and therefore has nothing to do with the beneficiation of the workers who create the wealth that is derived from them.
2. Create the awareness that Socialism is the only political and economic system that guarantees that the value created by workers is enjoyed by the workers and their families.

POLITICS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Conference notes that:

1. Human activity has interfered with the processes and cycles of the natural environment to the extent that the cumulative result is a global environmental crisis. Some of the data supporting this are the following:
 - a) Forty percent of deaths can be attributed to some form of pollution.
 - b) The gradual warming up of the earth because of the uninterrupted accumulation of greenhouse gases has resulted in environmental changes such as changes to the climate which have had disastrous local and regional results. The Arctic ice sheet has shrunk considerably putting at risk lands in the Polar Regions and rising ocean levels are threatening island nations.

- c) Worldwide deforestation is destroying what is considered to be the world's single most important carbon dioxide filter. Forty percent of the world's oxygen comes from the Amazonian rain forests which, in Brazil, is being destroyed at the rate of 10 000 square miles of forest per year by loggers, cash crop farmers and ranchers.
 - d) Many potentially renewable resources like clean air and water, vegetation, soil and fish stocks are being damaged and used up faster than they can renew themselves. Overfishing of the global marine fish stock has resulted in nine of the world's 17 major fishing grounds being in decline with some having become fishing graveyards.
 - e) Spillage of crude oil at sea by ships that grow larger in number and size by the day to feed the ever hungry machines of industry, destroy on a large scale both marine and land fauna and flora.
2. Waste products of industrialised countries far outstrip the quantities produced by developing countries and the flagrant disregard for control measures put in place to manage the disposal of these waste products, many of which are hazardous and toxic, results in poisoning natural resources such as agricultural soil, rivers, lakes and oceans.
 3. Protocols which have been adopted by international meetings such as the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit) which aim to "*prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the earth's climate system*" are opposed by, for example, the United States. Such countries refuse to abide by greenhouse gas emission regimes because these would reduce the profits of their large industrial corporations. Instead these giant corporations scupper efforts to deal with climate change by influencing and funding advocacy

groups who argue against global warming and climate change. They fraudulently manipulate peer reviewed scientific studies, misleading governments and the global community.

4. The destruction of the world's delicate ecological balance has a distinct class character when one considers the causes and results of environmental damage. Two thirds of the carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere come from a handful of the most developed capitalist countries. But the effect is felt in the poorest of nations elsewhere where climate change has brought severe weather with devastating floods, mudslides and windstorms killing thousands of people. Similarly, crop failures due to climate change-generated droughts further impoverish already suffering poor nations.
5. A country such as Cuba, which is a socialist country, has, by means of central planning, implemented turnaround strategies in order to stop the devastation of its natural environment. It has had to do with less than half its usual oil imports and plans to continue on one third of the original quantity. Alternatives, like the use of bio-mass, mini-hydro and solar energy are permanent parts of its energy production mix. Farmers are replacing pesticides with biological controls and reductions in chemical fertiliser usage continues "to an ultimate goal of phasing out chemicals entirely", while waste recycling is a well organised operation supported by the population. Cuba has been recognised as the "only society with high human development together with a below average ecological footprint."

Conference therefore declares that:

1. The long term impacts of environmental mismanagement threaten the livelihood of the world's ecosystems and as a result, the human populations that depend on them.

2. The drive by capitalist countries whose governments serve a handful of powerful transnational corporations to maximise profits by continuous and untethered development, stands in stark contrast to the aims of planetary survival.
3. Capitalism/Imperialism is incapable of developing a relationship of sustainability with the environment.

Conference therefore resolves to:

1. Educate the youth about the conspicuous consumer world which adds to the destruction of the environment.
2. Organise the people around the question of the unholy alliance between the World Bank and Eskom which will increase the pollution of the atmosphere via the extra coal-fired power stations which are to be built.
3. Make clear to the people the inherent strain between the long term interests of preservation of the environment and the short term interests of ensuring economic survival by the exploitation of natural resources and polluting the environment as well as the wisdom and imperative of maintaining a healthy balance between these extremities.
4. Show the people that such a relationship with the environment can only be achieved in a society where there is common ownership of the means of production and one which has replaced capitalist ownership.
5. Convince the people that such a system is possible in a socialist society which must arise upon the destruction of the capitalist system.

2010 SOCCER WORLD CUP

Conference notes that:

1. FIFA has made it abundantly clear that the authority of the South African government would be subordinate to that of FIFA when it comes to anything to do with the running of the month long Soccer World Cup tournament.
2. The government is an ever-willing partner and is going out of its way to satisfy FIFA's demands.

Conference deplores the fact that:

1. The billions of rand spent by the government to get South Africa ready for the World Cup could have been spent on addressing the legacies of Apartheid and the huge social deficits that exist in the country, like lack of decent housing for people, an ailing health system and a bankrupt education system, which is destroying a generation of children.

Conference declares that:

1. The South African government has become obsessed with the hosting of the 2010 World Cup as if it is a panacea for any of the ills of the country.

Conference therefore resolves to:

1. Inform the people of the waste of money on structures such as the expensive sports stadia that can become white elephants in the future.
2. Inform the people that the commodification of sport, which has become a multi-billion dollar industry, has deprived them of their right to enjoy leisure time through sport.

THE SOCIAL DEFICIT AND THE STRUGGLE FOR SOCIAL EMANCIPATION

Conference observes that:

1. The present social deficit, growing by leaps and bounds, has precipitated a political crisis throughout the country.
2. The growing social deficit is a function of the subsidiary nature of the South African economy.
3. It is caused by the basic failure of the investment process itself, which has been dictated by the World Bank and its sister organisations.
4. It is also a natural consequence of the apartheid debt.
5. Investment in South Africa is a process, which twins joblessness with an inability by the authorities to provide social services.
6. It has led to popular revolts both in the area of industry and in communities in all the provinces of this country.
7. This is a systemic feature, which is also conditioned by the transnational character of a state, which sub-serves the big corporations, creating environmental conditions for them to prosper at home and abroad at the expense of working men, working women, rural masses, and the youth of the land.

Conference finds it to be of critical importance that poor people all over the country and the organisations that support them begin a national dialogue of the poor in order to oppose the social regime imposed upon them by the government of the African National Congress.

Conference further notes that the crisis of the investment process, in its failure to expand the industrial base of our economy and to employ the fiscus for the purpose of enhancing the cultural life of the masses, was caused by conditions currently being under-written by a process in government of perfecting political circumstances that build a

dictatorial state with advancing repressive features especially in the security complex. There is emerging a political system by means of which the national state of impoverishment, social denial, and economic deprivation is maintained.

Conference therefore resolves:

1. To deplore the conditions so cruelly imposed upon the majority of the citizens.
2. To call upon all branches and structures of the Unity Movement to realise that the struggle for emancipation on the social front is at the centre of our fight for liberty.
3. To deploy a key element of its branch work to the task of working among the people, both in the sprawling national economy and in the area of social services, ensuring that an important aspect of our energy is devoted to this pivotal area of national life.
4. To use the intellectual and organisational energy of its members, publicists and organisers in devising strategies on a broad front which positively work to dismantle all the un-democratic elements of the present state, helping the masses to recognise this and building up methods of fighting back which are appropriate both to the general system and to the particular circumstances facing poor people in town and country.
5. To ensure that tools of struggle include helping to build the independent power of the masses, working with key organisations that carry in their numbers decisive detachments of the working people and also to identify political allies and any other formations whose commitment to the working class is unquestionable.
6. To align our programmatic work with the requirement of the working people to consummate their political struggles in the creation of a workers republic as the only form of democracy that will sustain the needs and demands of the mass majority in this country.

THE YOUTH

Conference notes that:

1. Young people today are heirs to a world on the brink of destruction. Chiefly as a result of capitalist-driven greed and rapacity, the environment has been over-exploited by the self-serving interests of an absolute minority of individuals and groups that have little concern for the sustainability of the planet or the welfare of the mass of its inhabitants. In addition, capitalist individualism over many decades has resulted in the fostering and glorifying of values that put individual needs and achievements above the good of society, and that make a virtue of competitiveness over sharing and cooperation. Consequently, the mass of young people across the globe have little prospect of inheriting thriving, people-centred economies and institutions. Unless there is initiated a process of worldwide social transformation, the prospects facing young people are likely to remain bleak with prosperity a likelihood reserved only for the privileged few.
2. It is no exaggeration to say that the long-term future of society and of the planet is at stake and that youth today have no choice but to engage in these critical issues to ensure that it becomes the key agent in securing its future.
3. The support and development structures which should be there for South African youth are sadly inefficient or non-existent.
4. This is reflected in the poor quality of education provided for the majority of South African youth, especially those in the townships and rural areas.
5. Similarly, access to Further and Tertiary Education is limited by:
 - a. the high fees required for admission to those institutions.
 - b. the fact that most young South Africans drop out of the schooling system and do not complete their primary and secondary school education, hence have no hope of reaching these institutions.
 - c. many of those who are lucky enough to pass through the secondary schooling system do not qualify for university entrance.

- d. some of these institutions themselves are not well run and the majority of Further Education and Training (FET) Colleges do not come close to fulfilling their education and training mandate.
- 6. The system of learnership, which replaced the old apprenticeship system, is a failure and very few opportunities are afforded the youth to qualify for any form of training.
- 7. The social services which exist are totally inadequate and many areas in townships and rural communities are totally neglected in this regard. This further impacts on the quality of life of our young people as facilities like libraries, swimming pools and sports, music and art facilities which would cater specifically for this sector are not available.
- 8. The living conditions in the above areas are so poor that they provide no positive stimulation to the youth; instead a life of crime and social deviance beckons.

Conference therefore resolves to:

- 1. Put its energies into fighting the cause of youth – that is, to take up the critical issues that threaten the future of our young people.
- 2. Foster the growth of a youth movement that is focused on taking back its future from those who are threatening to destroy it through capitalist exploitation.
- 3. Foster a new people-centred culture that will replace the current capitalist-inspired value-set that glorifies individualism and competitiveness over the interests and welfare of society.
- 4. Vigorously campaign for immediate reform of the social institutions, both private and public, that are hampering the growth and development of our youth. We say an end to crime, joblessness, disease, educational deprivation and all the other disabilities that are stifling our youth.
- 5. Embrace the South African youth by providing them with the political education which will enable them to identify the real reasons for their unfortunate state of existence.

- 6. Encourage all youth to become active in community organisations that engage in the fight for improved service delivery and the provision of new services such as libraries and sports facilities.
- 7. Encourage all youth to join community organisations (and where these don't exist, establish them) fighting for a sustainable future with respect to issues like water, electricity and the environment.
- 8. Encourage and assist the youth of the NUM to take the lead in creating youth structures that will provide alternative education opportunities to the marginalised youth of this country such as reading clubs, sports clubs, film clubs, etc.

21st CENTURY SOCIALISM IN SOUTH AMERICA

Conference notes that:

- 1. There are encouraging signs that social and political developments in the Latin American countries of Venezuela, in particular, and of Bolivia and Ecuador to a lesser extent, could lead on to the full-scale socialist transformation of society in those countries.
- 2. If 21st century socialism in Latin America is to result in the complete transformation of society along socialist lines, then it will need to move beyond an accommodation with capitalism and aim for the overthrow of finance capital.
- 3. As a result of the changes initiated by the regimes of Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador, a unique opportunity has arisen for *Permanent Revolution*, that is, for the forces of change in society to move the revolution beyond a social-democratic phase to full-blown socialism.
- 4. Hugo Chavez's call for the establishment of a Fifth Socialist International to unite socialists at the international level could lead to a re-unification and resurgence of socialist forces across the world.

5. Despite any intention of the ANC government in South Africa to move towards a post-neoliberal dispensation that might be more pro-people (i.e. the so-called 'developmental state'), the Zuma regime remains firmly committed to a capitalist order.
6. Despite widespread and growing social unrest in South Africa, resulting from the inability of the capitalist (or "national democratic") state to deliver on basic necessities, the government remains committed to:
 - a. Securing the interests of imperialism.
 - b. Serving the class interests of a parasitic domestic (largely emergent) bourgeoisie.
7. Ultimately, the tasks facing the working class movements of the Vanguard Countries as well as South Africa and indeed, the rest of the world, are the same and could arguably be reduced to a single imperative – the overthrow of the capitalist system.
8. The way forward to genuine liberation for all the working class people of the world does not lie along the capitalist road. The laws of motion of capitalism will always ensure social and material instability and crisis, the intensifying exploitation of labour and the concentration of wealth in fewer and fewer hands.

Conference therefore resolves to:

1. Renew its commitment to socialism and the struggle for the overthrow of capitalism.
2. Continue its commitment to a process of Permanent Revolution in terms of which we will seek to drive social change in South Africa beyond capitalist boundaries.
3. Devise a strategy and action plans for engaging the Movement in relevant initiatives to build a working class political consciousness in South Africa and for the total transformation of society.

EDUCATION

Conference notes that:

1. The South African education system is at a very low point in its history. An ever-increasing crisis has led to consistently low attainment in literacy and numeracy tests and alarming matric results.
2. One of the main reasons for this catastrophic state of affairs is the acceptance by the ANC government of the conditionalities recommended by the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), making education a commodity.
3. South Africa's rating as the most unequal society in the world is reflected in the wide gulf between the provision of dismal education for the vast majority of the poor and quality education for a wealthy minority.
4. The access to education for the children of the poor is characterised by an absence of schools, dilapidated physical infrastructure, a lack of transport and nutrition, a lack of support material for learners and educators, a shortage of teachers, overcrowded classrooms, lack of discipline, ineffective teaching as a result of government's adherence to anti-educational practices such as the National Curriculum Statement's Outcomes Based Education (OBE) methodology and a very high dropout rate.
5. Socio-economic conditions in the communities in which schools are situated breed crime, violence and abuse which spill over into classrooms and play areas.

Conference emphatically states that:

Education is an inalienable right.

Conference therefore resolves to:

1. Expose the real reasons for the disgraceful state of education.

9. Campaign in every way possible for compulsory, free and equal quality education for all as demanded in Point 3 of the New Unity Movement's Ten Point Programme.
10. Implore Parent Teacher Associations, Worker Collectives and other Community Organisations to become vigilant and more proactive to ensure that adequate education occurs at schools in their area.

IN MEMORIAM

Sadly, a number of stalwarts of our organisation passed away since the printing of our last Bulletin in September 2009. It is with a deep sense of loss that we pay tribute to the memory of Cdes Richard Canca, Cathy Steenveld, Livingstone Mqotsi, Dawood Parker, Jimmy Hiebner, Marge Hanmer, and Louis Roelf. In addition to these comrades, we remember Dennis Brutus who died on 26/12/09 and with whom many of us had strong fraternal ties. When we mention the names of these stalwarts we feel a sense of deep loss, but then we realise that their memories and the legacies they passed on to us make us stronger and enables us to say, *Aluta Continua*.

A book containing tributes to RO Dudley is now available at R50,00 a copy from Ashraf Ryklief and Bryan Kies. Their e-mail addresses and cell. numbers are as follows:

Ashraf Ryklief at ashrafr@mweb.co.za 074 660 3211

Bryan Kies at Bryan.Kies@uct.ac.za 083 680 5755

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