Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni on Why Decoloniality in the 21st Century?
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SYRIA

Say No to Regime Change

The Syrian Arab Armed Forces preparing to take martyrs to their last resting place
For nearly two years a war has raged in Syria in which many thousands have lost their lives, many more have been injured and maimed, the economy has suffered great losses and the infrastructure of a well-developed country has been devastated. Hunger, poverty and a lack of basic health and educational services now stalk the beautiful land of Syria.

What started as a legitimate struggle for democracy, human rights, the rule of law and constitutional changes has turned into a civil war led by anti-democratic, sectarian groups inspired by a form of militant Islamism. They are fully supported by those “paragons” of democracy, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey.

There is a crying need for a speedy negotiated resolution of the deadly conflict which must include fundamental changes to the constitution as well as the political and economic system.

The direct involvement of the major Western powers, supported by their allies in the region, in fanning the flames of war to bring about the downfall of President Assad and thus achieve an illegal regime change is a recipe for national and regional instability.

The demand that the Syrian government should voluntarily renounce power and cease all anti-rebel military actions is absurd. Any meaningful negotiations must include President Assad.

In an act of further intimidation and aggression, NATO, led by the US administration, has embarked on a plan to deploy Patriot missiles accompanied by 400 US army personnel along the Turkish-Syrian border. It is reported that they will be augmented by the deployment of additional missiles operated by German and Dutch troops.

NATO and its regional allies have long supported a motley collection of disparate opposition groups under the umbrella of the Syrian National Council (SNC). Dissatisfied by the failure of the SNC to impose its hegemony and unify the rebel forces, NATO has, under the watchful and intimidating eye of Qatar, cobbled together the so-called National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces. Already the major Western powers and their allies are according full recognition to the National Coalition. Included in this coalition of war and aggression are heavily armed Al-Qaeda groupings such as the Al Nusra Front. Even though this latter grouping is characterised as terrorist by the US administration it is accorded a leading role in the National Coalition.

As Joseph Kishore points out in an article posted on the World Socialist Website: “The utter cynicism of the US operation is hard to convey. For more than a decade, the central ideological framework of US policy - used to justify war abroad and the assault on democratic rights at home - has been the ‘war on terror.’ Yet the American military and CIA are now in a de facto alliance with Al Qaeda

It is not Syria that constitutes a grave threat to world peace, justice and security. In reality this threat comes from Israel, with Netanyahu’s continued support for more and more illegal settlements on Palestinian land and for the maintenance of the abominable apartheid wall.

It is noteworthy that Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey refuse to take an equally bullish stand against Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory. These and other Middle East countries should call for and implement boycotts and sanctions against Apartheid Israel and companies doing business there. The growing international Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign in support of the Palestinians struggle for self-determination and an independent state would become irresistible if those countries were to support the campaign.

It is not Syria that constitutes a grave threat to world peace, justice and security. In reality this threat comes from Israel, with Netanyahu’s
and international countries commit themselves to putting an end to funding, arming and harboring armed elements. On parallel, armed elements stop their terrorist operations, which will facilitate the return of displaced Syrians to their original residential places safely.

Immediately afterwards, the Armed Forces halt the military operations but preserve the right to respond in case the homeland, citizens and public and private facilities came under any attack.

Second: Finding a mechanism to make sure that all are committed to the aforementioned item, particularly with regard to border control.

Third: The current government immediately starts making intensive contacts with all the spectrums of the Syrian society with all its parties and bodies to conduct open discussion to pave the way for holding a national dialogue conference in which all the forces seeking a solution in Syria take part, whether they are inside or outside the country.

Stage 2:
First: The current government calls for holding a comprehensive national dialogue conference to reach a national pact that adheres to Syria's sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity as well as to rejecting interference in its affairs and discarding terrorism and violence in all its forms. The government's call upon the parties and the spectrums of the society is aimed at setting the criteria for this conference which is to be held later.

As for the pact, it will draw the political future for Syria and propose the constitutional and judicial system and the political and economic features, as it will also include agreement on new laws for the parties, elections and local administration, etc.

Second: The pact will be put to referendum.

Third: An expanded government will be formed to represent the components of Syrian society, which will be assigned with implementing the provisions of the national pact.

Fourth: The new constitution will be put to referendum, and after it is approved the expanded government will adopt the laws agreed on at the dialogue conference according the new constitution, including the elections law. Afterwards, new parliamentary elections are held.

We may put the word ‘if’ as far as everything related to the constitution and laws is concerned because everything will be contingent on reaching agreement regarding the contribution and laws in the dialogue conference, which will be then presented by the government once they are agreed on.

Stage 3:
First: A new government will be formed according to the constitution existing at the time.

Second: A general conference for national reconciliation will be held and a general amnesty will be granted to those detained due to the events while preserving the civil rights of plaintiffs.

Third: Working on infrastructure rehabilitation and reconstruction and giving and compensating those affected by the events.

As for the amnesty, the civil rights of the complainants will be preserved as the state can waive its right but has no right to waive the rights of the plaintiffs.

I believe though that when we have reached that stage, it will be an amnesty granted not only by the state but also by those who have rights. Then we will have practically reached the national reconciliation when everybody would forgive everybody else.

These main features of the political solution as we view it are only titles that need details. The government will be in charge of this issue as it will be tasked with drawing out the details and expanding on these titles so as to later present this vision in the form of an initiative in the coming few days and follow up on all these stages according to the aforementioned items.

These proposals deserve serious consideration by the international community, including the United Nations. It is incumbent on the US, their allies and the Syrian National Coalition to engage President Assad and the Syrian government on these proposals and plan of action.
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Ike Moroe practiced journalism in the mid-1970s, writing for The Friend, and The Voice newspapers. He was banned and banished for 5 years to the magisterial district of Bethlehem, after a long spell of detention under section 6 of the Terrorism Act. He left the country in 1979 and became a political instructor in MK. He worked in the ANC Department of Information and Publicity, writing for Mayibuye, the journal of ANC, and Dawn, the journal of Umkhonto we Sizwe. Ike studied Marxist Leninist Philosophy and Political Economy in Dresden. He completed a Post Graduate Diploma at PDM Wits in 1994. Currently, he is the Special Advisor to the Premier of the FS Province. He is a member of the ANC NEC sub-committee on Political Education and also the FS Province sub-committee on Political Education.

Vusumzi Nobadula holds a BA degree in journalism and media studies from Rhodes University. He has worked as a copy editor for more than 12 years across five newspapers in Johannesburg, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and Pretoria. He has just finished writing his first book *They Killed Their God* about how poor people can succeed in life despite their condition, and is now writing his second book *Ndixolele Ukujinga liso*, a collection of short stories about the lives of extremely brave people he has met.

Professor Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni is the Head of Archie Mafeje Research Institute for the Social Policy (AMRI), Professor in the Department of Development Studies, and founder of Africa Decolonial Research Network.
Mohamed Essa Suliman is an aspiring writer and researcher with a particular interest in communication and social change, social media, citizen media and social movements. He is a news junkie with a penchant for international relations and geopolitics. Most of his writing focuses on the role of social media and ICTs in the advancement and promotion of democracy and good governance. He is presently employed as a project manager and administrator in the education sector. His involvement in projects includes quality assurance, research and development of e-learning materials and the use of technology in teaching and learning.

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Lebogang Rasethaba, Botshelo Motuba and Mbuso Ndlovu are film-makers. They are currently working on a video documentary on the plight of the Western Sahara refugees. The documentary is scheduled to be released to the South African public in early 2013.

Professor Abdi Ismail Samatar is a Professor of Geography at the University of Minnesota, Vice-President of the African Studies Association and Research Fellow at the University of Pretoria, South Africa. He is the author of several books, including An African Miracle, a finalist for the 2000 Herskovits Prize. His research focuses on the relationship between democracy and development in the third world in general and Africa in particular. Other themes in his research include Islam, social capital and ethnicity in the Horn of Africa, and environment and development. He has a PhD from the University of California, Berkeley.
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What Africans must be vigilant against is the trap of ending up normalising and universalising colonality as a natural state of the world. It must be unmasked, resisted and destroyed because it produced a world order that can only be sustained through a combination of violence, deceit, hypocrisy and lies.

By Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni
he fundamental question which has consistently cried out for a response throughout the Global South/Third World as an epistemic site that experienced the ‘darker side’ of modernity is that of how to extricate (ex)-colonised peoples from coloniality. African countries are prominent in this group of nations. Africa has experienced the slave trade, imperialism, colonialism, apartheid, neo-colonialism, neoliberalism (Washington Consensus and Structural Adjustment Programmes), and today globalisation. Taken together, these processes constitute coloniality as a global power structure that sustains asymmetrical power relations between the Euro-American World and the Global South.

Coloniality is a leitmotif of global imperial designs that has been in place for centuries. Decolonisation did not succeed in removing coloniality. Coloniality must not be confused with colonialism. It survived the end of direct colonialism. In ‘postcolonies’ it continues to affect the lives of people, long after direct colonialism and administrative apartheid have been dethroned. What, therefore, needs to be understood is not just the ‘not yet uhuru’ postcolonial experience but the invisible vampirism of technologies of imperialism and colonial matrices of power that continue to exist in the minds, lives, languages, dreams, imaginations, and epistemologies of modern subjects in Africa and the entire global South.

Coloniality as a power structure, an epochal condition, and epistemological design, lies at the centre of the present world order that Ramon Grosfoguel correctly described as a racially hierarchised, imperialistic, capitalist, Euro-American-centric, Christian-centric, hetero-normative, patriarchal, violent and modern world order that emerged since the so-called ‘discovery’ of the ‘New World’ by Christopher Columbus. At the centre of coloniality is race as an organising principle that hierarchised human beings according to notions and binaries of primitive vs. civilised, and developed vs. underdeveloped. What Africans must be vigilant against is the trap of ending up normalising and universalising coloniality as a natural state of the world. It must be unmasked, resisted and destroyed because it produced a world order that can only be sustained through a combination of violence, deceit, hypocrisy and lies. This unmasking and resistance entails decoloniality as a political-cum-epistemological liberatory project.

Decoloniality is born out of a realisation that ours is an asymmetrical world order that is sustained not only by colonial matrices of power but also by pedagogies and epistemologies of equilibrium that continue to procreate alienated Africans who are socialised into hating the Africa that produced them, and liking the Europe and America that rejects them. Schools, colleges, churches and universities in Africa are sites for reproduction of coloniality. We so far do not have African universities. We have universities in Africa. They continue to poison African minds with research methodologies and inculcate knowledges of equilibrium. These are knowledges that do not question methodologies as well as the present asymmetrical world order. In decoloniality research methods and research methodologies are never accepted as neutral but are unmasked as technologies of subjectivation if not surveillance tools that prevent the emergence of another-thinking, another-logic and another-world view. Research methodologies are tools of gate-keeping.

What is even more disturbing is that African children and youth begin a journey of alienation from their African context the very moment they step into the school, church, and university door. They begin the painful path of learning to hate their progenitors as demons, they begin to be taught that all the knowledge they possessed before coming to school was nothing but folk knowledges, barbarism and superstitions that must be quickly be forgotten. They begin to be told that speaking mother-tongue is a sign of being primitive. In some schools direct punishments were inflicted on those who spoke ‘mother-tongue’ within school premises. Preachers, teachers, and lecturers produced by colonially-constructed institutions exist as lost children of coloniality.

Decoloniality is premised on three concepts. The first concept is that of coloniality of power. It helps to investigate how the current ‘global political’ was constructed and constituted into the asymmetrical and modern power structure. It delves deeper into how the world was bifurcated into ‘Zone of Being’ and ‘Zone of Non-Being’ maintained by invisible ‘abyssal lines.’ What needs to be understood is how modernity deposited its fruits of progress, civilisation, modernisation and development to the Euro-American world (Zone of Being) while at the same time imposing the slave trade, imperialism, colonialism and apartheid into the non-Euro-American world (the Zone of Non-Being).

The second concept is that of coloniality of knowledge, which focuses on teasing out epistemological issues, politics of knowledge generation as well as questions of who generates which knowledge, and for what purpose. African Studies frequently neglects to conduct serious investigations into the origins of disciplines, into epistemicles, into how knowledge has been used to assist imperialism and colonialism and into how knowledge has remained Euro-American-centric. Endogenous and indigenous knowledges have been pushed to the margins of society. Africa is today saddled with irrelevant knowledge that disempowers rather than empowers individuals and communities.

The third concept is that of coloniality of being. The starting point
of this perspective is the role played by philosophers like Rene Descartes and the long term implications of his motto ‘Cogito ergo sum’ (I think, therefore, I am) on conceptions of subjectivity. What is at issue here is the pertinent question of how whiteness gained ontological density far above blackness as well as how the notions of ‘I think, therefore I am’ mutated into ‘I conquer, therefore, I am’ and its production of ‘coloniser and colonised’ articulation of subjectivity and being. Coloniality of being is very important because it assists in investigating how African humanity was questioned as well as processes that contributed towards ‘objectification’/‘thingificatio n’/‘commodification’ of Africans. One of the continuing struggles in Africa is focused on resisting objectification.

These three concepts enable a deeper understanding of the construction of current modern world that is today besieged by a plethora of crises. Even non-decolonial thinkers like Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri who produced the celebrated book entitled Empire (2000) acknowledged that ‘the international order that European modernity continually proposed and re-proposed, at least since the Peace of Westphalia, is now in crisis. It has in fact always been in crisis, and this crisis has been one of the motors that have continuously pushed towards Empire.’

The Colombian anthropologist and leading decolonial thinker Arturo Escobar whose well-known work Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World, notes that the current global crisis emanates from the reality of modernity which created ‘modern problems for which there are no modern solutions.’ The crisis of Western civilisation was noticed long ago by one of the early decolonial thinkers, Aime Césaire, who in his Discourse on Colonialism proclaimed that:

A civilization that proves incapable of solving the problems it creates is a decadent civilization. A civilization that chooses to close its eyes to its most crucial problems is a stricken civilization. A civilization that uses its principles of trickery and deceit is a dying civilization.

From the time of Césaire’s indictment, European civilisation has suffered a series of trials and questioning, beginning with decolonial struggles that were premised on rejecting colonialism as a medium of modernity and civilisation. The modern problems ranged widely from those of ecological destruction, climate change, global migration that is provoking new racism and xenophobia, right up to increasing inequalities, deepening poverty and the crisis of Euro-American hegemonic epistemologies.

To fully appreciate the gravity of the current multi-dimensional crisis, we must remember the promises of Euro-American modernity to humanity. In the first place, is the fact that historically modernity promised civilisation that was founded on the Cartesian notion of ‘I think, therefore, sum’ to privilege ‘men’ in masculine gender terms, as the fountain of all knowledge about the world.

The leading Portuguese sociologist and decolonial thinker Boaventura de Sousa Santos clearly articulated how the human space was divided into two zones: ‘Zone of Being’ and ‘Zone of Non-Being.’ Santos provides details of how Western thinking operated as ‘abyssal thinking’ consisting of ‘a system of visible and invisible distinctions, the visible ones being the foundation of the invisible ones.’ Those people like Africans and others who experienced colonisation: their realm was re-constituted by technologies of power and colonial matrices of power into an incomprehensible state of being. The possibility of co-presence or peaceful co-existence of those in the zone of being with those in the zone of non-being was rendered impossible. The end product of all this were colonial discourses and negative representations of black people as being characterised by a catalogue of deficits and series of lacks that led Ramon Grosfoguel, a leading Latin American thinker and theorist, to present the trajectory of those closed out of the ‘Zone of Being’ as unfolding in this way:

“We went from the sixteenth century characterization of ‘people without writing’ to the eighteenth and nineteenth century characterization of ‘people without history,’ to the twentieth century characterization of ‘people without development’ and more recently, to the early twenty first century of ‘people without democracy.’

During the same period, those in the ‘Zone of Being’ were systematically gaining more and more fruits of modernity from sixteenth century ‘rights of people,’ to eighteenth century ‘rights of man,’ and to the late twentieth century ‘human rights.’ What was happening is that the Anglo-Saxons and their descendants were increasingly consolidating their ontological density while Africans and those of African descent resident in the Diaspora were losing ontological weight.

Decoloniality arises from this context in which the humanity of
black people is doubted and emerges as one way of telling the story of the modern world from the experiences of slavery, imperialism, and colonialism. It is not the only way of articulating the history of the construction of the modern world. What distinguishes it is its starting point, which is coloniality. Decoloniality entails studying Africa as a product of 350 years of struggles against slavery in the first instance and against coloniality today.

What is decoloniality?

Decoloniality ‘struggles to bring into intervening existence an-other interpretation that brings forward, on one hand, a silenced view of the event and, on the other, shows the limits of imperial ideology disguised as the true (total) interpretation of the events’ in the making of the modern world. Decoloniality is distinguished from an imperial version of history through its push for shifting of geography of reason from the West as the epistemic locale from which the ‘world is described, conceptualised and ranked’ to the ex-colonised epistemic sites as legitimate points of departure in describing the construction of the modern world order.5

To fully understand and appreciate decoloniality as a liberatory option, it is important to clearly distinguish it from colonialism, decolonisation, and coloniality.

Colonialism:

Colonialism is a historical process that culminated in the invasion, conquest, and direct administration of Africa by states like Spain, Portugal, Britain, and France for purposes of enhancing their prestige as empires, for exploitation of natural and human resources and export of excess population, for the benefit of the empire. Colonialism as a historical process came to an end in the post-1945 period that witnessed the withdrawal of direct colonial administrations and with those that were reluctant to do so facing confrontation from national liberation movements.

Decolonisation:

Decolonisation was a term that was used to describe the withdrawal of direct colonialism from the colonies as well as the struggles ranged against those empires that were reluctant to do so. In Sub-Saharan Africa, South Africa became the last colony to decolonise in 1994 from an internal form of white colonialism called apartheid. Decolonisation became a historical process that was enabled by the emergence of the United Nations sovereignty and its global constitutionalism that embraced postcolonial states.

Coloniality:

Nelson Maldonado-Torres, a leading philosopher in decolonial thought, grapples with the meaning of coloniality and this is how he defined it:

Coloniality is different from colonialism. Colonialism denotes a political and economic relation in which the sovereignty of a nation or a people rests on the power of another nation, which makes such a nation an empire. Coloniality, instead, refers to long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism, but that define culture, labour, intersubjectivity relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations. Thus, coloniality survives colonialism. It is maintained alive in books, in the criteria for academic performance, in cultural patterns, in common sense, in the self-image of peoples, in aspirations of self, and so many other aspects of our modern experience. In a way, as modern subjects we breathe coloniality all the time and every day.9

Coloniality is a name for the ‘darker side’ of modernity that needs to be unmasked because it exists as ‘an embedded logic that enforces control, domination, and exploitation disguised in the language of salvation, progress, modernization, and being good for everyone.’10

Walter D. Mignolo argued that ‘Coloniality names the experiences and views of the world and history of those whom Fanon called les damnes de la terre (‘the wretched of the earth’) those who have been, and continue to be, subjected to the standard of modernity.’11

Mignolo elaborated on the meaning of the wretched of the earth in this way: ‘The wretched are defined by the colonial wound, and the colonial wound, physical and/or psychological, is a consequence of racism, the hegemonic discourse that questions the humanity of all those who do not belong to the locus of enunciation (and the geo-politics of knowledge) of those who assign the standard of classification and assign to themselves the right to classify.’

What distinguishes decoloniality from other existing critical social theories is its locus of enunciations and its genealogy - which is outside of Europe. Decoloniality can be best understood as a pluriversal epistemology of the future - a redemptive and liberatory epistemology that seeks to de-link from the tyranny of abstract universals.12

Decoloniality informs the ongoing struggles against inhumanity of the
Cartesian subject, ‘the irrationality of the rational, the despotic residues of modernity.’

Why decoloniality in the 21st century?
The direct answer comes from Ramon Grosfoguel who argued that:

One of the most powerful myths of the twentieth century was the notion that the elimination of colonial administrations amounted to the decolonization of the world. This led to the myth of a ‘postcolonial’ world. The heterogeneous and multiple global structures put in place over a period of 450 years did not evaporate with the juridical-political decolonization of the periphery over the past 50 years. We continue to live under the same ‘colonial power matrix’. With juridical-political decolonization we moved from a period of ‘global colonialism’ to the current period of ‘global coloniality.’ Although ‘colonial administrations’ have been almost entirely eradicated and the majority of the periphery is politically organised into independent states, non-European people are still living under crude European/Euro-American exploitation and domination. The old colonial hierarchies of European versus non-Europeans remain in place and are entangled with the ‘international division of labour’ and accumulation of capital at a world-scale.

Decoloniality announces the broad ‘decolonial turn’ that involves the ‘task of the very decolonization of knowledge, power and being, including institutions such as the university.’ Maldonado-Torres elaborated:

‘By decoloniality it is meant here the dismantling of relations of power and conceptions of knowledge that foment the reproduction of racial, gender, and geo-political hierarchies that came into being or found new and more powerful forms of expression in the modern/colonial world.’

But this article cannot be complete without engaging with the postmodernist and postcolonial critique of all those combative interventions whose point of departure is coloniality.

The poverty of postmodern-postcolonial critique
The postmodern and postcolonial critique of nationalism, Marxism and decoloniality is informed by a deep misunderstanding of how the modern world was constituted and how it works. Such celebrated scholars as Achille Mbembe and Kwame Anthony Appiah manifest this misunderstanding which makes them very critical of any critical thought that builds its case from the reality of colonialism, coloniality and racism. They wrongly criticised African scholars, particularly those whose thinking is informed by nationalism and Marxism, for being enclosed inside an intellectual ghetto from which they articulate false philosophies.

The reality is that postmodern and postcolonial theorists totally failed to understand that modernity had two faces, particularly that the progressive rhetoric of modernity including liberal democracy and human rights discourses help in hiding coloniality as the negative side of modernity.

What they identify as false philosophies that they name as nativism and Afro-radicalism emerge as Africans try to regain lost ontological density. What is needed is not severe critiques of these ideologies emerging from the zone of non-being but to understand life in this zone. It was actually coloniality rather than nativism and Afro-radicalism that installed the discourse of metaphysics of difference. Africans are genuine victims of this system of power and they have little choice but to reveal a psychosis of victimhood.

It was also coloniality that created a polemic relationship between the Euro-American world and the rest of the Global South. As long as coloniality exists and as long as African ontology is doubted and ridiculed decoloniality in its various forms will continue to reverberate and be ‘repeated over and over again’ by nationalists and Marxists.

Postmodernists and some postcolonial theorists are surprising in blaming those people who were and still are victims of the ‘dark side’ of modernity for continuing to blame slavery, imperialism, colonialism, apartheid, dependence, and globalisation for the production of postcolonial problems. To characterise genuine people’s pains inflicted by these inimical processes as an ‘old refrain’ informed by unproductive and misguided intellectual exercise born out of the peddling of essentialist discourses of autochthony and authenticity, is mischievous and dishonest. Coloniality is still active and inflicting pain and death on Africans.

What is seen as the ‘self-ghettoisation’ of African scholarship, taking the form of ‘territorialisation of the production of knowledge’, is in fact a genuine effort to counter imperialist thought that pushes African knowledges to the margins of society. Africa is a victim of externally generated knowledges that are not informed by geo-and biographical contextual understanding of the African condition. But scholars like Mbembe deliberately distort this intervention and cast it as promotion of a ‘false belief that only autochthonous people who are physically living in Africa can produce, within a closed circle limited to themselves alone, a legitimate scientific discourse on the realities of the continent.’

Avoidance, if not scholarly failure to engage with coloniality, is the worst sign of intellectual laziness compared to African scholarship that continues to get to modernity, colonialism and coloniality as foundational elements of postcolonial African problems.

Logically, postmodern and postcolonial critique of African scholarship provoked an equally severe response from such scholars as Paul Tiyambe Zeleza and others. For instance, Mbembe was criticised for uncritical celebration of the globalisation and cosmopolitanism that underpin Euro-American hegemony.
His call for ‘internationalization’ of African scholarship as a way of ‘getting out of the ghetto’ was equated with ‘globalizing tendencies of neo-liberal economic policies of liberalization.’

The point was that the domain of knowledge generation in and on Africa has never been ‘ghettoised.’ It has never been closed from external influences and currents of thoughts. Instead it has been excessively exposed to external and imported Euro-American paradigms. This makes the case for decoloniality relevant, which pushes the agenda of decolonising knowledge. Mbembe was further criticised for surrendering to the triumphalist ideology of globalisation and the disempowering slogan ‘There Is No Alternative’ (TINA) doctrine.

Rebutting postmodern and postcolonial critique of decoloniality

Decoloniality must not be confused with nationalist and Marxist thought. Decoloniality is against essentialism and fundamentalism as put by Grosfoguel: ‘This is not an essentialist, fundamentalist, anti-European critique. It is a perspective that is critical of both Eurocentric and Third World fundamentalisms, colonialism and nationalism. What all fundamentalisms share (including the Eurocentric one) is the premise that there is only one sole epistemic tradition from which to achieve Truth and Universality.’

As noted by Nelson Maldonado-Torres decoloniality is not a singular theoretical school of thought, but a family of diverse positions that share a view of coloniality as the fundamental problem in the modern age. Yes, they might be some decolonial positions that might degenerate into romanticism and fundamentalism, but that is not generalisable to all decolonial thought.

Decoloniality gives ex-colonised peoples a space to judge Euro-American deceit and hypocrisy and to stand up into subjeuction through judging Europe and exposing technologies of subjectivation.

Decoloniality exposes the fact that Euro-American epistemologies are exhausted, opening an opportune moment for articulation of decolonal epistemologies from the South in an endeavour to attain cognitive justice. Rationality and technology have not completely managed to overcome all obstacles to human freedom.

At another level decoloniality involves re-telling of history of humanity and knowledge from the vantage point of those epistemic sites that received the ‘darker side’ of modernity, including re-telling the story of knowledge generation as involving borrowings, appropriations, epistemicides, and denials of humanity of other people as part of the story of science. It is also a call for the democritisation of knowledge, de-hegemonisation of knowledge, de-westernisation of knowledge, and de-Europeisation of knowledge.

As stated by Mbembe, ‘At the core of decoloniality is the agenda of shifting the geography and biography of knowledge - who generates knowledge and from where? Decoloniality’s point of departure is existential realities of suffering, oppression, repression, domination and exclusion. Decoloniality facilitates the unmasking of racism as a global problem as well as demonstrating how knowledge, including science, was used to justify colonialism. Finally decoloniality accepts the fact of ontological pluralism as a reality that needs ecologies of knowledges to understand.’

Conclusion

I hope this article has succeeded in making a strong case for decoloniality in the 21st century. Decoloniality needs to be appreciated as liberatory thought that gestures towards the possibility of another world and knowledge. At the epistemic level decoloniality is about epistemological disobedience premised on three domains of power, knowledge, and being. At the political level, it is working in areas of new critical theory, new meaning-making and action. At the methodological level, it rebels against knowledges of equilibrium and those methods that operate as part of colonial matrices of power that prevent transformation.

In our modest terms, we are pushing decolonial thinking as Africa Decolonial Research Network (ADERN) based at UNISA. The newly established Archie Mafeje Research Institute (AMRI)’s research work is also informed by decoloniality. Our plan is to host an annual Summer School at Archie Mafeje Research Institute to expose students and young academicians to decolonial thinking, the politics of knowledge generation as well as power, identity and epistemological issues at the centre of the modern world order.

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This assessment also recognises that the two countries apply different ideological concepts. China implements the theory of performance legitimacy, while South Africa applies the consolidated democracy theory.

By Yazini April
Last year, both China and South Africa hosted their dominant political party conferences where leadership was elected and policies thrashed out for implementation. The Communist Party of China (CPC) held its 18th National Congress in November 2012, in Beijing, China, while South Africa’s African National Congress held its 53rd National Conference in Mangaung, South Africa. It is important to note that both countries are led by the afore-mentioned political parties. Both countries are at a historical turning point. China, currently at 61 years, has now become the world’s second largest economy, while South Africa, at 18 years, has a governance performance characterised by low educational standards in comparison to many countries in the region, high unemployment, and high levels of income inequality. The objective of this article is not to compare country
growth performance as China has had a longer time and thus more opportunities to mature. Instead, the purpose is to assess both the CPC and ANC conferences and their prospective outcomes. This assessment also recognises that the two countries apply different ideological concepts. China implements the theory of performance legitimacy, while South Africa applies the consolidated democracy theory.

According to Christopher Bickerton, performance legitimacy requires above all that the actor in question establishes its value-added contribution in the relevant policy area. This theory is premised on meeting expectations, and satisfying citizens through policy outcomes.1 Legitimacy is an endorsement of the state at a moral or normative level. It is normative by conceptual definition. It is analytically distinct from that form of political support derived from personal views of goodness. 20th Century American political sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset maintains that a government is legitimate if and only if it is generally believed that the government performs at least as well or better than all conceivable alternatives.2 Democracy requires that a majority of the country’s population accepts the democratic institutions as legitimate and thus they exist relatively unchallenged. Larry Diamond states that for democracy to be consolidated, elites, organisations, and the mass public must believe that the political system they have in their country is actually worth defending.3

The implementation process by both countries of their conference policy outcomes is the crux of this paper. During the Cold War, democracy was widely hailed in the West as the best political regime yet invented, because its citizens were both treated with respect and dignity and had some say in political decision-making. In recent decades, democracy has been touted as the key engine for economic growth and development. Developing countries were constantly reminded that in order to succeed like the West, they first needed to put their democratic foundation in order. However, about 60 years down the road, a number of developing countries in Africa which chose the democratic path have remained poor while some Asian countries that did not necessarily practice democracy have effectively raised the standard of living for citizens in their countries. In fact democracy in several developing countries was premised on electoral rubber stamps which sometimes led to leadership deficiencies. It has now become very clear in 21st century governance that credible and efficient leadership are essential for any country to progress.

It is in the context of leadership and global governance that there has been an interest in the leadership outcome of the CPC and ANC national conferences. Both national conferences were dominated by speculation about who was going to take over the leadership reins. In terms of leadership, at the CPC’s 18th National Congress, the top seven elected were seven men – Xi Jinping, Li Keqiang, Zhang Dejiang, Yu Zhengsheng, Liu Yunshan, Wang Qishan and Zhang Gaoli. Xi is now the leader of the CPC and is expected to become President of China in March 2013. Xi’s team consists of practitioners with Doctorates from law to engineering. Furthermore, in addition to these qualifications, they also have practical experience, as individuals such as Xi, Li, Zhang Dejiang and Wang toiled in communes and villages during the Cultural Revolution, when millions of high school graduates were sent to rural areas to receive ‘re-education’ from peasants and help with rural development. A majority of the South African team members elected have also good academic records considering the circumstances during the period when they undertook their studies. For example, Dr. Zweli Lawrence Mkhize is a medical doctor and newest chancellor of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, and ANC Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa obtained his B. Proc. Degree in law. Furthermore the officials of President Jacob Zuma’s team have struggle credentials, government, business and trade union skills, experience and expertise.

With regard to policy making, the 18th Party Congress was probably the most watched national conference internationally in 2012 as many governments, academics and journalists were keen to know more about the incoming leader, and China’s governance map for the next few years. Given the length of the CPC Work Report, this article will just highlight four key issues. The work report affirmed that the CPC leadership was on track to achieve its goals: the need to solidify the domestic and international foundations for China’s development as a great power; structural economic and political reforms to improve governance, thereby bolstering the regime’s legitimacy through competent governance; and stronger supervisory mechanisms to address corruption, which poses a grave threat.

Another significant policy decision was the Constitutional Amendment that was immediately implemented to make the Scientific Outlook on Development part of its long-term action guide to address new challenges faced by the world’s second largest economy. The Scientific Outlook on Development advocates sustainable and efficient economic and social development instead of breakneck growth at the expense of the environment and society. The scientific development concept is the current official guiding socio-economic ideology of the Communist Party of China incorporating scientific socialism, sustainable development, social welfare, a humanistic society, increased democracy, and, ultimately, the creation of a Socialist Harmonious Society.4 The ideology stems from the basic premise that it is possible for the state to engineer sustainable development through tested and proven methodologies of governance.
Such a scientific approach is said to minimise conflict amongst different interest groups in society in order to maintain stability on the national level, in turn fostering economic and cultural advancement. Credit for the theory is given to current Chinese leader Hu Jintao and his administration, who took power in 2002. It is the newest brand added to the idea of Socialism with Chinese characteristics ratified into the Communist Party of China’s constitution at the 17th Party Congress in October 2007.\(^5\)

According to the International Department of the CPC, the Scientific Outlook on Development is a continuation and development of the important thoughts on development advanced by the previous three generations of central collective leadership of the CPC and a concentrated expression of the Marxist world outlook and methodology with regard to development. It is a scientific theory that is in the same line as Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory and the Three Represents concept credited to previous General Secretary Jiang Zemin.\(^6\) Based on this theory, the policy makers at the 18th Congress basically conceded that China’s development has produced a series of new features that must be tackled.

For example, even though economic strength has increased, capacity for independent innovation is weak, and the longstanding structural problems and the extensive mode of growth are yet to be fundamentally addressed.

Secondly, efforts to balance development have yielded remarkable results, but the foundation of agriculture remains weak, as the rural areas still lag behind in development.

Thirdly, even though a relatively comfortable standard of living has been achieved for the people as a whole, the trend of a growing gap in income distribution has not been thoroughly reversed, and it has become more difficult to accommodate the interests of all sides.\(^7\)

Fourthly, though Socialist democracy is steadily developing, through implementing the rule of law as a fundamental principle, efforts to improve democracy and development and management.

Sixthly, China is opening wider to the outside world, where international competition is becoming increasingly acute and pressure in the form of the economic and scientific dominance of developed countries will continue for a long time to come. Both predictable and unpredictable risks are increasing, and the need to balance domestic development with opening to the outside world is greater than ever.\(^8\)

South Africa’s ANC national conference path to Mangaung on the other hand was a very colourful event dominated by electoral issues. Both President Zuma and Deputy President Motlanthe had been nominated by various branches to become the new ANC president. Added to the nominations were various dynamics such as Motlanthe’s principled unwillingness to engage in discussions or campaigning around the leadership battle which disorientated the Forces of Change who wanted Zuma replaced. The leadership contest for the National Executive Committee (NEC) was plotted by political opportunism and a perception that some candidates were interested in gaining power for selfish reasons, influenced by greed and the settling of political scores. The delegates at the ANC National Congress overwhelmingly voted in favour of Zuma as President and for an election slate composed by Zuma’s supporters.

Some of the key decisions emerging out of the December 2012 national conference were:

- a rejection of the wholesale nationalisation of mines with a focus on strategic state involvement in key sectors where necessary;
- the regulation of labour brokers instead of banning them;
- possible tax breaks for employers from government to encourage the hiring of young job seekers to tackle chronic unemployment;
- a multibillion-rand infrastructure programme rollout; and
- an ANC ethics committee comprising of ANC veterans to respond to complaints and recommendations with ethical implications from inside and outside the party (to be created within three months of the conference).

Prior to the conference, David Makhura indicated that most of the outcomes of the national conference would be a reaffirmation of the June policy conference positions. The ANC June policy conference produced the Second Transition document which argued that the party’s first transition, which was political, was complete, and that the second transition should be the battle for socio-economic equality. At the Mangaung conference, the basic idea of the second transition document re-emerged, and will clearly influence policy during Zuma’s second term. Hlongwane emphasises how the National Executive Committee’s (NEC)
January 8 statement, which sets out the map for the party in 2013, highlights how the second transition will inform economic and social policies as part of a broader policy thrust, directed by the National Development Plan (NDP), which was constructed by the National Planning Commission in the Office of the Presidency.

Minister Trevor Manuel who is the National Planning Minister presented the NDP in 2012 detailing a road map which, if properly and successfully implemented, will see South Africa boast an employment level heading towards 90%, no poverty, and strong economic growth of 5.4% annually, by 2030. The NDP plan sets out six interlinked priorities:

- uniting all South Africans around a common programme to achieve prosperity and equity;
- promoting active citizenry to strengthen development, democracy and accountability;
- bringing about faster economic growth, higher investment and greater labour absorption;
- focusing on key capabilities of people and the state;
- building a capable and developmental state; and
- encouraging strong leadership throughout society to work together to solve problems.

The main objectives of the plan are:

- raising employment through faster economic growth;
- improving the quality of education, skills development and innovation; and
- building the capability of the state to play a developmental, transformative role.

Some of the key programmes of the National Development Plan are already being implemented. These include the New Growth Path framework with its major infrastructure development programme, as well as the state-led industrial policy.

As indicated earlier, both China and South Africa are at critical junctures where the policy decisions made at party conferences will have long term ramifications politically and economically. The 21st century world power is now pegged on economic might first, then military, and hegemonic influence. Moreover, due to technology, emerging markets are developing very fast, reducing the level of time required to industrialise. Gone is the period when it took about 300 years to industrialise as was the case with the UK. Neither country has the luxury to waste time before implementing the necessary measures to fast track growth, development and political stability and cohesion.

The Chinese debates surrounding the need to include the Scientific Outlook theory into their Constitution are interesting and actually relevant to South Africa. Issues highlighting growing economic inequalities and the need for agricultural development echo the same sound even though South Africa’s cases are significantly more critical.

Issues of the cultural changes that have taken place in the structure of society, in the way society is organised and in the pattern of social interests, are topics that are hotly debated in both China and South Africa.

Here, there is a focus on the rising black middle class and its questionable outputs in areas such as work ethics, entitlement, get rich quick schemes, and low degree turn out rates, in comparison to other emerging markets even on this continent. From a cultural perspective, it goes without saying that the impact of the growing middle class in China is similar to that of South Africa. In South Africa this class will become a critical determinant of much of what lies ahead.

Finally, there is the issue of democracy and performance legitimacy. Democratically, South Africa not only has one of the best constitutions in the world, but also has all the necessary legal frameworks and performance management systems in place to ensure sound public management. South Africa definitely has the capacity to come out of its current challenges and produce an economically strong industrial economy. While democratic principles have been espoused, implementation remains a challenge. Suffice to say, the biggest challenge that could hinder the success of the NDP is implementation.

In 2012 COSATU produced a Post Polokwane Resolution Audit where it maintained that nearly three years after Polokwane, progress in implementing its economic resolutions was too slow. Major structural change is critical to sustained future growth and stability. It is still not very clear how the ANC plans to implement the necessary reforms to shift its economy onto a path of sustainable development. This still leaves the question as to whether our democratic processes are strong enough to sustain consolidation. More importantly, how do we link democracy to the substantive outcome of popularly perceived good governance rather than to procedural guarantees?

From a performance legitimacy perspective, instead of spinning out endless policies and having audits from organisations demonstrating
that previous policies are not being effectively implemented, China employs policy experts who optimise policy in order to maximise Lipsettian goals such as economic growth. Although realised increases in living standards are the most important factor in Lipsett legitimacy, radical unfamiliar policy changes can jeopardise public confidence in government. In order to maintain Lipsett legitimacy, Chinese officials are not allowed to circumvent public support by relying on terror, which is egregious “despotic power”, such as that employed by Joseph Stalin. Chinese officials are required to maintain public confidence, they must convince the people that they are delivering and will continue to deliver, that the government is working effectively in the people’s interest.

Improving living standards are the results the Chinese people are looking for, the results by which they primarily judge the legitimacy of their government. Chinese technocrats translate this into a basket of numerical indices which include, for example, a growth index, a green index, a poverty index. The goal of policy makers then becomes the optimisation of this basket. Behind the calculation and optimisation of policy are vast numbers of academics, economists and statisticians.

The creation and incredibly fast expansion of a highly competitive science and engineering focused educational system has also greatly contributed to the economic revolution. Many senior Chinese officials, including President Hu Jintao, have engineering degrees and industry backgrounds. In the last thirty years these experts have delivered an average annualised GDP growth rate of over 10%. Even the Japanese post-war economic miracle only managed 8½%. It is an unparalleled achievement, and just as Lipsett predicts, the CPC is consequently hugely popular with the Chinese masses and thus the government is politically stable.

The ANC still has the opportunity and capacity to accomplish some of the performance legitimacy results gained by the CPC. In fact, South Africa has also begun practicing measures of performance legitimacy. An example is the afore-mentioned NDP Plan. Like the Chinese, the NDP process was undertaken by the NPC through a number of experienced technocrats who have also developed their own basket version of numerical indices which have been calculated to determine the best way forward under the NDP Plan. What is now essential is for the ANC and the entire nation to lose all ideological colour and ensure that the Second Transition document and the NDP Plan become a vast economic and scientific optimisation process driven by statistics, experimentation and implementation.

Unfortunately, we cannot afford to lose another 5 years before getting some of the NDP plans not just implemented but fast-tracked. The deployment of cadres without the necessary skills would be the quickest way of stalling effective implementation of the NDP Plan. As in the Chinese case, we need to effectively marshal all our skilled resources to implement the identified policies. However, in order to do this we need to all work together as a nation to achieve the end state. Economic reform is not just the responsibility of the government to implement. Every single South African needs to do their part to make economic transition a reality.

Moreover, if the ANC policies are to be effectively implemented, there is a need for political consistency amongst all the governance structures. Being soft on certain cases, or unusually tough on corruption involving political opponents, implies inconsistency. For example, the Ethics Committee that is being created is a positive step in the right direction and should not be viewed as a selective tool when dealing with complaints. In essence ideological colour should be far removed from decisions related to bureaucratic inefficiency, corruption, etc. It is imperative that decision-making and its consequences are consistently dealt with across the board.

Fortunately, South Africa has developed and maintained the necessary democratic principles to steer its path. Despite all the ailments we have accumulated, democracy is still functional and our legislative instruments and administrative structures are still being utilised to ensure that correct measures are taken - which is the sign of a vibrant democracy. Moreover, South Africans also understand the principles and values of democracy which is one of the key criteria of consolidated democracy. Their ability to engage in public protest is an example of their democratic awareness of rights. South Africa also has the capacity to industrialise and become a strong player in the emerging market. Despite the current global economic climate, we are still doing well economically, and have maintained our global footprint with groupings such as Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa (BRICS). Finally, the very fact that the ANC has determined that we need to move beyond democratic ideals and now move towards economic best practices, is a sign that as a nation we are on the right track.

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The ideological perspective of the ANC as the basis for a successful fundamental transformation of our society

Any attempt to answer the question regarding the definition of the ideology of the ANC must be premised on the fact that the ideal of the ANC is to have legitimacy as the leader of South African society, and have its ideas as ‘the ruling ideas’ of society.

By Ike Moroe

Analysis, knowledge of, and clarity on the ideological perspective of the ANC is of critical importance in the everyday life of the movement, especially at this juncture, when our country is faced with gigantic challenges of poverty, unemployment and growing inequalities.

The means we choose to confront these challenges can only work when they are being implemented within a particular ideological framework, which we must convince society to embrace and own, so that we can all move in the same direction towards a common united vision.

The importance of an ideological framework is also to ensure that we subscribe to a certain revolutionary perspective which will bind us to a particular revolutionary morality, and compel us to act in a particular manner, to uphold our conviction in our promises to the society.

The Oxford dictionary submits that the classical definition of ideology is “a system of ideas and ideals, especially
one which forms the basis of economic or political theory and practice". On the other hand Marx and Engels go much further when they write, “the class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production”. Therefore, “The ideas of the ruling class in every epoch are the ruling ideas”.

According to Marxism there are two critically important ideologies in the current epoch: The ideology of the working class, and the capitalist ideology. However, the ANC has essentially drawn its culture, symbols, beliefs, political theory and practice from its traditions of struggle to rid this country of apartheid colonialism, and restore the dignity of the black people in general and the Africans in particular.

Over the more than hundred years of its existence, the ANC progressively developed to serve all sections of the population. It remains committed to non-racialism and to addressing the plight of the people of South Africa, especially the working class and the poor.

However the focus of the ANC is neither to build socialism now, nor to refurbish and consolidate the foundations of capitalism. But the ANC, as pointed out in the Strategy and Tactics of 2007, as affirmed by the Mangaung National Conference, is to create a developmental state utilising a mixed economy approach, as expressed in the need for the strategic intervention of the state in the economy.

**Current ideological scenario**

Nearly 19 years ago we achieved a democratic breakthrough from the system of racist apartheid colonialism. Since 1994, there seems to have been a systematic erosion of the revolutionary ideology of the ANC, and its replacement with neo-liberalism.

The intense ideological struggle within the ANC is reflected in the push for access to resources by all means possible, even illegal, by some who are powerful and well connected. The control of the economy remains in the hands of a tiny minority which is now joined by the newly rich.

Each day that passes, there are increasingly audacious attempts to reverse the gains of the democratic revolution.

Given that the movement has become a mass movement with minimal restrictions for the acceptance of new members, the ANC has become a ruling party, which controls state assets, and attracts all classes and strata of the society. This changes it from a broad church to an arena of ideological gladiators fighting to the death.

**It is national because it pursues the ideal of building a non-racial nation; it is democratic because its seeks to banish the vestiges of tribalism, patriarchy and racism and commits to entrench a culture of human rights; and it is revolutionary because it is inclined to the left, as a disciplined force that seeks to bring about fundamental economic and social transformation.**

Compounding and further complicating the raging ideological contestations is the dearth of ideological depth. Ideology has somehow become a pariah word in a world where power is falsely paraded as neutral. This is a world where revolutionaries have become scarce, and boardroom power brokers, who have become bona fide members of the movement, are the new fad.

It is essential to analyse with care the ideology of the ANC in order to focus our movement on its historic mission, and help it to shed the burden of the alien behavioural patterns currently tearing it apart.

**Ideological contests of the past**

During the early years of the ideological positioning of the ANC, contestation was fierce as illustrated by the exit of the Pan Africanist Congress in 1958, followed by the expulsion of an anti–communist grouping in 1980.

Equally the emergence of the Marxist Workers’ Tendency is another clear illustration of attempts to steer the ANC towards becoming a pseudo working class party.

These contestations, from both the ultra-left and the right tendencies, to influence the ideological perspective of the ANC repeatedly failed. They could not make headway, because the politics of the ANC were informed by its realities, encapsulated in its theory of the revolution.

During the height of the existence of the socialist system, primarily in Eastern Europe, those opposed to our liberation found it easy to distort the ideology of the ANC, and readily pigeon-hole it as a communist, or communist led organisation.

But the reality of the ideology of the ANC drawn from its mission, based on the utmost need to lead the people to liberate themselves from colonial bondage, prevailed at all times. This resilience was driven by a leadership possessing a strong conviction about the direction, strategy and mission based on the ideological perspective of the ANC.

This ideology cut across class and race and mobilised not only South Africans, but the whole world against an unjust system afflicting all members of the society, but of course in different degrees. It exposed the divisiveness of apartheid, and sought to unite all patriots for the attainment of our liberation, for the development of a better, democratic and prosperous society.

This ideology was based on the notion that the defeat of the racist apartheid colonialism could not come about through the efforts of the ANC alone. Not even through the actions of the black people alone. It recognised that apartheid colonialism, which was alternatively known as colonialism of a special type, was a danger to peace and a crime against humanity.
It promoted a united effort of all the progressive forces, including those within the white section of the population opposed to apartheid, to bring liberation and lasting peace and progress to South Africa.

On the basis of greater unity, straddling class and race, the ANC pondered the question in the Strategy and Tactics of 1969: “How can we strengthen and make effective the co-operation between communities, and how can we integrate committed revolutionaries irrespective of their racial background?”

This desire for greater unity differentiates the ANC from the ultra-left leanings of workerist tendencies, or even a Marxist party, whose mission, drawn from its ideology of the working class, is the building of a socialist society.

On the other hand, the total rejection of black exclusivism did not make the ANC the darling of some anti-colonial freedom fighters. The non-racial stance of the ANC was viewed by some as capitulation to the whims of ‘white liberals and communists’.

Current challenges

Our democracy is still relatively young, emerging from a divided society, in which over centuries our colonial past of subjugation through racial lines entrenched itself, and left the ideas of the ruling class deeply embedded in our society. We emerge with deep racial scars, which have implanted deep mistrust among the citizens of our country.

After a period of relative peace in our midst, during the early years of transformation, we currently stand at the crossroads, the future of our country uncertain, unless of course we revisit our basics, and chart our way into the future from firm ideological foundations.

We are challenged by the existence of extreme poverty, which afflicts mainly Blacks in general and Africans in particular. This is a major threat to national security, unity, cohesion and peace.

Decidedly the challenge of extreme poverty and inequality in our society cannot be overcome by an accidental establishment of a welfare state. It cannot be overcome by the populist outbursts of desperate measures feeding on the frustrations of the poor. And it cannot be overcome by the crude importation of development strategies from elsewhere.

But it is a challenge that can only be confronted and defeated by political and economic strategies that are based on properly aligning the ANC to its ideological perspective. Our ideology must serve as the basis and our guide to action.

Can the ANC – whose members are drawn from rich and poor; working class and management; employed and unemployed; farmers and peasants; intellectuals and the illiterate - have an ideological perspective which embraces and advances the interests of all its membership cutting through all sections of society?

The declaration of the Decade of the Cadre, as adopted by the Mangaung Conference, attempts to resolve some of these questions by specifying the years of service in the movement required to qualify for certain leadership positions. It also puts an emphasis on the training of cadres in order to serve in both government and ANC leadership positions.

Political training is emphasised, but not much is said on the need for in-depth ideological training. Is this perhaps due to the fear of dealing with ideology in a world that has been overtaken by neo-liberalism. It could also be we are no longer sure how to define the ideology of the ANC.

Ideology of the ANC

Any attempt to answer the question regarding the definition of the ideology of the ANC must be premised on the fact that the ideal of the ANC is to have legitimacy as the leader of South African society, and have its ideas as ‘the ruling ideas’ of society.

We must proceed with the understanding that the noble struggle to develop national cohesion, across class and racial differences, to deepen democracy and bring about fundamental economic changes in the lives of the people of our country is the centrepiece of ANC policy and thinking.

Therein we shall find the glue that bound the movement together and put it in the leadership of the people, while its ideas were found growing in the struggling masses and the revolutionaries.

In this vein, the Strategy and Tactics documents of the ANC, since 1969, characterise the aspiration of the ANC to bring about fundamental change in South Africa, as the ‘National Democratic Revolution’.

It is a national democratic revolution which seeks to build a national democratic society. It is national because it pursues the ideal of building a non-racial nation; it is democratic because it seeks to banish the vestiges of tribalism, patriarchy and racism and commits to entrench a culture of human rights; and it is revolutionary because it is inclined to the left, as a disciplined force that seeks to bring about fundamental economic and social transformation.

Therefore the ideology of the ANC is Revolutionary Democratic Nationalism. It is a set of ideas that draw from the best of human achievement and aspirations. It reflects our struggles and projects our future. It must be the basis of our political ideals and economic policy, and embrace the values of human rights and prosperity for all.

Those who belittle the idea of an ideology within the ANC, do so out of a particular historical reality. This is because they fear that the battle of
ideas will always favour an ideology which aligns itself with a class that is responsible for building the future, while taking along other progressive classes and strata of society. They fear that the vulgar avarice and the individualism of the capitalist society cannot compare favourably with the progressive ideas aligned to the dynamism of the working class as the future of a transformed and restructured society.

The role and character of ideology

Does mention of the working class make the ANC a communist organisation? It does not, and it must not. But indeed, it makes the ANC an organisation that recognises and acknowledges its position as the vanguard party for transformation in our country.

But being a vanguard of societal transformation bestows certain serious responsibilities on the movement. These are responsibilities of the leadership of society as a whole. The ANC does not only lead its members, but it leads the whole society.

Therefore, in line with the position we occupy in society, we must not take the people for granted. Ideological conviction becomes extremely important in determining the character and content of leadership. A leader of choice must not only be grounded in the ideological perspectives of the ANC, but must be able and indeed ready to live according to its prescripts.

Leaders must be role models of unity, should have respect for democratic values and possess the will to transform themselves, along with the society, and prosper only when the society does. They must project the ideology of the movement in their life style.

The cadres of the national liberation movement, from which the leadership must be drawn, must be ideologues who participate in peoples’ initiatives and activities, and give leadership through their advanced knowledge of societal dynamics.

Ideologically grounded cadres would act with honesty and humility in the knowledge that, through their advanced thinking, they are able to interact with ordinary people as equals and give sound, well-considered advice, which is the strength of any leader.

The Strategy and Tactics document of 2007, reflecting what one would regard as the principles of the ideology of the Revolutionary Democratic Nationalism, states:

“Given the vision of a national democratic society and the motive forces of change, what should be the character of the movement to lead transformation?

To carry out the NDR in the current phase requires a progressive national liberation movement which:

• understands the interconnection between political and socio-economic challenges in our society;
• leads the motive forces of the NDR in pursuing their common aspirations and ensuring that their sectoral interests are linked to the strategic objective;
• masters the terrain of electoral contest, utilises political power to advance the objectives of the NDR and wields instruments of state in line with these ideals as reflected in the National Constitution;
• organises and mobilises the motive forces and builds broader partnerships to drive the process of reconstruction and development, nation building and reconciliation; and
• conducts itself, both in its internal practices and in relation to society at large, in line with the ideals represented by the NDR and acts as a microcosm of the future.”

Deliberately, the cadres of an organisation that subscribes to the above-mentioned principles would as a matter of fact aspire to live an exemplary life above reproach and befitting leaders who are focused on building a better society.

Conclusion

Leadership of society, as the vanguard, means that we should be beyond reproach as members and leaders of the ANC. Our conduct in our everyday life, in our leadership of the ANC, the society, and in the matters of governance should inspire respect, patriotism, and reverence for the constitution of the land. We must earn the accolades of society, and not coerce the society to fear us.

To recoup our position as the vanguard of the South African society, we need to provide leadership and direction. It is desirable that we understand our position and engage society in dialogue to understand better the fault lines of our society, and devise together the means to build bridges, and have a common understanding to face a promising future together.

For our ideas to displace the ideas of the past, we need to embrace intellectuals within our ranks, and also nurture organic intellectuals within our organisation.

“...for our ideas to displace the ideas of the past, we need to embrace intellectuals within our ranks, and also nurture organic intellectuals within our organisation.”
Any recent visitor to Ethiopia would be struck by the ubiquitous billboards commemorating the late Prime Minister’s life, two months after his demise. Meles Zenawi’s photo forms the backdrop to the TV screens and adorns the streets of all the major towns and villages. These sights were supplemented by the chorus of African leaders that attended the PM’s funeral and who lavished praise on this “dedicated son of African soil.” He was depicted as the untiring leader who toiled for the upliftment of the indigent peoples of Ethiopia and Africa. Among this choir were African presidents and prime ministers whose own policies have degraded the lives of their people. The least distinguished of these visitors were the former President and Prime Minister of Somalia whose tenure in power was marred by their total subservience to the Ethiopian regime.

One wonders if this orchestrated and well managed public love of the late Zenawi reflects the thoughts and feeling of the peoples of Ethiopia and the neighboring states where the PM’s policies had the greatest footprint. Putting aside the propaganda of the Ethiopian governing party, the admiration of his cohort of political friends, and partisan Ethiopian critics, most objective analysts would agree that, unlike the visiting African leaders, Zenawi left behind a record that deserves critical scrutiny. Zenawi’s legacy can be viewed through two analytical lenses: a) his domestic footprint; (b) and his regional impact.

To assess the PM’s legacy we need to understand the political and economic context of Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa when Zenawi and his party, the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF), came to power in 1991. First, Ethiopia had been devastated by a brutal military dictatorship that massacred hundreds of thousands of people, which it also presided over the catastrophic famine of 1984 that devastated several regions of the country. Additionally, the military regime wasted Ethiopia’s meagre and precious resources to oppress the legitimate struggle of the Eritrean people, as well as others inside Ethiopia, such as Tigray, Somali, and the Oromos, to mention a few. War, famine, and oppression were the hallmark of Ethiopia in 1990, and the regime was exhausted and had run out of ideas and energy to move the country beyond multiple calamities. Then came the last drive of the Eritrean resistance against the regime since they already controlled the entire countryside and surrounded the capital Asmara. Their ally in Ethiopia (TPLF) then pushed towards Addis Ababa and within a couple of months it became clear that the regime’s days were numbered. Given the ethnic character of the TPLF it was not clear whether its takeover of the capital would induce a new civil war with the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and other communities. Concerned about the possibility of having another failed state in the region, with all the attendant problems such as a tidal wave of refugees, the United States brokered an agreement between the regime and the TPLF. This pact allowed for a “peaceful” takeover of the capital and Mengistu’s departure for exile.

The TPLF brought with it a client group of ethnic political parties, the so-called PDOs (People’s Democratic Organisations), who jointly formed what became known as EPRDF. But there has never been any doubt that TPLF controlled the levers of power in the country. The junior partners of the “coalition” were supposed to provide national legitimacy for the new ethnic authority. However, the Ethiopian public largely considered the PDOs as lackeys. The independent Oromo Liberation Front, which initially joined the ruling coalition, failed to understand TPLF’s militarist agenda and paid the ultimate price as the latter swiftly destroyed its military base. After this defeat OLF went underground where it has virtually become inconsequential. Establishing
the new order and consolidating the TPLF’s power took nearly a decade, after which the regime turned more of its attention to other matters.

After twenty one years in power, we can emphatically state that Zenawi’s regime has been a Janus-faced order. Its political rhetoric exuded democracy, peace, national harmony, and development, but behind that facade was a determined security apparatus that crushed even the most democratic attempts to challenge its authority. This rhetoric proved seductive enough for outsiders, but all indications are that it has failed to sway a majority of the population. It is these two faces of the regime that the remaining section of this brief will focus on. But I must first provide an explanatory note about the nationalist character of the regime. I can categorically state that the late Premier Zenawi was an Ethiopian nationalist, despite the claims of some of the opponents that he was building Tigray for an eventual secession, if needs be. Many critics of the TPLF regime claim that it exploited the resources of most regions in Ethiopia to develop its home province. There is a grain of truth to this assertion, but I would suggest that to be a nationalist does not exclude a regime from internally differentiating regions by privileging some over others. Most critics do not understand that there are two kinds of nationalists: Civic and sectarian nationalists.

Civic nationalists genuinely try to treat all regions and citizens alike and fairly. In contrast, sectarian nationalists protect the territorial integrity of the country but also establish a hierarchy of power which privileges certain groups and political factions. Zenawi and his regime represented the latter version of nationalism and are not alone in this regard in the developing world.

**Domestic Footprint**

Zenawi’s group and those they invited to take part in the political conference in the early 1990s produced a constitution which nominally privileged ethnic identity. They subsequently divided the country into ethnic provinces. There is little doubt that this political architecture gave modest advantages to most ethnic groups in the country who were the *subjects of the empire*, but such gains belied the fact that Addis Ababa remained the decisive power centre of the country. More critically, a small group of TPLF cadres and the security establishment they strategically controlled have had the final say about all the major issues. Even when the affiliates of the TPLF became senior ministers they remained pliant cadres without a backbone. I have witnessed the humiliation that comes with such status. The absence of any degree of autonomy on the part of those affiliates manifestly demonstrates that belonging to EPRDF has been like George Orwell’s *Animal Farm* where “All animals are created equal but some animals are created more equal than others.”

Despite cowering their partners and most of the population, Zenawi and his regime can legitimately claim several major accomplishments:

First, the regime has created a physical infrastructure for the country that is better than what was left behind by all the previous regimes combined. The road network that spans to most regions of the country can facilitate national integration and development if progressively used. Second, the number of public universities has increased substantially over the last decade and this has allowed many young Ethiopians to gain access to some form of higher education.

Third, the electrical grid of the country has been expanded and more hydroelectric dams have been built or are under construction and this has expanded the country’s energy supply. Some of these dams were initiated illegally because other riparian countries that have a stake in the rivers were not consulted and no agreements were reached to satisfy all parties. Despite such illegal and unethical pre- emptions, the growth in electricity production bodes well for the country’s economic growth.

Fourth, an intensive regime of mineral exploration has been put in place which could deliver dividends for the country in the long run. Fifth, Zenawi and his team have not ameliorated the population’s vulnerability to famine, but fortunately the country has avoided the catastrophic famines that used to take hundreds of thousands of lives. Finally, there is has been an increase in the volume of foreign investment in the country and the rate of economic growth has been substantial despite starting from a very low base.

The regime’s liabilities are also numerous but here is a sample of the major ones. First, in spite of the seemingly smooth transfer of authority to the Deputy Prime Minister, power is still wielded by individuals without legitimate institutional anchors. As such, authority in Ethiopia is extremely concentrated in two nodes that completely overlap: the TPLF core, and the security establishment. The ultimate anchor of power is the security apparatus which has been loyal to the TPLF rather than the country and the constitution. Such concentration of power has entribeled all other institutions and has created a political culture and society deeply marooned in fear rather than genuine loyalty and respect for national institutions. The political and social consequences of this *republic of fear* are far reaching.

Second, although the economic sphere has been somewhat more liberalised, loyalty to the regime is still central to an entrepreneur’s ability to succeed. In many instances, party connections are essential to start a major business, and important sectors of the economy are dominated by the party and its friends. Third, the promotion of fear has suffocated the entire political spectrum through its unwillingness to tolerate even a minor political opposition. By claiming to win over 95 percent of the votes in the last election, the regime has created a make-believe world where it is adored by all.

Fourth, in some parts of the developing world academics are not free to present their ideas/work regarding their countries’ ailments, and Ethiopia appears to be the model of academic unfreedom. This has been accomplished through the elimination of tenure or long term contracts for faculty and the appointment of political loyalists to top academic positions. If a professor indulges in critical analysis of the political and development affairs of the country, there is little chance that his or her contract will be renewed. Fear is the life blood of...
this system and compels productive academics to either leave the country if they can, or languish in the margins, or simply become sycophants of the regime to maintain their livelihoods. Nevertheless, there are a few courageous scholars who have stayed true to the ethos of the academy and still remain in the country against incredible odds.

Fifth, poor people dominate the landscape of Ethiopian cities and towns, and the UN has reported that over 80% of the building structures of the capital are of slum quality. Mindful of this image, the regime has embarked on urban renewal that will ultimately remove most of the poor from the city and allocate the “freed” spaces to shopping malls and investors. It intends to house the indigents removed from those areas in apartments built on the outskirts of the city without examining alternative schemes that will keep these residents in their neighbourhoods.

Finally, the collective effect of these liabilities is that public institutions in the country are beholden to the individuals in power rather than embodying national ethos. The shameless use of the security forces to retain power or intimidate the political opposition, and the culture of fear this engenders means that Premier Zenawi and his regime reinforced institutions the public fears but they have failed to create legitimacy for the post-1991 institutions. Without legitimate institutions that are autonomous from particular leaders, the country remains in danger of fully sliding into an ethnic strife.

The Regional Impact

The “winds of change” in the Horn of Africa in 1990/1991 created opportunities which could have produced a bright future for all. Post-1991 Eritrean and Ethiopian leaders were cut from the same political cloth since they closely collaborated in the battle field to dislodge the Mengistu regime. Nevertheless, one major factor separated the two movements: one was mainly a national liberation movement while the other was primarily an ethnic liberation project. On the Eastern front, Somalia provided material and diplomatic support for the leadership of both the Eritrean and Ethiopian liberation fronts, and the Somali people keenly followed the advances of the two fronts against Mengisú’s military while they also hoped for the fall of the Somali dictator. I remember visiting the border regions of Ethiopia and Somalia after the fall of Mengistu and Siyad Barre where I saw the population relish their new freedoms on either side of the border. The hope was that a new and more progressive political chapter for the region was in the offing.

But the new lords of Ethiopia were steeped in a sanitised imperial orthodoxy. During the first decade in power, Zenawi and his subordinates adopted the same ethnic political logic, tested in Ethiopia’s ethnic provinces, to manipulate Somali affairs in the old Republic. The authorities in Addis Ababa made no effort to reach out to Somali civics, but instead chose warlords and sectarian political actors as their best collaborators.

Once the Somali people realised Ethiopia’s new strategy of “divide and rule” old animosities resurfaced and the Ethiopian occupation of parts of the Somali Republic and its invasion of their country and capital in 2006-08 dashed the last residue of goodwill. Nearly all Somali civic nationalists now see Ethiopia as an enduring enemy.

In the north, the Ethiopian and Eritrean leaders who claimed to be the best of friends slowly drifted towards conflict and imposed a horrible, costly, and unnecessary war on the population. The goodwill which has been nurtured in the battlefield of liberation vanished. After a devastating war which wasted over 100,000 lives, the two regimes consented to arbitration. An international boundary commission was set and both governments guaranteed to accept the commission’s findings. Eritrea immediately embraced the findings once the commission rendered its verdict. Unfortunately Ethiopia has yet to honour its commitment as it introduced new conditions to the process and the international community has failed to enforce the commission’s ruling. Consequently and unfortunately the two countries remain in a virtual state of war.

The Verdict

There is little doubt that history will judge Premier Zenawi as one of the two major leaders in Ethiopian history. His regime will be remembered for holding Ethiopia together as one country even under the centripetal ethnic order which his regime officially introduced. Second, Ethiopian nationalists will celebrate him as the man who invaded Somalia and occupied Mogadishu. Third, his government will be highly regarded for developing the country’s physical and educational infrastructure, and for refreshingly having the ambition of becoming a developmental state. What Ethiopian democrats will not forgive is the regime’s failure to establish a political order and national institutions that have earned the loyalty and respect of the people. The conflation of the regime’s interests with the national cause and the use of the security forces to domesticate the population is not a sustainable strategy if Ethiopia is to ever evolve into a vibrant democracy. The republic of fear must give way to the rule of law to thwart a more foreboding future.

On the regional front, posterity will not be kind to the Zenawi regime as it has totally squandered the opportunity to forge a more peaceful and collaborative relations with Eritrea and Somalia given the goodwill of these two peoples. Allowing Somalis the opportunity to rebuild their government and society in a democratic fashion would have eliminated traditional hostilities between the two countries and boosted their mutuality. Further, this approach would have shifted hundreds of millions of dollars from the war machine to development which is desperately need. Instead of building on that goodwill the regime embarked on a reign of terror to destabilise Eritrea and keep Somalia in its catastrophic condition. Sadly, the attempt to impose regional tyranny will ricochet on Ethiopia and perpetuate the misery of all the peoples in the region. It is not too late to change course and anchor developments on the significant and positive elements of the last two decades, but will there be the wisdom and the will in Addis Ababa?
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Young graduates, industrialists and South African entrepreneurs should be equipped with skills and resources that will enable them to first be ‘laterally-innovative’ which means we would not necessarily create all new products but we would compete in existing value-added product markets.

By Zinhle Khumalo
A typical technological colony has business activities that are mainly driven by an economic reliance on commodities, manufacturing and a trade in products at the end of their product life cycle. This has been putting education above everything – prioritising the education outputs that complement the needs of the productive forces within the economy.

Process: Creating a Nation of Young Skilled Workers

Increased government efficiency and clean governance is essential to our economic drive forward. Resources that are lost through corruption, maladministration, fruitless and wasteful expenditure should be considered as sabotage in the drive for economic freedom in our life time. The youth formations must take a stand against these even if such damaging behavior is emanating from within their own ranks. Lumkile Mondi (Chief economist at the Industrial Development Corporation) once said: “the biggest losers for bad governance in South Africa are not white people but it is the majority of the blacks in this country”. Turning a blind eye amounts to short-sightedness and will undermine the objectives at hand. These resources can be better used to develop new industries and expand the productive systems essential for our objectives.

Giving tax incentives to companies that venture into technology development and new industries, for example consumer electronics, is one way we can increase the productivity of our young nation of workers, as they are technological driven in their day to day living. The State should invest in creating a science, technology and engineering university which will harness the best and brightest minds coming out of schooling system. This institution should collaborate with our research institutions (e.g. CSIR, DST) around the country and abroad. Our association with BRICS countries should be a platform for not only trade but also technical knowledge spilling over to our shores.

Job creation is paramount if we want to create a nation of workers. Young people should be at the forefront of development because they constitute the majority in the country. Brand South Africa has respect amongst African countries. The dominance of South African companies like MTN, Investec and Multichoice in other countries is proof of our ability to exploit markets in other countries. South Africa must target other sectors in these growing economies. South Africa’s growth is directly proportional to the role it plays in the development of other African countries. We must be able to produce products on a large scale that are tailored to the needs of African and other developing countries, as well as for local consumption. The state can also widen the scope of parastatals like Denel to aim at production and lateral-innovation to create skilled young workers and manufacture such products.
Labour unions and government have a critical role to play in reducing red tape. The youth wage subsidy was a good initiative by government because it was aimed at transferring skills to the younger generation. Yes, it is important to guard the interests of workers and to protect them from abuses. However this protection must not stand in the way of progress and impede the development of young workers.

A trade-off between unions and business needs to be reached. There should be a trade-off between wages and youth development. A nation of highly productive young people with competitive salaries is better off than an unemployed young nation resulting from, amongst other things, high uncompetitive salary demands. We need to be decisive about what it is we want as a country. The future leadership will be faced with such decisions and faced with the likelihood of a large middle-aged population group of unskilled and unemployable workers which will be dependent on state social grants for survival.

Content: Quality Education linked to Productive Forces

Deng Xiaoping, the architect of China’s economic reform, once said “education must face modernization, face the world and face the future.” In his four elements of modernisation he rightly recognised science and technology as ‘primary productive force’. Our pursuit for economic freedom in our life time cannot materialise without some sort of technological decolonisation, global competitiveness and self-reliance. South Africa’s educational output should be re-engineered towards these primary productive forces as we have to increase our technical output in engineering, science and technology. The table on this page illustrates some of our technical output in comparison to other countries, both developing and developed. The table shows the much needed output of our technical skills as most if not all of our developmental objectives cannot be achieved without increased technical capability. Our goals in terms of infrastructure development, manufacturing, health care and agriculture, for example, cannot be achieved without investing in the development of the human capital in our primary productive forces.

Young graduates, industrialists and South African entrepreneurs should be equipped with skills and resources that will enable them to first be ‘laterally-innovative’ which means we would not necessarily create all new products but we would compete in existing value-added product markets. This would be the decisive step towards gaining some technological independence by participating in the total life-cycle of products in the market. Optimal Energy, a Cape Town based company which produced Africa’s first electric powered car (the Joule,) is a classic example of what is needed to gain technological decolonisation. Local industrialists and venture capitalists must take advantage of such opportunities. ‘Optimal Energy envisages establishing and leading the electric vehicle industry in South Africa as a springboard to global expansion’, but it should also look at producing vehicles that can compete with cars in fossil-fuel based markets. This would stimulate our competitiveness in the automobile industry.

Repeated efforts of such initiatives in other sectors would set us on the right path towards economic freedom in our life time. We need to break away from of a sense of entitlement as the world does not owe us anything and it will continue to advance in technology, production and innovation with or without us. Deng Xiaoping once said

“We mustn’t fear to adopt the advanced management methods applied in capitalist countries. The very essence of socialism is the liberation and development of the productive systems. Socialism and market economy are not incompatible. We should be concerned about right-wing deviations, but most of all, we must be concerned about left-wing deviations.”

His words should find resonance amongst us as young people. The very essence of ‘economic freedom in our life time’ is driving social redress through self-determination, continuous development, expansion of productive forces through quality education and self-reliance by participation in the total life cycle of products (not by hand-outs). We need to keep in mind that entitlement is an enemy of hard work and innovation; most likely it would lead us to a dependent state.

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“...the day should not be far off, when we shall have a people’s shrine, a Freedom Park, where we shall honour with all the dignity they deserve, those who endured pain so we should experience the joy of freedom.” – Nelson Mandela
The process of vetting cannot monitor the behavioural changes of deployed cadres over time. It behoves the current generation of ANC membership to ask hard and germane questions about what they are; what they want to become; and why they became what they are today.

By Lesetja Marepo
he African National Congress (ANC) has been an organisation of principles, values and a vision. These attributes constituted the life blood of the ANC of yesteryear. They were used in the recruitment and politicisation of cadres and the mass mobilisation of the oppressed majority inside South Africa. It was these values that guided the ANC in its war with the apartheid government that won the ANC the moral high ground in the eyes of the freedom loving world.

Different mechanisms and strategies were used to keep the ANC painstakingly ethical and focused on the National Democratic Revolution. The screening of people joining the organisation was one such methodology that had far-reaching implications in keeping the ANC ethical and moral. The ANC in exile emphasised the screening of people who swelled its ranks in camps such as Quatro, Camp 13, Pango, Quibaxe, Caculama and particularly Viana Transit Camp. The screening process had far-reaching repercussions for the organisation in its quest to liberate South Africa from the juggernaut of oppression. This process was primarily informed by the apartheid forces’ clandestine infiltration proclivities. It also assisted the ANC in determining the future commitment and dedication of the cadres at its disposal. The ANC had a mission for each and every cadre who swelled its ranks. After the screening process the ANC endeavoured to assign individual recruits particular roles in the context of achieving national liberation and freedom for the people of South Africa.

The nature of the liberation struggle explains the military option that most recruits opted for. This was not a strange choice for most of the recruits because the overriding purpose of going into exile was essentially about military training for the eventual overthrow of the apartheid regime. The attainment of freedom on 27 April 1994 in South Africa modified the political landscape and terrain of the struggle. This also affected the determination of people joining the ANC and those that were already in its ranks. Political opportunists and hangers-on, careerists and "staff riders" now joined the ANC and persistently tried to transform its character.

The challenges posed by the transition of the ANC from a national liberation organisation to a powerful ruling party cannot be underestimated nor be overestimated. In the early 1990s the ANC was bursting at the seams with regard to its membership. All that was needed was a meagre R12 to join. The ANC’s cadreship requirement was either vitiated or totally neglected for the sake of burgeoning membership. The floodgates were opened, not only for committed cadres but also for opportunists, peacetime warriors and venal comrades whose penchant for money and political traction knows no bounds. These people are deeply ensconced in the ANC and they have managed to change and dictate the direction of the organisation at least at branch levels. The ANC, well aware of the dangers of transition, clarified, warned and prescribed how to choose cadres to lead the struggle for transformation. The prescription encapsulated in Through the Eye of a Needle? describes the best cadres to lead transformation thus:

“A leader should lead by example. He should be above reproach in his political and social conduct – as defined by our revolutionary morality. Through force of example, he should act as a role model to ANC members and non-members alike. Leading a life that reflects commitment to the strategic goals of the NDR includes not only being free of corrupt practices, it also means actively fighting against corruption.”

This article uses the examples of ANC camps in exile to highlight the abuse of power particularly at local government levels. The article also questions the obvious limitations of declaring branches and individuals as being in good standing on the basis of their continuous renewal of R12 membership.

It is well known that branches and their memberships are activated whenever there are elections. The importance of the screening process as conceptualised in exile by the ANC was lost in the euphoria of freedom when the organisation was unbanned and eventually became a ruling party. All sorts of people are now allowed to join the organisation without proper verification of their credentials and political membership worthiness. The vetting process as done by government security agencies cannot be extended to political parties. The process of vetting cannot monitor the behavioural changes of deployed cadres over time. It behoves the current generation of ANC membership to ask hard and germane questions about what they are; what they want to become; and why they became what they are today.

Why are so many of them unable to look at themselves in the mirror and shudder because of the immoral transformations that they have undergone; why are they unable to produce leaders who are capable of taking up the cudgels against the “demigods” that are aplenty in the organisation and why are they producing these “demigods” in the first place? Because these “demigods” are at the coalface of service delivery in various local governments and because these “demigods” get ‘promoted’ up the political ladder through the three spheres of government, the once proud organisation is surrounded by police in almost all of its major conferences. The seed of political arrogance and indolence, snobbery and egocentricity germinates at the local government sphere and spreads like an infectious disease throughout the ANC and government.

What is really going wrong? An inherently faulty process of leadership production has been allowed into the structures of the movement.
Political branches with permanent or recycled leadership without the general membership is the order of the day. People who are either inactive or politically ostracised for a variety of reasons move to other provinces and ultimately get elected into branch leaderships without proper verification of their political backgrounds. Their elections into branch positions are normally based on their past dubious seniority from where they originate or their marital status. Individuals married to high ranking members of the ANC usually form part of branch leadership. People thus elected seem to think that they are entitled to municipal positions, and in most cases these perceptions are confirmed by deployment to those cushy jobs. They then occupy positions at local government and turn into “demigods” by controlling all levers of power. The ANC declared a long time ago that “There are no ready-made leaders”.¹

Active political self-resuscitation is usually timed to coincide with major political changes in the country. National or local elections are usually used as preparatory mechanisms for personal promotions and deployment in newly created government and related parastatal opportunities. In some cases the aging generation in the ANC uses its influence and political pedigree to pave the way for its children and grandchildren to occupy influential positions in society. The only contribution that these offspring bring into the organisation is that “I was in exile in Botswana, Swaziland and we eventually settled in Zimbabwe”. The truth is that these children were born of parents who were in exile. Loyalty, long standing familial friendships and business partnerships amongst their parents has ensured that some of these children are appointed “Chiefs of Staff” or “Media Liaison Officers” in different ministerial officers at national and provincial government levels. Therein lies the genesis of “demigods” syndrome because meritocracy is thrown out of the window. What happened to clearly spelt out organisational guidelines on deployment such as this one:

Deployment and Redeployment: this must be according to specificity, aptitude, qualification and capability.

“After the screening process the ANC endeavoured to assign individual recruits particular roles in the context of achieving national liberation and freedom for the people of South Africa.”

Though in principle a revolutionary must be ready to serve in any capacity, in practice the aptitudes and wishes of individuals should be taken into consideration wherever possible. Cadres should be correctly placed and promoted at the right time so that they may fully apply their talents and creativity.² Ordinary members of branches are not effectively involved in the election of branch leadership. The list process or what is termed “slates” stifles the aspirations of general members because in most cases those lists are just presented without any proper and open process of selection of potential candidates for branch leadership. The same process of leadership election is followed at regional level and eventually at provincial and national levels. Members who attend elective regional conferences are selected on the basis of their known support for certain pre-identified candidates. Failure to declare preference for certain individual candidates prior to conferences may limit chances of elective conference attendance. Support for identified individuals amounts to later recompense in the form of a cushy job, a tender or a straightforward monetary compensation. Factions in the Movement are traceable to this process of flawed leadership elections and the attendant benefits. The assumption turned practice in that a regional political head will be a district mayor and his/her deputy a municipal manager. Qualifications and aptitude have been banished. The fact that people have been elected into positions of leadership that they know they don’t deserve has all sorts of implications.

Dissatisfied factions work around the clock to right the wrongs of conferences until the next elective conferences are held; the incumbent leadership is aware of the unfairness of tenure and corruptly amasses as much wealth as possible through underhand methods. Venality or what the internationally renowned investigative journalist, John Pilger, calls “the extreme political cult of money worship” starts here.³ Communities observe warring factions that are at each other’s throats and conclude that the vanquished faction just wants to be in power and behave like the sitting leadership.

Call a meeting – nobody attends and branches are declared not to be in good standing. The declaration of branches as in good standing or otherwise is too knotty to be unravelled to everybody’s satisfaction. But there is a lot that can be done to improve what is glaringly a grey area. Declaration of branch preference should remain a secret until elections are held at elective conferences. The practice of declaring preferred candidates before the conference has been exploited to such an extent that comrades who deviate from branch or provincial nomination preference are left out when provinces are requested to send delegates to conference.

Limpopo and North West provinces (as far as the 2012 Mangaung ANC elective conference is concerned) not only manipulated this nomination process but they seem to have written
manuals on how to rig candidates’ nomination process. Branches should wield powers to declare their leaders not to be in good standing and not the other way round. This declaration should be informed not only by the ability of individual members to pay R12 for five years but also by the ability to be honest and loyal to the organisation. An attempt to flout and manipulate organisational rules and regulations should be declared organisationally treasonable.

People attending conferences should declare their roles when asked to do so. Fancy cars outside conference venues with shady characters asking conference attendees for their leadership preferences during conference adjournments should be prohibited at conference venues. These are characters that carry a lot of cash and cell phone airtime that they distribute to potential conference candidates once their choice of preferred candidates has been declared. Conference sponsors should declare their interest in ensuring that conferences are run as organised and not for their preferred candidates to be elected into positions of power. The separation of political office and public professional life would be a welcome relief. Positions of authority in public life should be opened for anyone who has the requisite aptitude, experience and subscription to the incumbent government’s policies.

In the final analysis, the ANC should emphasise or revive political education that is based on its ideology, history and its dictates as a ruling party. The much vaunted political school’s curricula should be all-encompassing if the ANC’s march to self-immolation is to be stopped.

In the final analysis, the ANC should emphasise or revive political education that is based on its ideology, history and its dictates as a ruling party. The much vaunted political school’s curricula should be all-encompassing if the ANC’s march to self-immolation is to be stopped.

The political commissars who imparted a lot of political education in ANC camps in exile should be roped in and contribute effectively towards the development of curricula in the ANC political school. Well-schooled ANC political school products would not annihilate one another for a political office. It is only semi-digested graduates of a political school who would take the ANC to court, question its decisions and utter unspeakable profanities against any leader or any office within the movement. The fact that the Mangaung conference put the setting up of a political school on the pedestal is an encouraging portent in the right direction. There should be no wavering on adherence to organisational policies and implementations amongst deployed cadres in all spheres of government. The political education will also teach ‘cadres’ that people who are schooled in ANC policies cannot be pompous or selfish and cannot guard coteries of friendships founded on self-protection and monetary gains. The ANC has reached a stage where it is interpreted as a vehicle to riches by hook or by crook. This perception has to change if the organisation is to be saved from implosion, court battles and lingering power struggles that impact very negatively on service delivery. The lull in political activism amongst the ANC’s membership and its sudden reactivation when important political episodes such as local, regional or national elective conferences are held should be questioned and investigated.

Comrades whose political activism is based on personal enrichment should be exposed and curtailed rather than encouraged. Factionalism for political favouritism and self-aggrandisement is debilitating for rank and file members of the organisation. It also has a negative effect on those cadres of the movement whose political aspirations are genuine but their intentions misconstrued whenever they engage in any political discourse. The dissolution of branches on the spurious grounds of not meeting questionable criteria; the hogging of branch positions by members for deployment benefits and power invested in the hands of branch or regional leadership carry the seeds of the ANC’s self-destruction. The ANC should assign its deployees tasks according to aptitudes and political aspirations based on societal expectations and requirements. Deployees should be evaluated and monitored by the people they serve lest the organisation continue to produce en masse “demigods” who think that the ANC is defined and practiced by them only. In summation, members of the Youth League should be thoroughly “politically re-schooled”. Youth League members should be taught that the ANC’s march to self-immolation is to be stopped.

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No glory without sacrifice

The only thing we can do now is to try as hard to encourage our people to be more innovative, work twice harder than everybody else and come up with new ways of making sure that we eradicate poverty and joblessness in our communities. We can easily do that, we just need to have self-confidence and show more respect to each other.

By Vusumzi Nobadula

Celebrity R&B singer and actor Keabetswe Motsilanyane, popularly known as KB, made the following profound statement in one of the scenes in Rhythm City some time last year, where she plays the role of Lucilla: “Creativity is 10 percent inspiration and 90 percent perspiration.”

She was talking to the “talented but unpredictable” Shado (real name Samela Tyelbooi) in an attempt to convince her to take her music career very seriously if she wanted to succeed in the dog-eat-dog music industry.

For the purpose of advancing my main argument here, I will make use of the liberties provided by the principle of poetic licence and rejig the above statement to mean that “there is no glory without sacrifice”.

Molefi Kete Asante, the US-based Afrocentric scholar, addressing the Unesco-sponsored international conference themed “The Route of the Slaves” held in Lisbon, Portugal, on December 9 to 12, 1998, made a similar observation about the risks taken by European invaders in the 16th century in their quest to conquer the new world, implying that it was pure bravery and grit on their part to travel by sea, as the ocean is more daunting than the desert.

Asante says it is not racial difference that has been a problem in discovering the ideological basis of the enslavement of Africans, but rather the idea of racial hierarchy, developed, refined and disseminated by Europeans who prosecuted the slave trade for three centuries. He says in part:

“All of us here are aware that the magnitude of the European forced migration of Africans has no peer in history. In its extraordinary reach into another continent and its equally overcoming of horrendous obstacles on land and the high seas, the European enterprise dwarfed all other examples of similar social and economic constructions. The sea, more daunting in ways than the desert, made the journey more perilous than any other forced migration of people. Yet it is also true that the magnitude of the so-called ‘trade’ must be measured in terms of the multiplicity of legacies, historical and contemporary, that it created. In the wake of the most mammoth forced movement of people over a period of centuries we see the very beginnings of the modern world, and, indeed, the post-modern world is, in effect, the creation of the same legacies.”

The results of taking such risks – something that can be equated with the “first move advantage” as in the game of chess, put those who made such first moves during the Age of Discovery at a comfortable advantage as opposed to those who remained in their natural place of abode, as Martin Jacques explains in the Guardian newspaper on September 20, 2003, in an article headlined “The global hierarchy of race” the Caucasoid race continues to reap the benefits emanating from such odysseys to this day. Jacques elaborates:

“In our 14 months in Hong Kong, I learnt some brutal lessons about racism. Every race displays racial prejudice, is capable of racism, carries assumptions about its own virtue and superiority. Each racism, furthermore, is subtly different, reflecting the specificity of its own culture and history. Second, there is a global racial hierarchy that helps to shape the power and the prejudices of each race. At the top of this hierarchy are whites. The reasons are deep-rooted and profound. White societies have been the global top dogs for half a millennium (500 years), ever since Chinese civilisation went into decline. With global hegemony, first with Europe and then the United States, whites have long commanded respect, as well as arousing fear and
resentment, among other races. “Being white confers a privilege, a
special kind of deference, throughout the
world, be it in Kingston, Hong
Kong, Delhi, Lagos – or even, despite the
way it is portrayed in Britain, Harare. Whites are the only race that
never suffers any kind of systematic
racism anywhere in the world. And the
impact of white racism has been far
more profound and baneful than any
other: it remains the only racism with
global reach. Being on top of the pile
means that whites are peculiarly and
uniquely insensitive to race and racism, and the power relations this involves.”

Let me point out from the onset that
Asante was actually not in praise of the
Caucasoid race, he was simply making
an observation. I use his observation
here to drive home the main thrust of
my thesis that “there is no glory without
sacrifice”.

Again, as an express purpose
of sticking to the topical question,
I would as well intimate that KB's
statement can be stretched to refer
not only to the creative arts, but to
be used as a reference for all other
human interactions, more so in the
art of governance, as this form of
human activity is the one that is always
hanging as a dark cloud over our
heads as ordinary citizens. Politicians
control every aspect of our lives, from
the cradle to the grave, and it
very important to point out that total
commitment to service delivery is the
single most important obligation that
any mandated cadre of public servants
must take seriously and duly carry out if
indeed it/they/he/she is determined to
serve humanity. In this regard, action
speaks louder than words. Those put
into positions of power must walk the
talk and no amount of public posturing
in August conferences is going to make
any difference to marginalised people’s
lives if those tasked with bringing
positive change to the lives of these
people dismally fail to do so.

Great thinkers with far-reaching
insight and conviction seem to possess
a natural ability to see things way before
the rest of us mere mortals are able to
do so. The late academic and freedom
fighter, Robert Sobukwe, emphasised
this aspect of the need for us to make
sacrifices for the benefit of future
generations to come. His clarion call
during his days of social and political
activism centred on the motto that was
adopted by the organisation he helped
found, the Pan Africanist Congress,
which was “Serve, Suffer, Sacrifice”.
(Simphiwe Sesanti, “Sobukwe – A role
model then, now”, Sowetan Live, April
16, 2012)

The big mistake we made as a people
is that, first, we didn’t heed such a call
from this great man and second, we
were not supposed to have jettisoned
our core moral values with reference to
our economic system even if historical
imperatives compelled us to adopt new
ways of economic sustenance because of
the introduction of mechanised
farming and industrialisation by foreign
invaders.

Arguably, the scholar who best
brings to life our way of life before our
complete deculturisation as a result of
conquest, is Dr Pallo Jordan. Writing
a foreword to Tales from Southern
Africa, a book written by his father,
AC Jordan (2004), he expands on this
particular aspect of the loss of historical
and national consciousness alluded to
above. He writes:

“The central institution in the
traditional societies of South Africa was
the popular assembly. It breathed the
spirit of community life, embracing the
economic, political, and ethical outlook
of the community. All men participated
fully in the affairs of the assembly,
hence there were no paid legislators,
and there was no clear distinction
between the political authority and the
citizens of the realm. The king or chief
presided over the assembly in council
with advisers drawn from among the
populace on the basis of merit and
experience.

“In his political function the king
was mediator between disputants
among his people. The main concern
of his office was the reconciliation of
parties rather than the interpretation of
points of law. He also symbolised the
unity and integrity of the community.
As such, any injury done to one of his
people was considered an injury against
his person . . . The ethos of traditional
society was enshrined in an oral, legal,
religious, and literary tradition through
which the community transmitted from
generation to generation its customs,
values, and norms.

“Into this picture, from about the
middle of the 17th century, intruded a
new factor, destined to transform
and finally destroy the traditional African
community. For the next 200 years
European expansion steadily pounded
at the foundations of African societies
until they finally collapsed under the
weight of the bombardment. The
Africans resisted with all the power
they could muster, but, through a
combination of territorial annexation
and forced acculturation, the gun
prevailed over the spear. Thus began
a chapter in the history of South Africa,
characterised by the total transformation
of human relations.”

In conclusion, I would like to say
that the only thing we can do now is to
try as hard to encourage our people to
be more innovative, work twice harder
than everybody else and come up
with new ways of making sure that we
eradicate poverty and joblessness in our
communities. We can easily do that,
we just need to have self-confidence
and show more respect to each other.
In his book Capitalist Nigger: The Road
to Success the US-based Nigerian
writer and former editor-in-chief of the
African Sun Times newspaper, Dr Chika
Onyeani spells out clearly how
this can be done. The problem is that
if we fail to do so, the ongoing crises
in almost all spheres of our country’s
economic activity, sadly highlighted by
the Marikana tragedy a few months ago
and the militant De Doorns industrial
action by farm workers just recently,
will continue to plague this country to
the point of irreversible moral decay
and economic collapse. Surely, no sane
person here wants to see that happen.

Also, it is clear that political freedom
without economic justice is not enough.
On that score, we definitely
need to convene a national economic
summit as a matter of urgency – an
economic Codesa, so to speak – that
will look at all the problems this country
is faced with on the labour and moral
fronts, where all the stakeholders will
have an equal opportunity to thrash
out their concerns and grievances, so
that our country can have a clear way
forward for the sake of a healthy socio-
economic development of our children
and their progeny – in their lifetime.”
BEE can and must be transformative

Dr Penuell Maduna is the chairman of SAB Zenzele Pty Ltd, which holds BBBEE participations rights in South African Breweries.

By Dr Penuell Maduna

Black economic empowerment (BEE) has to a large degree been tainted by the association with high profile beneficiaries of BEE, who may or may not be perceived to be connected to the ruling party and therefore close to the seat of power. With this notion comes a tendency for BEE to become about an anointed few. In contrast, the transaction by South African Breweries (SAB), called SAB Zenzele, was specifically designed to be broad-based and innovative.

It sought to ensure from the beginning that the beneficiaries were ordinary men and women, previously disadvantaged SAB staff members, tavern owners and members of the broader society, through the SAB Foundation, and not a few high profile individuals. When I was invited onto the board as a member and eventually chairman, I accepted gladly, as it was an opportunity for me to add value by providing leadership.

As South African capitalists and business people, we know that a lot is possible and we can extend economic and other opportunities to a whole host of people who have previously been excluded and neglected. Beyond mere compliance with existing laws and policies, BEE is an imperative of South African business. It is in the self-interest of business to ensure that gradually the colouration and gender component of business changes in this country.

Every time I have the honour of chairing the SAB Zenzele annual general meeting (AGM), I am reminded of what is possible when you allow BEE to be truly transformative. One reason I accepted the opportunity to serve in this role was what I saw when I examined the details of how the initiative had been constructed. Thirty thousand taverners, operators, and owners of what we used to call speakeasies were given an opportunity to own a stake in the company that is one of the major suppliers of what they
trade, namely beer. I have personally witnessed its transformative power on several levels, which has filled me with immense pride and gratitude.

One of the first opportunities that arose from the SAB Zenzele BEE transaction was giving those shebeen owners who applied to participate in the scheme, the incentive and opportunity to become or operate licensed businesses. No longer would they be fugitives from the law, who ran the risk of being raided, arrested and their money literally poured down the drain, and with it their livelihood and only means to support their families. One mother in Alexandra Township, a previous shebeen owner, has been able to use the dividends to create an infrastructure that allows her to feed scores of children. Many of them are orphans and the food she provides them with will often be the only meal they receive that day. Her transformation from an illegal shebeen to valued member of the community has not only influenced how she is viewed, but also how she feels about herself.

She is but one of many examples of people who no longer have to “bob and weave” as smugglers or bootleggers of sorts. We have been empowered to help people to move from a state of lawlessness to become legal and legitimate businesses. They have now also joined the tax pool and are adding to the fiscus.

This has also allowed SAB to help them with business skills, with training programmes on how to trade responsibly and curb alcohol abuse, as well as ensuring they comply with liquor laws and don’t risk losing those hard earned opportunities, which has also had a transformative impact.

The very fact that she and other shareholders of SAB Zennele are already able to receive dividends twice a year is a remarkable achievement of this transaction. One of the most unique features of SAB Zennele is the payment of cash dividends to shareholders from the first year. Retailers who acquired the minimum allocation of shares for R100 will this year receive more than R269 in dividends for the first six months, or 2.7 times their initial investment, while at the top end retailers will receive up to R1 811. A cumulative R111 million in dividends has now been paid to SAB Zennele Holdings since the launch of the transaction.

Notwithstanding their dividends paid out to date, at the end of the 10 year transaction period, their Zennele shares will be transferred into SABMiller plc shares. In other words, they will be shareholders in a global company, in fact, the second largest beer brewer in the world, without the need for any political connection. If that is not empowerment, I'm not sure what is.

The enthusiasm with which each AGM is met continues to astound. Shareholders literally arrive in their thousands and they can make decisions in their own company. And those of us who have the honour and privilege of providing leadership are held accountable by them and submit to an election process by them. I remember they asked me at last year’s AGM what was in it for me, and I said “Nothing. As an independent director, I am not employed by SAB, nor am I a shareholder of SAB Zennele”.

They asked why there were not more board members, and we said we can include more, but that would come at an additional financial cost. They voted to keep the number of board members the same. They were empowered.

I had previously been used to AGMs with a handful of shareholders attending, or scores at most. The order of business would usually be concluded within thirty minutes. Not only are our SAB Zennele shareholders enthusiastic, they are hungry for knowledge. Some have proudly told me how their children (sometimes grandchildren) take them through their notice of the AGM, giving them the opportunity of using audited financial statements of a real company as they study subjects like Accounting. They learnt about the workings of the Companies Act. The children too are empowered by being able to apply what they are learning in school, thanks to “granny’s business.” Understanding that their participation rights have real long term value has also led many to ask questions about, and start, estate planning, again something they have never be exposed to or previously reflected on before because there was, until now very little to bequeath.

At the risk of plagiarism, once you are standing on the summit, you get a totally different view of where you are. Ordinary shareholders of SAB Zennele are increasingly in a position where they begin to see how business works, as well as to identify opportunities available in the larger economy. Some have asked about prospects for more participation rights in the share scheme, as they have seen first-hand the power of true empowerment. Some have even begun seeing opportunities elsewhere in the economy and other industries.

I am a product of the Republic of South Africa. I’m grateful to live in a country where since liberation, schemes such as SAB Zennele give us the opportunity work with ordinary people and see them become different from how or what they were at the point of entry. They give us a privilege each year when they vote us in to lead them - and one that we don’t dare take for granted.
The growing importance of technology in economic and social development in the developing world

Service and technology are the differentiators between countries that are able to tackle poverty effectively by growing and developing their economies, and those that are not.

By Lee-Roy Chetty

Technological innovation and Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) represent a way for nations within the developing world to foster economic development, improve levels of education and training as well as address gender issues within society.

In many emerging nations it is a major challenge to gain access to capital and market information. Developing nations specifically do not have functioning infrastructure or much in the way of financial resources.

In sub-Saharan Africa for example, approximately 29% of roads are paved, barely a quarter of the population has access to electricity, and there are fewer than three landlines available per 100 people.

In Indonesia, 75% of the country has household incomes below $2.50 per day. The combination of poor infrastructure and poverty makes it difficult for citizens to access financial resources and information.

However, a basic form of technology – such as a simple mobile phone – has been proved to assist people communicate with one another, access market information, sell products across geographic areas, reach new consumers, enter mobile payment systems, reduce fraud and crime and empower women and the disadvantaged.

With mobile phones and tablets proliferating at a significant rate, these communications tools enable women, the disadvantaged, and other individuals to access a broader range of investors, suppliers, and customers. Combined with social media platforms, people can extend their reach through mobile devices and pool resources in meaningful ways.

The Self-Employed Women’s Association (Sewa) in India includes 1.1 million workers who pool their resources to improve their bargaining power. The organisation sends agricultural workers daily SMSs on commodity prices so farmers can determine the best places to sell their products. Those participating say they have been able to market fruits and vegetables over wider areas and thereby earn higher incomes.

The Ethiopia Commodity Exchange Program (ECEP) has helped entrepreneurs expand their markets. Before 2008, 95% of farmers sold their products in local markets and were not able to access other areas. Transaction costs were high and they had problems getting fair prices due to the lack of market competition. With the advent of the ECEP, agricultural producers gained access to external buyers and
were able to negotiate better prices. This boosted their incomes and improved the quality of food products. The India-based Hand in Hand Partnership (HIHP) enables women to use mobile devices to launch businesses in the technology area. It provides mentorship, training, credit, and technical support.

In Kenya, the Farmers Helpful Network (FHN) gives agricultural producers access to the latest research through their mobile phones. Farmers can ask questions of experts concerning crop rotation, artificial insemination, and crop insurance. This helps them improve their agricultural production and marketing, and increase their overall income.

Access to mobile technology is particularly important for females because there are, globally, 300 million fewer women than men who own mobile devices. Overall, there is a 21% gender gap in owning a phone worldwide, but this number rises to 23% in Africa, 24% in the Middle East, and 37% in Asia.

Wireless communications also plays an important role in education and training.

In Indonesia, the Global Ready eTraining Center programme has trained over 1000 students in technology services. Those enrolled get vouchers for a three-month programme. More than 95% of the individuals enrolled completed the class, and 75% said the course increased their income as a result of the skills acquired in the program.

A survey undertaken by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) found that 55% of women around the world earned additional income due to owning a mobile phone and 41% increased their income and professional opportunities.

Mobile payment systems represent a way to reduce the cost of financial transactions and thereby help entrepreneurs. If people can transfer funds quickly and efficiently, it becomes easier for small and medium-sized businesses to sell their products. This improves the efficiency of the marketplace and removes barriers to growth.

Reducing “friction” is very important in African, Asian, and Latin American financial markets because barriers to financial transactions remain quite high. Only 30% of those who live in developing African nations have bank accounts.

In short, mobile technology offers extensive help on various forms of social and economic development.

Wireless communications broaden access to information, improve capital access, overcome geographic limitations, and expand market access. However, the continued and equitable expansion of Information Communication Technology (ICT) depends on electricity. The real divide over the next 20 years will be between those who have access to reliable electricity to power these devices and those who do not.

"Access to mobile technology is particularly important for females because there are, globally, 300 million fewer women than men who own mobile devices. Overall, there is a 21% gender gap in owning a phone worldwide, but this number rises to 23% in Africa, 24% in the Middle East, and 37% in Asia."

To promote technological advances, developing countries should invest in quality education for youth, continuous skills training for workers and managers, and should ensure that knowledge is shared as widely as possible across society.

In a world in which the Internet makes information ubiquitous, what counts is the ability to use knowledge intelligently. Knowledge is the systemically integrated information that allows a citizen, a worker, a manager, or a finance minister to act purposefully and intelligently in a complex and demanding world. The only form of investment that allows for increasing returns is in building the stocks and flows of knowledge that a country or organisation needs, and in encouraging new insights and techniques.

Adopting appropriate technologies leads directly to higher productivity, which is the key to growth.

In societies that have large stock and flows of knowledge, virtuous circles that encourage widespread creativity and technological innovation emerge naturally, and allow sustained growth over long periods. In societies with limited stocks of knowledge, bright and creative people feel stifled and emigrate as soon as they can, creating a vicious circle that traps those who remain in a more impoverished space. Such societies stay mired in poverty and dependency.

The investment climate is crucial, as are the right incentive structures, to guide the allocation of resources, and to encourage research and development. Successful countries have grown their ability to innovate and learn by doing, by investing public funding to help finance research and development in critical areas. Everyone is involved – big and small, public and private, rich and poor.

The benefits that are certain to flow from the technological revolution in an increasingly connected and knowledge-intensive world will be seized by those countries and companies that are alive to the rapidly changing environment, and nimble enough to take advantage of the opportunities. Those that succeed will make substantial advances in reducing poverty and inequality.

Access and application are however, critical.

Service and technology are the differentiators between countries that are able to tackle poverty effectively by growing and developing their economies, and those that are not. The extent to which developing economies emerge as economic powerhouses depends on their ability to grasp and apply insights from science and technology and use them creatively. Innovation is the primary driver of technological growth and drives higher living standards.
SOUTH AFRICA’S “EXCEPTIONAL UNEMPLOYMENT”

Is tax the silver bullet?

The report actually finds that effective tax rates and regulations represent the least important of all obstacles to doing business in South Africa, amounting to only 0.7% of all obstacles according to their business survey.

By Itumeleng Rantao

In August 2012, economist Chris Hart made headlines by classifying South Africa’s unemployment levels as “exceptional”. As reported, he compared the unemployment situation here to the employment success story of Brazil, and counselled that taxation policies, not labour laws, were to blame for our persistent unemployment problem.

This focus on a reduction in taxation is in line with the New Growth Path (NGP), wherein government has announced its desire to attract more foreign direct investment (FDI) in manufacturing by implementing low effective taxation rates. FDI is viewed as critical for development. Given the recently-announced 43.6% drop in foreign direct investment (FDI) to South Africa this year, in the context of rising FDI to the continent as a whole, lowering effective taxes is being seen as a silver bullet of sorts.

Chris Hart is right; unemployment is a critical problem faced by South Africa. This year, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) reported that in South Africa only 40 per cent of those of working age have jobs, compared to 65 per cent in Brazil. But we can take the case of Brazil and draw some very different conclusions about what direction South Africa should take in tackling its unemployment problem.

Cross-country studies conducted by the World Bank in 2011 have indicated that lowering effective taxes can indeed attract investment, reduce tax evasion, enhance the creation of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and ultimately raise sales and gross domestic product (GDP). Small and medium enterprises are rapidly being seen as the solution to South Africa’s persistent youth unemployment. A study by Trade and Industrial Policy Strategies (TIPS) provides a solid basis for this belief, finding that between 1985 and 2005 90% of all formal jobs in South Africa were created by small, micro and medium enterprises (SMMEs). As such, reducing effective taxes with an objective of attracting manufacturing FDI and creating SMEs is being seen as a means of resolving this market failure.

But the 2012 World Economic Forum (WEF) global competitive report indicates that in South Africa tax is not the problem. The report actually finds that effective tax rates and regulations represent the least important of all obstacles to doing business in South Africa, amounting to only 0.7% of all obstacles according to their business survey.

So if taxation is not South Africa’s major problem, what is? The report finds that leading obstacles to expanding the private sector in South Africa through SMEs and FDI are an inadequately educated labour force, and restrictive labour regulations. These cannot be resolved by tampering with the effective tax rate as initially believed by government, and advocated by Chris Hart.

What can be said of the Brazilian example? Like South Africa, Brazil has very stringent labour laws. However, according to the same WEF report, stringent labour laws in Brazil only account for 10.1% of obstacles to doing business there, whereas they account for 18.5% in South Africa. Crucial barriers to doing business in Brazil appear to be tax regulations, accounting for 18.7% of all obstacles, inadequate supply of infrastructure (17.5% of obstacles), and effective tax rate (17.2% of obstacles).

Despite this, Brazil has managed to substantially increase its employment levels while South Africa has not. Since 2003, Brazil managed to create 8 million formal jobs before the 2008 global financial crisis, which shed 600 000 jobs. Post crisis, Brazil doubled its pre-September 2008 job creation rate.

Lessons from Brazil seem to indicate that both supply-side and demand-side matter. Increased school coverage and increased fiscalisation of labour nurtured and improved skills of the labour force in Brazil. This complemented and accelerated the creation of SMEs and attracted FDI, which led to a recovery of growth which, in turn, impacted on the elasticity of the demand for labour.

Perhaps the most important underlying lesson here is context. In Brazil, major obstacles to expanding the private sector include tax regulations, infrastructure and high effective tax rates.

In contrast, in the case of South Africa, pressing issues include an inadequately trained labour force and restrictive labour laws. South Africa ranks 143 out of 144 countries on hiring and firing practices, and 140 on flexibility of wage determination according to the WEF global competitive index. Brazil ranks significantly higher on these scales (114 and 118 respectively).

As such, it only makes sense for South Africa to focus on labour laws in the short term, and education in the longer term so as to create a favourable business environment. Government is on the right track amending labour laws, because in South Africa, tax, on its own, is definitely not the silver bullet.
ALL THE GAMES
LONDON 2012 OLYMPIC GAMES.
ALL THE SPIRIT. ALL THE PAIN. ALL THE RECORDS.
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AVAILABLE ON DSTV
Message to the European Commission Joint Research Centres from the Minister of Science and Technology of the Republic of South Africa

By Derek Hanekom
C ooperation with the Joint Research Centre is, from a South African perspective, one of the cornerstones of our strategic science and technology partnership with the European Union. I therefore greatly appreciate the opportunity to contribute an editorial message for the JRC’s newsletter. In November last year, I was honoured to host Commissioner Geoghegan-Quinn in South Africa for a series of events, which marked fifteen years of implementation of the South Africa-EU Agreement on Scientific and Technological Cooperation. On that occasion we had expressed our commitment, building on the successes of the past, to expand and deepen our cooperation. I was therefore delighted that less than a month after the Commissioner’s visit a first concrete step in this direction was taken through the signature of the Collaboration Arrangement between the JRC and the South African National Space Agency (SANSA). Focused notably on cooperation in Earth observation, to support for example disaster prevention or the management of natural resources, the JRC’s cooperation with SANSA is an excellent example of collaboration in addressing our shared objective to put science and technology at the service of society.

The JRC’s mission to harness scientific knowledge and expertise to inform policy- and decision-making in support of sustainable development is one with which South Africa fully associates. We are therefore keen to encourage enhanced cooperation between the JRC and South African institutions, such as our Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), which have similar mandates. The main societal challenges confronting our planet, such as fighting pandemic disease, improving food security, increasing the efficiency of renewable energy, protecting biodiversity, addressing climate change, supporting sustainable livelihoods and alleviating poverty, all require a concerted research and innovation effort. These are shared global challenges and cannot be addressed by nations or regions in isolation. International cooperation in science and technology is a critical, essential component of the response required. In this regard, the JRC should be lauded for its exemplary initiatives to foster a diverse, rich range of international partnerships, of which South Africa is privileged to form part.

Whether within the context of our bilateral South Africa-EU partnership, or within the framework of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy, or as part of different multilateral alliances, South Africa is keen to step up its cooperation with the JRC. We stand ready to contribute our experience and expertise as part of joint knowledge generation efforts. Our cooperation should extend to ensuring science-based information and advisory products and services are more readily available to governments and user communities who need them. We should also exploit opportunities for capacity-building including through training and staff exchange programmes.

As global citizens, with inextricably linked destinies, we share the considerable responsibility to promote sustainable growth, enhance environmental protection and improve the quality of living of citizens worldwide. Despite many scientific and technological advances our planet during these early years of the twenty-first century in many respects remains a fragile one. Reinforced global partnership and solidarity is essential if we are to enhance our collective resilience and achieve the objectives of the global sustainable development compact. International cooperation in science and technology will not only provide us with instruments to achieve these objectives but also facilitate improved understanding, communication and friendship between nations and peoples. The case for partnership is therefore compelling. It is a cause espoused with vigour and commitment by South Africa, and we know, by our valued partners, the JRC and the European Commission.
The ‘handing-over’ of Western Sahara to Morocco and Mauritania, despite the UN continuing to treat Western Sahara as a colony, ushered in a period of armed struggle by the POLISARIO Front against the two occupation forces (Morocco in the north and Mauritania in the south) in the quest to liberate the territory.

By Lebogang Rasethaba, Botshelo Motuba and Mbuso Ndlovu
A few months ago we read of a ‘lone’ Moroccan patriot who temporarily defaced three South African government websites (Business Day; ‘Hacker defends Morocco from SA villainy’, Thabiso Mochiko, 10 December 2012). We were later to learn that the primary motivation behind this cyber-warfare on the South African government was as a result of Pretoria’s recognition and support of the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR). According to the supposedly Moroccan nationalistic inclined hacker who goes by the name “H4ksniper”, he hacked the websites because: “…SA is supporting the [SADR] and is considered an [enemy] of Morocco…I’m just defending my country”. As much as H4ksniper has every right to defend his country, it would be more appropriate for him to rather say: “I’m just defending my country’s illegal occupation of Western Sahara.”

We do thank H4ksniper for one thing though: that is bringing the attention of the South African media and public to the plight of the people of Western Sahara, a territory regarded as Africa’s last colony. We had the opportunity of visiting the Western Sahara refugee camps last year, for the purpose of shooting a documentary on these forgotten peace-loving people and their struggle for independence.

Rivers of ink have been spilt by numerous analysts in this country decrying political apathy amongst our generation, commonly referred to as the ‘Kwaito generation’, after the township dance genre more renowned for its negative connotations than positive ones. Determined not to be defined by our predecessors, we took to heart Frantz Fanon’s clarion call that: “Each generation must out of relative obscurity discover its mission, fulfill it or betray it”.

In May 2012, we as young filmmakers decided to take the long journey from the southern tip of the African continent to its northern end. Our voyage to Algeria was not borne out of the desire to see the tourist attractions of the country where Nelson Mandela and other African liberation movements received military training during the anti-colonial liberation struggles. The latter consideration led the great son of Africa from Guinea-Bissau, Amilcar Cabral, to famously name Algeria as the Mecca of revolutionaries!

Our main interest in travelling to Algeria was to visit the Western Sahara refugee camps next to the military town of Tindouf, which is located in the heart of the harsh Sahara desert, south-west of Algeria. The purpose of this visit was to attend the 9th Edition of the Western Sahara Film Festival commonly known as the FISAHARA Festival. The aim of this festival is, amongst other things, to raise international awareness of the refugees’ situation in the international community and to enable the Saharawis to tell their own story through film by leaving a lasting legacy of skills and equipment in the camps. We have completed a video documentary on the plight of the Western Sahara refugees which is scheduled to be released in early 2013.

"The aim of this festival is, amongst other things, to raise international awareness of the refugees’ situation in the international community and to enable the Saharawis to tell their own story through film by leaving a lasting legacy of skills and equipment in the camps.""

As young South African filmmakers, we are of the view that it is important to engage our generational counterparts with issues pertaining to struggles for self-determination and independence as we can all relate to these issues relative to our understanding of them via our own similar history. On another level, we are still very pretentious and superficial as a human race when we use terms like “post-colonial” when there are still colonial appendages on the continent, most notably Western Sahara. Our generation, a post-apartheid group, find ourselves grappling with the angst attached to the question, “now what are we supposed to do?” Well here, we feel, is a worthy and just cause that people should at the very least be aware of, and of course with this type of situation, one can never do too much.

It is within this context that we wish to provide our perspective on the issue of Western Sahara as understood by us young South Africans.

For the initiated, the inalienable right of the Saharawi people to self-determination was first confirmed in 1960, following the adoption of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 1514(XV) also known as the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. At the time, Western Sahara was claimed by both Morocco and Mauritania.

In 1963, Western Sahara was placed on the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories under Chapter XI of the UN Charter. The list included the territories whose people had at that time not yet attained a full measure of self-government. On 16 December 1965, the UNGA adopted resolution 2072 on Spanish Sahara (Western Sahara), in which it recalled resolution 1514(XV) and requested Spain to take all necessary measures to liberate “Spanish Sahara from colonial domination”. As a result of this resolution, Spain was also recognised as the “administering power” of the territory in line with article 73(e) of the UN Charter.

In 1974, Spain announced plans to decolonise Western Sahara through a referendum to be held within a year. Pre-empting a probable choice for independence by the Saharawi people, the Moroccan government demanded an opinion from the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on Morocco’s historical claim to the territory. As such, the ICJ’s opinion was announced on 16 October 1975 and held amongst others that: “…the Court’s conclusion is that the materials and information presented to it do not establish any tie of territorial sovereignty between the territory of Western Sahara and the Kingdom of Morocco or the Mauritanian entity. Thus the Court has not found legal ties of such a nature as might affect the application of resolution 1514(XV) in
the decolonisation of Western Sahara and, in particular, of the principle of self-determination through the free and genuine expression of the will of the peoples of the Territory”.

In the aftermath of this landmark ruling affirming the right of the Saharawi people to self-determination, Morocco’s King Hassan II announced that 350,000 Moroccan civilians would walk into Western Sahara to claim the territory. This defiant act by Morocco would be known as the ‘Green March’. In view of the foregoing, it needs to be highlighted that on 6 November 1975, the UN Security Council in its resolution 380 “deplored” the holding of the Moroccan ‘Green March’ into Western Sahara, and called upon Morocco “to withdraw from the territory of Western Sahara all the participants in the march”.

A domestic political crisis in Spain was exacerbated by the illness of long-time dictator Generalissimo Francisco Franco. With the majority of its allies within the UN Security Council in particular and the ‘Cold-War’ in general favouring Morocco’s forced occupation of Western Sahara, Spain was compelled to negotiate with Morocco. To this end, on 14 November 1975, representatives of Spain, Morocco and Mauritania (whose territorial claims of Western Sahara were also dismissed by the aforementioned ICJ ruling of 16 October 1975) gathered in Madrid and announced an agreement whereby Morocco and Mauritania would gain administrative control over Western Sahara as of February 1976. This ‘gentlemen’s pact’ would go on to be known as the ‘Madrid Agreement’. Against this backdrop, it should be noted that the ‘Madrid Agreement’ did not affect the status of Western Sahara as a Non-Self-Governing Territory in accordance with Chapter XI of the UN Charter.

The ‘handing-over’ of Western Sahara to Morocco and Mauritania, despite the UN continuing to treat Western Sahara as a colony, ushered in a period of armed struggle by the POLISARIO Front against the two occupation forces (Morocco in the north and Mauritania in the south) in the quest to liberate the territory. As a result, Mauritania signed a peace treaty with the POLISARIO Front on 5 August 1979 and renounced its territorial claims to Western Sahara. On 6 September 1991 a ceasefire between the POLISARIO Front and Morocco was declared by the United Nations.

Shortly before the ceasefire, the United Nations established its Mission for Western Sahara whose main task will be to organise a referendum in which the Saharawi people choose between independence from Morocco or integration into Morocco. This body was aptly named the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO). At the time of writing, approximately 21 years since the establishment of MINURSO and the declaration of the ceasefire, the referendum has not been held. Moreover, due to the non-resolution of this conflict the Saharawi people continue to be confined in the harsh conditions of the refugee camps.

At this juncture, let us examine the basis in which South Africa supports the struggle of the people of Western Sahara since H4ksniper used it as the pretext for his offensive. The right to self-determination was the basis upon which a democratic South Africa was founded. As such, South Africa has consistently held that its violation of this sacred principle vis-à-vis the issue of Western Sahara would constitute a grave betrayal of its own painful struggle and commitment to respect the Charter of the United Nations and the Constitutive Act of the African Union as former South African President Thabo Mbeki once noted.

South Africa has also lent its voice to numerous UN Security Council resolutions that reiterate its commitment to help “achieve a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution, which will provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara in the contexts of arrangements consistent with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations.” This stance by South Africa is informed by its own experience of resolving conflict through political dialogue rather than force.

South Africa has also consistently called for the following with regard to the current situation in Western Sahara:

- An end to the illegal exploitation of mineral resources in the Western Sahara occupied territories;
- An end to human rights abuses against Saharawi activists in the occupied territories and has as such, called for the mandate of MINURSO to include the monitoring of human rights. MINURSO remains the only UN Mission without a human rights monitoring mandate;
- The lifting of a media blackout imposed in the Western Sahara occupied territories that continues to prevent the international community from seeing the daily misery of the Saharawi people; and
- Increased humanitarian support to the Saharawi refugees who continue to live in the harsh desert conditions due to the non-resolution of the conflict.

By way of conclusion, contrary to the claims by H4ksniper that his actions were in defence of his country, our view is that this position makes a mockery of the countless UN resolutions affirming the inalienable right of the Saharawi people to self-determination. As such, these cowardly acts by H4ksniper serve to preserve the illegal occupation and the continued colonisation of Western Sahara rather than as a defence of Morocco!
In a highly competitive world, and particularly in the dissemination of progressive ideas, analysis and commentary is no easy undertaking. We therefore trust that all who are committed to the realisation of the democratic ideal of freedom of thought and expression will respond positively to this journal to ensure its continuity and viability.

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In an era of ‘instant news’ the role of the citizen journalist has become more valuable than ever, and mainstream news organisations can and should do more to embrace citizen journalism.

By Mohamed Essa Suliman
Citizen journalism, public journalism, grassroots journalism, participatory journalism and user-generated media are just some of the terms used to describe the citizen's new role in the gathering and production of news.

Freedom of expression is a fundamental element of democracy. Citizens should be able to choose between different sources of news and opinion. The notion of citizen journalism enables people to voice their opinions, supporting this fundamental element of democracy.

The term ‘citizen journalism’ has been defined in many ways, and search results indicate that definitions can be strikingly different.

The following definition by Bowman & Willis in We Media define citizen journalism as

“The act of a citizen, or group of citizens, playing an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analyzing and disseminating news and information. The intent of this participation is to provide independent, reliable, accurate, wide-ranging and relevant information that a democracy requires.”

Although citizen journalism is not a new phenomenon, prior to the internet citizen journalists had little opportunity to reach global audiences. The advancement of the internet and Web 2.0 technologies has facilitated the transformation from consumers of news to producers of news. This has led to the democratisation of news reporting, allowing audiences witnessing incidents to post eyewitness accounts, share photos or video clips as soon as they happen. The Arab Spring and Occupy Wall Street movements have also displayed the ability of new media and user-generated content to democratise.

According to www.poynter.org, journalist Steve Outing states that the earthquake and tsunamis in South Asia in December 2004, and their aftermath, represented “a tipping point in ‘citizen journalism’. He further states that:

“Digital technologies – the Web, e-mail, blogs, digital cameras, camera phones – have evolved to

the point where people on the scene share with professional journalists the ability to reach a wide audience, to tell and show the world what they saw and experienced. Where once disaster eyewitness photographs and videos turned up for widespread viewing only on news programs and in newspapers, today through e-mail, blogs, and a blogging infrastructure that spreads amateur news quickly and efficiently, they often find large audiences without the help or need of mainstream news outlets.”

In an era of ‘instant news’ the role of the citizen journalist has become more valuable than ever, and mainstream news organisations can and should do more to embrace citizen journalism as it provides the opportunity to present a unique perspective and add value.

Citizen journalism is not without drawbacks, however. Critics argue that the fundamental problem of citizen journalism is the ability to hide behind anonymity, and potentially feed opinion or false information as fact into the media.

The South Korean website OhMyNews with its motto "Every Citizen is a Reporter" is an excellent example of an initiative that promotes democracy. It allows citizens to express and share their news with the nation. It is the first portal of its kind in Korea to accept, edit and publish articles from its readers. About 20% of the site's content is written by staff, while most of the articles are written by freelance contributors who are mostly ordinary citizens.

The growth of mobile phone technologies in Africa and the use of smartphones have also changed the way people consume, share and interact with news. One of most promising media development initiatives on the continent is from The Star newspaper in Kenya who have developed a platform to promote citizen journalism. Star Reports is an Android application which allows citizen journalists to easily upload their news content to a dedicated web portal. Readers are able to view the entire stream of content, or filter content according to various categories and regions. These content streams are also fed into The Star's workflow, where the newspaper and affiliated radio and television stations can access user-generated content for development into stories to be featured in print or broadcasts.

It is evident that citizen journalists are indeed reshaping and challenging the global media landscape. Access to the Internet has enabled citizens to voice their political and societal concerns more easily, and act as catalysts in the promotion of democratic values and active citizenship. While new media technologies have a role to play in the promotion of democracy, their potential must be viewed in the light of their political and socio-economic realities. Furthermore, for citizen journalism to flourish the formerly passive audience needs to make the shift from consumers of news to producers of news. Mainstream media also have to accept the value of user-generated content, and be able to incorporate it in an effective way.
At the start of a new year and the height of summer; we have chosen three poems which celebrate the powers of the natural universe.

In ‘Spirit Chaser’ the cosmic force is personified as a playful and exuberant entity paying our younger selves a brief visit, reminding us that we may, after all, exist in a greater context than just this world. The other two poems pay our respects to the familiar but mysterious elements of our own world. Storm clouds rise, threaten, dance and then dissolve in our skies; a darkly elegant creature of nature threatens us in ‘Stalker’.

The Editor welcomes contributions that take into account The Thinker’s vision of a democratic, non-racial, non-sexist and caring South Africa. Submissions of poetry and the written word should be brief. For visual material, a high-resolution document is required (300dpi Jpeg). Please send your work electronically to editor@thethinker.co.za for consideration.
DANCERS IN THE SKY
Swiftly moving running, flying
Light blue dominate, hands, legs feet
Purple push,
Powder fight
Turquoise step,
Grey, grey, grey
Blistering build up
Rising bodies
Erect stances
Towering structures
Loud and Powerful voices
Roaring
Orchestra beating blowing shaking
Climaxing
In between the crooning and chirping
Twirling
Notes held through the swirling
Screaming, shouting
Sudden.
Slow steps.
Disengaging dancers.
Quieting.
Stillness,
As if nothing happened.

SPIRIT CHASER
Galloping across Milkyways
Sprinting into supernovas-
Trotting through nebula
Exploring space.

Holiday patron of a younger earth,
Raced on oceans before land.
Running on clouds
Moving through storms
First ground
Grazed on first grass.

Met with growls
After asking the first naked man who are you?
He tried to chase.
Playfully letting him get close,
But never enough to touch.
Tired of the game,
A universe awaits,
Trotted off into the sun after being chased.

STALKER
At home in the black
A child of the dark,
Nocturnal by birth
Moving freely in the shadows,
Completely at peace in the darkness
Breathing deep in the blackness.

Bold and beautiful
Skilled in elegance,

Born to kill
Not bothered by money
Spending days swimming,
Lounging waterside,
Nights stalking
Hunting
Wanting
With a mind
Beyond the reach of hate and murder,
Homicide, slaughter?
Constructs that he would laugh at,
Like the daily curses placed on him
If he ever did laugh.

Friends with the stuff of nightmares,
Acquainted with,
All the monsters that go bump in the night-
As they creak and croak, slither and slime
Causing panic and screaming
He acknowledges them
And goes about his darkly business
Avoiding their noises,
For the loneliness
Choosing instead the silences
The in between spaces,
The quietness
That he wears like a second skin,
As he stalks,
Looking breathing
By the time you see him,
It’s already too late, he’s too close,
He’s got you
The claws and jaw, butter through flesh,
Screams get lost in the jungles nothingness.

Tshegofatso Seboni is a 25 Year old B.Com Economics graduate from the University of Pretoria. His interests range from theoretical mathematical models to digital art to poetry. He has published poetry Ebooks and short stories that can be found on kobobooks.com, amazon.com, barnesandnoble.com under the nom de plume TMS. He is currently working on starting his own company.
Dora Motshabi, who married ANC leader Obed Motshabi in 1958, recalls her life in Newclare before her marriage, her arrest with Winnie Mandela and others in 1957 and imprisonment in Number 4, joining the Women’s League, her husband’s departure for exile and police harassment thereafter; the hardships she experienced after his departure, and financial support provided by unknown persons.

I am Dora Motshabi Kubu from Kubu in Pietersburg (Polokwana). I was born in Newclare in southern Johannesburg on the 2nd of August 1928. There were five children in my family, three of whom died when we were still young and only two of us survived. There were three boys and two girls. My mother was originally from Queenstown. She married a man who worked in Johannesburg and they went to Pietersburg, where my father came from. In 1933 my father died. After my father’s death my mother did not stay long in Pietersburg. She went to the police station and my father’s young brother followed her and told the police that my mother was taking his brother’s children to Johannesburg. My mother stood her ground. She took a train to Johannesburg, where she worked as a maid getting two pounds ten a month. We stayed with our mother’s sister. My mother would give her sister money for our upkeep. Eventually, however, she got a house in Newclare, for which she paid one pound, ten shillings a month.

I did my primary education at a Catholic School in Sophiatown called St. Francis Xavier, which was in Bernard Street. I don’t know when I started school but I passed my Standard 6 in 1944 and in 1945 I proceeded to a high school in Western Native Township. Our principal was Harry Madibane and our school was called Madibane High. I did my JC in 1948. Thereafter I left school and started training in 1949 as a probationer nurse at Baragwanath Hospital. But I did not complete as I fell pregnant. During those days one could not go to school pregnant.

Life was not good at all in Newclare because we were in a slum area. We were mixed with Indians and Chinese and “Coloureds”. But we lived together without any problems and we used to play with their kids. The main problem was when the Sotho-speaking peoples, who were called the Russians, fought. They used to fight with people from Sophiatown, Newclare and Western Native Township. Their leader was Hlalele. These guys were not working. They used to go to the Indian and Chinese shops and take things forcefully. They even took other people’s wives. You could not divorce a Russian. I remember some years back, when another woman ran away from one of them from Benoni, they followed her to Newclare. She had her suitcase on her head and the Russians were beating her, whipping her all the way to the station. When the train came they went inside. I don’t know what happened after that. Maybe they killed her in Benoni because that is where their stronghold was, Ethwathwa (as Benoni was called). When I was at Nursing School, they would fight near Newclare station or Westbury station so that we could not go to school.

We suffered a great deal because as a maid my mother was only earning two pounds ten. What could you do with it? I used to work for Indians after school, washing clothes for them, and I earned one pound five shillings a month. I was in high school by then. I never really enjoyed my youth because we suffered. My mother could not even buy me clothes. I remember a dungsare that I used for school. It had a colour problem, so I bought dye with the money I earned from the Indian family. Where I stayed we were about ten to fifteen. Those who owned properties were mainly Indians and some black elites. We rented this house from one of them. We had only one room, which served as everything: it was a kitchen, sitting room and bedroom at the same time. When it was time to sleep we would put chairs on the table and sleep on the floor. There was only privacy for bathing because I did not have a brother or father.

The police were another problem. These guys caught many people, especially those women who brewed African beer, like MaShezi, who stayed at Mayor Avenue in Newclare and sold beer and firewood, and MaMeleke, who stayed in Rooi-jart in Newclare and was equally well known for brewing beer. What the women did was they would brew this beer, dig a hole and put the container with beer there. So, the police would go out searching for such people who brewed beer and those without ID books. They came with long and sharp rods to dig up the beer. After that, they would arrest you and take you with a bottle containing the illegal brew as evidence. When caught you would pay a fine. We paid a shilling for one bottle of homebrewed beer. Brandy was only drunk by whites and the black elites, people like J. R. Rathebe, a businessman who stayed in Sophiatown. They were many in Sophiatown and in Western. There were very few prominent people in Newclare.

Our mother did not drink beer; she was a Christian. We used to go to church, which was called the Apostolic Faith Church under Rev. Rasmot, who stayed at Khanyile Street in Western. She was very strict and we envied other children who were free. There was this Bioscope in Hamilton Road but we never went there. I even got married without knowing anything about it. What we enjoyed was only attending church. I was not used to other girls. I had one friend, Catherine Zikalala, who stayed at Fetcher Street in Western. She was my only friend.

After I dropped out of Nursing School, I went to work as a private teacher at Bantu United School. The School principal was Mr. Ntuli. I taught Sub A from 1952 until 1954. Thereafter, I worked part-time at Boldburg Furniture, Number 7 Good Street, in Sophiatown, until they transferred me to town at the corner of Fraser and Jeppe Streets. I worked as a filing clerk. I worked there until the old man died but before he died he handed over his company to other Jews, who then changed the name to Rain Gold Furniture. I worked there
until somewhere in 1981, when the sons of the old man then took me to Kliptown Furniture’s, where I worked until I retired in 1989.

When I was growing up, I was not involved in politics because, as I said, my mother was a devout Christian, so strict we could not even go to the street. I only came into politics after I got married. But I knew Ntate J. B. Marks and Aubuti Sampie, who crossed the country and died in Basutoland. They stayed in Newclare and were ANC members.

I met Obed Motshabi because we were together at Madibane High School. He was from a poor family. I married Motshabi on the 8th of May 1958. When I married him, his family lived at JZ Section in Moroka. The place was also called Masakeng because people came from different areas and when they arrived they settled in shacks. They used masaka (bags) for building because there was no corrugated iron. They used empty plastics and cardboard boxes. I knew that was where his mother stayed but I did not know the place physically. I only got to know it on our wedding day. I had a white wedding because during those days if you didn’t go for a white wedding it was an issue. When we were dating, he always took me to his brother’s house in White City Jabavu. He never took me to his home. I think he was afraid that I was going to see how poor they were and leave him. The very day I married him we went to live in White City. He stayed with another guy who later had a problem with influx control and left for Swaziland, never to come back. But before leaving he gave the house in White City Jabavu to my husband. It was a two-roomed house.

I had one child then. I had a second child before we left in 1957 to go and live in Mapetla like Mr. Elmon Malele, Mr. Rhadebe, Mr. Moumakwe and Mr. White Sekhukhune. I remember one time when they were in a meeting the Special Branch arrived. Ntate Motshabi took all the pamphlets and put them inside my clothes chest. When those police came in they searched but found nothing. My husband and his group jumped the fence and ran away. He used to tell me when they were going to have a meeting and where. It was no longer difficult because bit by bit I was getting involved. Thus, I got politics when I got married.

During the anti-pass campaign Ntate Motshabi and others campaigned from house-to-house, looking for ID books so that they could burn them. Some people refused, others gave them up. Collected ID books were burnt with a paraffin fire in the bush. Motshabi was very active. He was also arrested for ninety days during the State of Emergency. I used to take him food in Booyens police station, where he was detained. When he was released, when they said that he was

We stayed in Number 4 for nine days. It was very hard. There was a Boer woman warder who lined us up every day to count us. If you were standing in line with the others, you got a clap. If there was a visitor you would be called: “Dora Motshabi, vuka lapho ule khona” (wake up wherever you are). You would run, and they would give you an apple and one banana. You would ask yourself: How can a visitor come all the way from Soweto just to give you one apple and a banana? I then found out that they were taken by those Boers. One day the prison warder said she was taking us to a very clean place. She told us: “Today you are going to sleep in a very special house. Leave your blankets behind.” It was a horrible place; there were very big lice all around; they seem to have poured them there. You could not sleep for the whole night. The following day we said: “No, we are not going there again. You rather kill us.” They then took us to the previous cell.

It was hard. As time went on, however, it was no longer hard because Mandela negotiated that we must get food in prison.

When they released us, they just dropped us at a bus stop. I was with another woman, when they dropped us at the bus stop in Molapo. We were so confused we did not know which direction to take. When we appeared in court we were fined thirty pounds or three weeks in jail. I remember when sentence was passed one woman screamed at the rest of us: “You are the ones who influenced me!”

After our arrest with Mrs. Lillian Ngoyi and others I joined the Women’s League. That was before my husband crossed the boundary. He had been in the Treason Trial from 1956 until the charges were dropped against all the accused in 1961. I was an ordinary member of the ANC. I remember when Bantu Education was introduced. Because we did not want our children to get Bantu Education, the ANC had a school project where teachers taught our children the education that was not for Bantu. It was a struggle.

There were often meetings at our house with people mainly from Mapetla like Mr. Elmon Malele, Mr. Rhadebe, Mr. Moumakwe and Mr. White Sekhukhune. I remember one time when they were in a meeting the Special Branch arrived. Ntate Motshabi took all the pamphlets and put them inside my clothes chest. When those police came in they searched but found nothing. My husband and his group jumped the fence and ran away. He used to tell me when they were going to have a meeting and where. It was no longer difficult because bit by bit I was getting involved. Thus, I got politics when I got married.
a free man, when he went out of the police station gate and was just a few metres away from freedom, he was re-arrested. He was then taken back for ninety days again. I suffered with my children.

He crossed the boundaries in 1964. I didn’t even know where he went. He did not tell me. I had a small child. I woke up in the morning and went to Rockville to Ntate Morodi. I was crying, telling him that Ntate Motshabi didn’t come home, asking where he went. He told me that he knew nothing. I found out later that he knew and my husband’s sister also knew. When I came back, on the sideboard I found a cigarette box written “Goodbye”. I cried and cried. The Boers came to me within a week or two. They went into the house, opened the wardrobe and carelessly took out all the clothes in there. They thought that he was in the wardrobe. They asked me where he was. I really did not know where he was. I was very thin, as if I had TB. Yet the Boers continued to ill-treat me. They would take me in their Pick-Up to the tenth floor at John Vorster Square. When I got there they would beat me. They showed me photos of Mandela, Sisulu and others and asked if I knew them. I said I didn’t know these people except Mandela. I only knew that he was an ANC person. One Boer ended up saying: “Ag voetsek jy is dom!” (Bugger off, you’re so daft). They thought that he was in the wardrobe. They asked me where he was. I really did not know where he was. I was very thin, as if I had TB. Yet the Boers continued to ill-treat me. They would take me in their Pick-Up to the tenth floor at John Vorster Square. When I got there they would beat me. They showed me photos of Mandela, Sisulu and others and asked if I knew them. I said I didn’t know these people except Mandela. I only knew that he was an ANC person. One Boer ended up saying: “Ag voetsek jy is dom!” (Bugger off, you’re so daft). They thought that he was in the wardrobe. They asked me where he was. I really did not know where he was. I was very thin, as if I had TB.

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I only came to know of Ntate Motshabi’s whereabouts much later, whereas his sister, who is a very rude girl, knew all along. She used to get money from foreign countries, while I suffered with my children. She said nothing. Then I also started to receive some money through the post. I did not know who these funds were from but they were from America. The Boers realised that there was some money from overseas. They started questioning me about where the money was from. I told them that I did not know. Thereafter I thought that it would be better for me to look for someone who was not known so that he can collect the money on my behalf. So I approached my sister, who stays in Meadowlands. I registered her. They followed her, too, asking her where the money was from. She was clever enough to say that her mother was working for white people and when they left for overseas they said that they would continue supporting me.

It was very hard after Mr. Motshabi went out of the country. People who were looking for houses just said that the great man is gone. The municipality was after me. I would find notices when I come back home from work, saying that after thirty days I should have left the house. They always called me to their offices to ask me where my husband was. I told them: “I don’t know.” They said: “Why don’t you divorce him?” I said: “How can I divorce him without knowing his whereabouts?” As I refused to divorce, I thought I had a chance to keep the house. I went to Ntate Rathebe, who referred me to a woman called Selma Brode. She was a secretary of the town Council. She said that I should come with my ID book. When I went with it, she wrote my history. When I got the thirty days’ notice again, I went to her again. She gave me a letter which I took with me when I went to the municipality office. They read it and said, it’s alright and changed the house to my name. I was helped by Mr. J. Rathebe, while people were being taken out of their houses because their husbands were not there. Even my mother’s house was taken at Naledi No. 221979. It was taken after her death. Because my mother did not have a son, she took her younger sister’s child and registered him as her son. He was driven out. Another man called Manthata took that one. He is the one who drove people out of their houses.

In 1984, someone comes to my house – I can’t remember his name. He says that we should go and visit Mr. Motshabi in Zambia. So, in 1985, I find my way there with his sister, who knew the way because seemingly she was used to it. Because she knew the place she leaves me and reaches there first. She then tells her brother many stories, saying that I am staying with another man. When I reach there the atmosphere is not welcoming. I stayed there for fourteen days with him. In 1989 I went there again. Now I stayed for a longer time. This time I used a plane that was organised by Mr. Andrew Mlangeni. It was good; I stayed there for three months.

Mr. Motshabi came back in 1990. He never appreciated that when he left there was no floor mat, no nice windows. He never appreciated that there was now somebody with a profession in the house because Seithati is a teacher. I expected him to thank me. When Seithati got married she went to Zambia to show her father her husband. She was married to Mr. Mabuya, one of the people who were prominent during her days. You know people from the Cape are educated. Her father never appreciated even that. My daughter stayed there for almost two weeks. She even lacked money to come back because those people do not give you money. Somebody once asked me if I got anything since Ntate Motshabi passed away, mainly because he spent twenty-seven years in exile: “Are you getting anything?” I said: “They only gave me after his death a lump sum of about R168 000.” I tried to do something. I didn’t want to buy a car first. I am old. I wanted to build the kids a home. That is when I built a bathroom. I even bought him a tombstone.
Efforts to maintain social peace by force

By Jerry Semudi

The exploitative nature of capitalist society and its division into antagonistic classes with conflicting interests make class confrontations objectively inevitable. The antagonism between vital economic interests likewise gives rise to basic political contradictions between labour and capital. Under capitalism the bourgeoisie uses state power to forcibly implement its policy and prevent the workers from opposing it. The workers’ organisations, therefore, must vigorously carry on political activities to protect their interests, including the purely economic ones. The workers’ growing political influence shows that capitalists, who want to keep their grip on society at all costs, are losing ground.

The workers must win more rights for trade unions at enterprises in order to counter the latest methods of exploitation and the pressure brought to bear on them by capitalist circles. But greater rights mean intervening further with proprietary powers, the inviolability of which is a symbol of free enterprise which is defended by the bourgeoisie in every way.

The policy pursued by capital is in general aimed at consolidating and improving the existing economic system. The workers, whose struggle is undermining the foundations of the exploiting society, are objectively interested in abolishing this system. The antagonistic labour-capital contradictions will be aggravated until a social revolution comes in South Africa, which will eliminate the social system based on the exploitation and oppression of the working people.

The constant tension in the relations between the bourgeoisie and the workers is systematically expressed in intense class confrontations, which assume very diverse forms and at times lead to violent struggles. But the bourgeois state uses the police force and the army to suppress the peaceful actions of the workers. Strikes, picketing, boycotts, and protest demonstrations are the forms of class action which the working people use.

Confrontations are a response to wide-scale dismissals, lockouts, shutdowns, “black lists”, and the transfer of enterprises. The confrontations include those between the supporters of bourgeois policy and supporters of the workers’ policy. They take place at congresses, conferences and in everyday activities carried on by Right wing parties, Social-Democrats, and reformist trade unions. All these will end with this dying system through the efforts of the working class and its vanguard party.

During labour disputes the workers’ economic demands overlap with political ones. Since legislation often determines working conditions, wages, social insurance, housing rent and the rights of workers’ organisations, the working class must address its vital rights and interests. They use:

- their own economic strength and the employers’ power over the workers;
- the services of the reformist organisations’ right-wing leaders; and
- the bourgeois state machinery’s might.

The lockout is one of the capitalists’ crudest means of fighting against the working class movement. It signifies wide-scale dismissals in order to force the employees to return to work on the employers’ terms.

At times, the employers make threats against the workers who try to exercise their rights. This is contrary to workers’ recognised rights and trade union freedoms and often causes bitter disputes. Threats against workers have become a burning question in our country, where the employers are openly demanding that employees should not join the trade union and that they should not take part in its activities.

The struggle waged by the broad sections of the working class, who have seen from their own experience that only militant struggle can make the bourgeoisie concede to their demands, is the greatest obstacle to the policy of class collaboration. No matter how much the reformist leaders try they cannot convince the workers that the policy of conciliation is expedient and effective. Despite the arguments of the reformists the workers keep trying to have their demands met by taking active militant actions which will ultimately lead to the replacement of this exploitative system by a better system where the workers will own the means of production.
Who will protect the hundred years’ long legacy of the fighting spear? Will a single tribe claiming and gyrating history of the Movement save the spear? Is the revolution safe in the hands of the ZAR nationalists? Or will the spear be saved by the luxurious craving Gucci communists? I know not, but the question confronts those in the Left and those who’re drifting to the right.

Will the Family Trusts, political courts, democratic or dictatorial rulers shield our Movement? Will the Young Lions malformed into domestic fat cats be silenced by cadre underdevelopment? Malibongwe igama lika Nomzamo, Dora, Ruth the contemporary NDR of the Women’s movement Will the workers’ federation donate with the blood and sweat of proletarians for political convenience? For how long will the Left shift from Marxism-Leninism while salivating to the gravy of the moment? This question needs the makers of history to give it a revolutionary treatment.

Free State, will you breathe a new life to internal democracy whilst we are engaged in factions? Will the birth-place of the spear scare and shame all of you who are deviated by frills of VIP tents? It seems the end could be near, will it be the masses or elites who will attend the memorial disservice?

Delivery or not the fundamental thrust of the People’s Movement has always been about service. History confirms the youth as grave-diggers of the old society and midwives of an alternative world. The revolution will be defended by conscious deliberate deed and not revolutionary word.

Indeed, the masses organised in branches will save the People’s Movement.
A l Gini, Professor of business ethics, says business is not inherently bad, it is only filled with temptations. Moral leadership is the only safeguard against rotten business, when the game is everything.

The groundbreaking series, The Sopranos, is a moral play wherein the central character Tony Soprano is always at odds with himself and with the seemingly evil life of a mobster. Violence and crime are just a part of the nature of the game. Tony fights to be at the top of the game while trying somehow to remain as moral as possible.

The show won 21 Emmy Awards, five Golden Globes, was honoured with two George Foster Peabody Awards, and in its time was considered the most financially successful series in the history of cable television. Major critics called it the best television series ever made. It also happens to be one of Dr Al Gini’s favourite programmes.

“Tony Soprano is a moral leader. Yes he lives in a world considered evil, but he always evaluates his decisions and always seeks the moral high ground. He doesn’t always get it right but he tries. He is a moral leader,” said Gini, speaking recently to a sold out audience at a Distinguished Speakers Programme at the UCT Graduate School of Business.

Gini has made the study of ethics and morality his life. He is a Professor of Business Ethics at the School of Business Administration at Loyola
University in Chicago. He co-founded the Business Ethics Quarterly and is a long-time Associate Editor. For two decades he’s been the resident philosopher on a popular radio station in Chicago and lectures to community and professional organisations on business ethics. He has authored a number of books, including, Why It’s Hard to be Good, Seeking the Truth of Things: Confessions of a Philosopher, The Importance of Being Lazy: In Praise of Play, Leisure and Vacation, and God Can Quote Me on That.

At the talk that he gave at the UCT, GSB, he said: “The thing is the world of the Sopranos isn’t very different from Wall Street. It’s all business. It’s all about the money and it’s all about the game, and everyone wants to be the master of the universe,” he said. “And that’s a major problem we have today. There is a lack of moral leadership and everyone is out only to look after themselves.”

He, in a snap of self-deprecating humour, described himself as “a card carrying capitalist who drives high performance cars, owns nice suits, and has a high maintenance wife.”

“So,” he said, “I understand business.”

But he believes fundamentally that a person “can do good, and do well” and if you had to ask him why business is always bad, he’d abruptly answer: “It’s not.”

“Business is not inherently bad, it’s only that business happens to offer many temptations,” he said. “Wall Street offers many, many temptations.”

It’s a temptation that has proven too strong for many.

Charles Ponzi seduced investors with promises of lavish returns in 1920. His scheme brought in massive amounts of money but collapsed when he paid out new investors’ money to earlier investors and himself. More recently, in 2008, Bernie Madoff, the respected investment banker with the “magic touch”, was arrested when his $50 billion scheme collapsed dragging down with it well-known investors and non-profits.

Mike Milken, the “Junk Bond King”, was arrested in 1989 on 98 counts of racketeering and securities fraud as a result of an insider trading investigation. He was sentenced to ten years in a federal prison, but only served two and paid $200 million in fines and $400 million in restitution. He was a trusted financier and philanthropist.

The list goes on. Little needs to be said about AIG, Lehmann Brothers, Goldman Sachs, and the most iconic of all Enron. At one point the American energies, commodities and services company was considered the most innovative company in the US. It is now the symbol of corporate corruption and fraud. Gini calls it “the perfect case study of corporate greed.”

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While recalling some of these examples and many others, Gini took great pleasure in knowing that some of the perpetrators are sitting behind bars, but asked why good businessmen become rotten. “It’s the game.”

“People in the game cannot step out of the shadow of self. They will not step out. And in the game, they need not,” he said. “But when you break ethics down, it all hinges on the willingness to stand outside of the shadow of ourselves.” Leadership isn’t selfish and egotistical. Moral leaders serve others. They do not rule over them for self-gain.

He said that good business leaders know that business is there for creating value, that it is always communal, and that any actions should be taken in sympathy with others. He said that good leaders know that they set the tone for their organisations; corrupt leaders lead corrupt organisations.

“Corporate cultures clone their own. Their internal cultures are perpetuated constantly. Like it or not, business ethics is driven by moral leadership. And there are few excellent leaders out there. They are truly hard to find,” he said.

“But every now and then, one comes along, and redefines the game. They lead by serving and they strive to always do the right thing.”

According to Professor Kurt April, professor of Leadership at the GSB, South African businessman Graham Power is considered by many to be an example of just such a person. He is the founder and chairman of the Power Group, and founder of Unashamedly Ethical.

He was Die Burger newspaper’s businessman of the year in 2005, and in 2006 was voted one of South Africa’s leading managers by the CRF Institute. In 2008, the Power Group was awarded the Business Against Crime Continuous Support award, the same year in which Power construction received a certificate of acknowledgement at the Govan Mbeki awards ceremony for its contributions to housing the poor. In 2010 the group received an award for social affairs and services at the Civic Honour’s Ceremony in Cape Town in recognition of its outstanding contribution to society.

In an announcement on the Power Group website Powers reiterates the company’s focus on ethical practice.

“It is an undertaking that this company, its culture and ethics will continue to thrive long after our time. Far from being a fanciful notion or a pipedream, this is an actual long-term business objective, with definite processes and courses of action put in place to ensure its fulfilment in ten, twenty – and even more – decades from now,” he said.

Ethics is part of the group’s performance management system. Ethical dimensions are measured in leadership assessments, internal customer evaluations, external evaluations and culture and climate surveys; forming part of performance contracts, which affect bonuses. The company also has an ethics hotline.

This is one example, and there are more of these leaders, for whom ethics is a verb. And it is they who need to be emulated.
Racism

By Tembile Ndabeni

The past and the present respectively bears evidence of racism Africans suffered in their country and abroad. Slaves were not only Africans, but the majority of slaves were. As a result many Africans abroad cannot be exactly sure which part of Africa they come from.

Slavery is degrading and painful because it is one of the most evil stages of development in human history, followed by feudalism and capitalism.

Whites were masters to the natives regardless of their status and that inculturated a master race mentality. The end of colonialism was not the end of racism. This manifests itself in many ways, in sport for example.

Before the start of Euro 2012 racism towards Blacks was anticipated. Bananas were thrown at Balotelli in a bar in Rome. He expected offensive racist gestures; as a result he said, “I will go to prison because I will kill him” (Sunday Times, 3 June, 2012).

In South Africa initially racism was more about Whites discriminating against Blacks but presently Black population groups discriminate against each other. Africans are still victims, but now of Black on Black racism with the ‘K-word’ used. One of the worst scenarios is when people are discriminated on their deathbeds. In 1996 my son, six years old then, was racially discriminated against on his deathbed by Coloured nurses at Red Cross Hospital. This happened after the birth of a supposedly rainbow nation and the year of the birth of our new constitution. These are people who smile in front of Mandela. My son told me they would stop when he threatened to tell the doctor, a White person.

This also happened to me when I was in Kuils River Hospital in 2005. The Coloured patients with minor injuries got better treatment. Not all nurses were racists but the majority were. Like my son, I was treated better by a white person than my fellow black ones, Coloureds.

Racism is a thing of the past to those who are not affected. It is the Africans who always compromise while the others do not. Daniel, Habib and Southall (2003:112) write “Such racial fault lines have also played themselves in the schools and in the criminal justice system. In Vryburg in the mid-1990s, a black high school student, Andrew Babeile, was sentenced to a prison term for stabbing a white schoolmate whom he argued was being racist towards him. Yet when white school boys at Bryanston High School attacked a black fellow pupil and damaged his eye, they were simply suspended and no charges were laid against them.”

There were many more racial incidents cited by the above-mentioned writers from the same book. For example, “... a white farmer who shot and killed a black baby on his mother’s back because they were trespassing on his property, the white man who pulled a black man to death tied to the back of a van; and the group of Afrikaner right wingers belonging to an organisation known as the Boeremag were arrested for planting a series of bombs that rocked Soweto, killing one individual and disrupting public transportation in the township.”

There are many more like “Racist spoof anthem in KFC ruffles feathers”. A derogatory reference to Mandela is derogatory to the entire nation especially Africans. A person who does not respect Mandela will respect no other African. The worst is disrespecting and undermining the national anthem. According to a report in the Cape Times (June 28, 2012) the national anthem, was played in a popular restaurant, in a way that was profane, racist and vulgar. At the same time the icon of our struggle and the world, Nelson Mandela, was treated with disrespect. The sad thing is how Mandela feels about every South African. Duke (2003:277) writes what Mandela said:

“Every day I go to bed feeling strong like a young man of twenty because I can see this rainbow rising in front of my eyes and that is what inspires me. As far as I’m concerned, there is no coloured, there is no Indian, there is no white person. There are only human beings, all of whom I love”.

After two days at the national social cohesion summit, the DA MP and arts and culture spokesperson said people of South Africa need a “big hug” (Cape Argus, 6 July, 2012). I disagree because even hypocrites can give hugs. Something must be done. There should not be a people who suffer racism from slavery until now.

After 1994 South Africa was hailed as the rainbow nation. Under the title “Laying ghosts to rest: The dilemmas of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission” quoting Bishop Tutu, Ramphele (2008:46) writes “We are charged to unearth the truth about our dark past, to lay the ghosts of that past so that they will not return to haunt us”.

It looks like ghosts were not really buried but hidden; this is why they are coming out now. To an ordinary African the ‘k-word’ is not strange. We are sitting on a time bomb because nobody will tolerate suffering from racism as suffered by their forbears. Instead of being ashamed of their forbears’ action, the perpetrators are continuing from where they left off. It is the mind-set of the perpetrators that needs to change first and then hugs follow. Survivors must not tolerate something that is not natural. Wakeup South Africa before it is too late! ■
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