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# *The* WORKER

WE FIGHT IDEAS WITH IDEAS

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## TRIBUTE LIONEL ANDREW ADRIAAN

We in the Unity Movement were deeply saddened by the death of our revered comrade Lionel Adriaan on 27 July 2023 at the age of 85 years.

We convey our most sincere condolences on the passing away of our dear friend and comrade to his children (Francois and Suzette), his grandchildren and the extended Adriaan family. We mourn with them at this time of grief, for, the Unity Movement too, has lost a soldier, mentor and leader.

Comrade Lionel and his late wife Maureen, were both excellent teachers, who proudly raised Suzette and Francois to believe in the value of education. It was as a teacher that Cde Lionel came into his own to advance the struggle for an egalitarian society where his students and their families could live free from exploitation and

oppression. He joined the Teachers' League of South Africa (TLSA) where he was a revered member, taking the battle against an oppressive government and authoritarian, draconian education authorities, into the classroom.

Cde Lionel and his comrades in the TLSA operated from the standpoint that it was necessary to resist the expectation by the authorities that teachers in government schools would collaborate in the nefarious project of producing uncritical learners who would become



slaves to a system that relegated them to second class citizenship. Lionel had the courage to teach beyond the syllabus; to ensure that his students did not take for granted the lies about superior, benevolent European crusaders who came to civilise African savages. This, Cde Lionel, his dear wife and their

colleagues in the TLSA did courageously, aware that their jobs might be at stake.

Lionel and his comrades also knew that their students came from communities that suffered the hardships of poverty and unemployment as a result of government policies. He and Maureen joined the Elsies River & Districts Vigilance Association which became a founder member of the Federation of Cape Civic Associations (FCCA) when it was formed in 1979. The Adriaans' home was always open for organisational meetings

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where hospitality and camaraderie welcomed one at the front door.

As a member of the TLISA and the FCCA he participated in the discussions that led to the establishment of the New Unity Movement (NUM) in 1985. From the start, Lionel committed himself to the efforts of the NUM for an end to exploitation and oppression. He joined and remained a loyal member of the Cape Town branch of the NUM until he died. He also served as a member of the national executive committee of the NUM and as its national treasurer for a number of years.

May the legacy of dedicated service and uncompromising adherence to principle as exemplified in the life of our dear friend and comrade serve as an inspiration to us all going into the future.

Let us rededicate ourselves to striving to achieve that which Lionel so passionately believed in, namely, the re-building of a movement for the liberation of the toiling masses of this country on the basis of our Ten Point Programme of Transitional Demands and on our policies of non-racialism, anti-Imperialism and anti-capitalism. In short, the building of a true Peoples Democracy.

**Dr Basil Brown**  
**NUM President**

**August 2023**

**Lionel Adriaan lived by the  
TLISA credo of**

***“Let us live for our  
children”***



**Six of the best:** From left to right - Sedick Williams, Amien Fredericks, Helen Kies, Lionel Adriaan, Peter Meyer and Victor Ritchie are pictured here at a function at Harold Cressy High School on 29 May 2010. These giants of education were presented with 'Lifetime Commitment to Education' awards by the Harold Cressy Alumni Association at the school's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala Dinner.

## BRICS (AND BRICS+) – WHAT HOPE FOR THE WORKING CLASS?

The BRICS SA Extravaganza has run its course, and the hosts can breathe a sigh of relief, it all went well – no unsightly poverty on view to embarrass us in front of our guests, no protests worth putting down, no bad press, not even from our serial critics, the DA, and no load shedding, at least at the conference venues.

And no Putin-in-person, so no conundrum about should we or shouldn't we arrest the bugger.

Tons of paper and terabytes of data have been used by the local and global media and – at least in the short term – will continue to be used to assess, laud, criticise and trivialise the event and its implications for global, regional and national change.

In terms of current geo-political dynamics, the event took place at a time when “The West” (as in America and Europe) in their attempt to undermine Russia are intensifying their proxy war in Ukraine; when Biden is openly hinting at attacking China; and when Ramaphosa & Co badly need to repair their dented image among voters and would-be voters ahead of the 2024 elections.

There are lots of talk about East versus West – a new cold war, with the usual suspects ranged on either side of the divide: America and Europe versus Russia and China. At the economic level, this translates as BRICS (and what is likely to become known as BRICS+ with the addition of the new members/associates) and the G7 group of nations.

South Africa is caught in the middle, since we continue to be locked in the historically unequal embrace of our ex-colonial partners, and at the same time are courting a new (unequal) embrace with the BRICS+ cohort.

Not surprisingly, there is a propaganda war on the go, framing the respective groupings as The Good Guys versus The Bad Guys, and laying a trap for the unsuspecting among us to inadvertently “pick a side.”

Little need be said about the US and their allies, who all claim the democracy high-ground. They can be dismissed with Richard Wolff's trenchant quote: “Why real democracy and capitalism clash: what capitalism does to people economically real democracy enables people to undo politically.”

Time and space need to be set aside for a consideration of the motley BRICS+ crew. Some of them – like SA – have the nerve to regard themselves as democracies, while others are openly autocratic, with one-party-state China leading the way.

Of immediate concern to us, South Africa, is the prospect of economic rejuvenation. China's economy has arrived at the same place which all leading capitalist economies eventually find themselves: over-accumulation. Therefore, China



needs to find new markets for the goods piling up in their warehouses, and for the excess surplus profits from their export sector, piling up in their banks. We stand to “benefit” from Chinese investment in our country, with the accompanying prospects of job-creation.

There is also, of course, the prospect of broadening our range of export markets within the group, and of achieving

“favourable trading partner status” among the members, new and old.

On the downside, we might be drawn directly into the turbulence created by the new cold war taking shape, and get into unwelcome and undesirable conflicts between the major parties.

If one adopts the optimistic view, and supposes that the effect of our BRICS+ membership will result in a net benefit to our country, then one will need to speculate on the impacts, especially the economic impacts. Such impacts will certainly include the likelihood of (some) job creation, and export-led growth.

But modern capitalism is beset by the problems of over-accumulation, growing inequality and ecological breakdown. We will not escape the fall-out.

Despite the unprecedented abundance which exists in the world today, there has never been the scale of poverty, degradation and inhumanity which is suffered by the overwhelming majority of people on the planet. How will BRICS+ change this when the same levels of extreme wealth versus extreme poverty exists in most of the BRICS+ countries as well (including China)?

BRICS+ promises a re-ordering of the global configuration of power, but it is not a working-class initiative. BRICS+ is a response by one group of capitalists against another group of capitalists. The working classes of all the nations involved are incidental to the strategies of the global capitalist elite, whose concern is to protect and perpetuate their privilege in relation to one another.

There is no end in sight to global monopoly capital; the powers-that-be continue inexorably along the path of planetary destruction; and the global inequality gap continues to widen.

The need for united working class action has never been more urgent. We echo the call, “Workers of the World Unite – we have nothing to lose but our chains.”

## BOTTOM OF BRICS, TOP OF THE RUGBY WORLD.

**On Friday 25 August 2023 the South African national rugby team, the Springboks, handed the New Zealand All Blacks the heaviest defeat in their history. In a powerful display the 'Boks bullied, harassed and ultimately destroyed the most feared rugby unit on the planet.**

Social media exploded. Memes and graphics depicting the dejected and humiliated All Blacks flooded digital platforms and The South African headline declared: "Springboks bruised All Blacks' egos and bodies". In an epic 107-minute match, that only saw 33 minutes of ball-in-play, the Springboks made South Africans celebrate the smokescreen that prevents them from seeing that in reality, there is nothing to celebrate.

In a university WhatsApp group, a graphic regarding the GDP and manufacturing output of the BRICS nations was greeted with comments about the rugby: "Quite a trashing there. Beautiful game" and "The boys were on fire. I enjoyed it too." Not a single intellectual or academic commented on South Africa's contribution to BRICS.

It was Nelson Mandela who said: "Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire, the power to unite people in a way that little else does." But it was Mandela's embracing of apartheid sport that led to the collapse of community sport across the country. Mandela, the darling of elite, apartheid sporting structures globally, even features in the World Rugby Hall of Fame alongside apartheid rugby icons such as Danie Craven, Hennie Muller and others.

The power of sport as distraction has managed to shift people's attention away from the harsh reality of South African society. In a Rugby World Cup year, major corporate bodies have invested heavily in the Springbok brand, with Samsung promising all those who purchase Samsung products during the tournament, "full refunds" if the Springboks win the cup. The elite sporting spectacle has no influence on changing the world, rather, it blunts the ability to analyse and interpret the world in terms of reality.

The press have managed to shift their shallow coverage of the BRICS summit to the Rugby World Cup, without offering South Africans any real insight on the place of South Africa within the bloc. A grinning billionaire president, in Cyril Ramaphosa, standing hand-in-hand with Chinese leader Xi Jinping, dominated newspaper headlines in the same way that the 'Bok victory over the All Blacks has done. The context of the partnership is never provided by the intellectually poor press.

According to 2021 figures, South Africa accounts for 0.84% of current BRICS manufacturing output in comparison to China's 84.12%, while Brazil (2.91%), Russia (4.44%) and

India (7.67%) make up the balance. In terms of GDP, the numbers are equally grim. South Africa accounts for 1.69% of BRICS GDP, China, a hefty 71.72%, Brazil (6.46%), Russia (7.20%), and India (12.84%).

Deeper analysis of South Africa's place in the world is best avoided, with "deep thinkers" preferring to wallow in the spectacle provided by elite sport. Marketing and public relations specialists plough their talents and energies into keeping Springbok mythology at the forefront of South Africa's consciousness. Emotion and not intellectual context drives the narrative, crippling critical thought in the process.

Within the marketing and public relations sectors, emotional inbreeding deforms the thinking of society, and intentionally so. All focus and attention in the South African press is on the prospects of the Springboks in the 2023 Rugby World Cup tournament, with in-depth analysis being provided on game management, injury scares, refereeing bias, team selections, bomb squads and of course, what they "do for" the country. Journalists, due to their reliance on official statements and spokespersons (read: propagandists), prefer to bask in the frivolity of post and pre-match analysis.

According to the World Bank, South Africa has the highest unemployment rate in the world, outpacing Gaza, the Palestinian West Bank and Djibouti. According to Isobel Frye, of the Social Policy Initiative in South Africa: "24 million adults out of a population of 60 million are either unemployed or not involved in economic activity." This idleness is reflected in the serious crime statistics which places South Africa at the top of the table – murder figures from 1994 to 2022 show that 590 682 people have been unable to share in the joy of all of the Springbok rugby triumphs in 1995, 2007 and 2019 – murdered by fellow "rainbowists."

Described as the most influential person in rugby, Siya Kolisi is the face behind which so much is hidden. In Kolisi's hometown of Zwile, Uber and Bolt taxi drivers no longer provide services due to the high crime rate, and Somali shop owners have closed up their stores. Kolisi's value and influence is confined to blinding people from seeing the truth hidden behind the brand – which is what brands are designed to do – hide facts from the public.

The system of deception is deeply ingrained into our daily life, and the treacherous activities of ANC cadres in the lead up to the release of Nelson Mandela in 1990 ensured that control of sport, as a prized social commodity, would vest in the greasy palms of the privileged. The social value of sport

as social educator and social cohesion vehicle has been displaced, and instead sport is now the locus of mass deception. Deception that goes unchallenged because the community sports movement SACOS is gone.

SACOS was much more than an institution – it was a defiant environment of constructive learning – about constructive socialisation and deep political education. SACOS is sorely missed in a society without structure or rules. It operated in a society that was much the same, except that that society was not only an unethical society, but a wholly immoral one. The many academies, departments of sport and recreation, and sports programmes that are currently tasked with developing and transforming sport, are anti-SACOS in their outlook because these entities ply the trade of sports transformation and development without analysing, or considering the social environment.

The role of the media in re-educating South Africans about sport is aided by voices such as that of Mike Haysman, who smashed the apartheid boycott by accepting Ali Bacher's invitation to participate in apartheid tests in the Republic of South Africa. The sporting deception is but the backdrop to the larger political deception, where the distractions of sporting victories on the fields of play have masked an ever-widening chasm between race, class and inequality.

The splintering of South African society is not an issue when it comes to celebrating the heroic feats of elite athletes. Every Springbok victory is proof positive that the system is working, deflecting attention away from the myriad failures within the country. In 2018 the Auditor-General audited 257 municipalities and only 8% yielded clean audit reports and 19% managed to provide quality financial statements.

With no running water in many areas and many communities underserved by their presiding municipalities, it beggars belief that a victory on a rugby field in France would improve the quality of life of poor South Africans. Those who have securely vested interests in the Springbok brand are the only people who benefit from the spectacle of professional sport – those who own the television channels, the retail outlets, the sports media, the exclusive schools and the branding rights. Patriotism through sport is a placebo. People have been psychologically programmed to feel good whenever they wave their flag, or don their Springbok jerseys. We are supposedly stronger together.

It would be interesting to see how the 2023 RWC plays out. The embedded propaganda machines within South African journalism will work hard at directing the gaze of South Africans to the magic of France. The Springbok, the system that protects it and the adulation meted out by the victims who are shut out of the stadiums, solidify the claim made by Wim Wenders when he said:

The most political decision you make is where you direct people's eyes. In other words, what you show people, day in and day out is political...And the most politically indoctrinating thing you can do to a human being is to show him, every day, that there can be no change.

The Springbok is a symbol that encapsulates the chasm that exists in South African society today, and it reinforces the claim made by FW De Klerk when he declared in a 1998 interview with John Pilger:

It is true that our lives have not fundamentally changed. We can still go to the cricket at Newlands and watch the rugby. We are doing okay...

As for the rainbow nation, our power utility ESKOM is functionally bankrupt, and blackouts have become the norm in South Africa, as is the fleecing of the population through increasing taxes. In the dark, you cannot see rainbows or trophies, and it is very dark in South Africa presently, and it is getting darker.



## THE MOONSHOT PACT - SURELY SET TO NOSEDIVE?

**It is a well-known fact that the ANC has been on a downward slide for a number of years, now. And their rivals at the feeding trough – those creepy-crawlies who've envied them their (strangle)hold on power since 1994 – will be licking their chops! Will 2024 finally see them displacing the ANC as the chief beneficiaries of this country's electoral political system?**

Not unless they band together as a coalition, they think.

Enter the DA-initiated "Moonshot Pact," another one of those absurdities that have characterised our ruling-class political landscape since from way-back-when (for example, remember the Nationalist government's Bantustan policy?).

Since this motley band of parties began to smell blood, they've been looking for opportunities to raise their profile in the media, and the war in Ukraine provided an ideal opportunity for them to court their imperialist masters. Why else would the one called Steenhuisen go visit Ukraine? Why would his party go plead in America for them to please, please, please not punish us for apparently supporting Russia? (Some observers see clear evidence that Imperialism is losing patience with the ANC as their official reps in SA, and might be looking around for new blood.)

The seven parties involved in the Moonshot Pact (and which produced a so-called "Multi-Party Charter for South Africa") are the DA (as Sunday Times columnist, Hogarth, has observed, more like the "Desperate Alliance" than the "Democratic Alliance"), Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) (whose Youth Brigade is apparently opposed to the Pact), Freedom Front Plus (FF+), ActionSA, United Independent Movement (UIM), Independent SA National Civic Organisation (Isanco) and the Spectrum National Party (SNP).

To choose between them and the ANC (or the EFF, or an ANC-EFF coalition, for that matter) would be like choosing to jump from the frying pan into the fire.

The leading party in this Moonshot grouping, the DA, likes to trumpet anything as a success, and as evidence of their imagined competence, to lead. Yet, when one considers their record in the Province which they most like to hold up as an example, they score an F. Remember their disgraceful plans to herd the homeless people into an internment-like camp at Strandfontein on the pretence that this will protect the citizenry of Cape Town (including the homeless) from Covid-19 infection? Remember their heavy-handed crackdown on the taxi industry in Cape Town, recently? How about their total abandonment of the poor in respect of housing delivery? Their decision to raise electricity tariffs for the ordinary people above those prescribed by Nersa? Their persecution of education stalwarts such as Brian Isaacs and Wesley Neumann? Their closure of so many schools of the poor? Have they done anything *effective* to turn the crime stats around? They like to talk up their clean audits, but the personnel in



the very municipalities which they control complain that "you can't deliver services when you are deprived of requisite funding, so what's the point of a clean audit?"

They puff out their chests in pride when there is a fractional improvement in the unemployment rate, but we all know such improvement would not have resulted from *their* deliberate action. We also know that in our capitalist system, marginal improvements in the unemployment rate are notoriously unreliable. Where will the DA be hiding itself when the fig-

ures go into reverse?

A noticeable absentee from this group of opportunists in the Moonshot Pact is Gayton McKenzie's Patriotic Alliance. McKenzie has made no secret of his willingness to enter a coalition – any coalition – as long as there's mass deportation of illegal foreigners, and as long as he can bring back the death penalty. Unsurprisingly, there is speculation in the media that the Moonshot gang will welcome even him in to secure the numbers. After all, it's about politics and profits, not about principles.

So, South Africa's voters will face a choice between the ANC, the EFF, and this Moonshot mélange. There is a popular saying: "You get the government you deserve." Over the years, not only the ANC has been suffering at the polls, but the whole system of electoral politics in this country has suffered declining credibility among ordinary citizens.

Even if by some miracle a party sympathetic to the real needs of SA's citizens comes to power in 2024, there is no chance that it would be able to implement a people-centric agenda. The forces whose interests are threatened by a people's/working class agenda will not allow it – which proves the point that if the working class is going to be strong inside parliament, it first has to be strong outside parliament. This is important, because sitting in parliament without an iota of a chance of changing the plight of the workers by having the necessary two-thirds majority to write a new workers' constitution, is nothing but a callous fleeing of the hard-earned taxes of the workers.

Thus, the work of the Left is clear-cut: as a priority, we need to build the unity of the progressive forces in this country, and that needs to be done *outside* of parliament.

### SHOW ME AN OLD REBEL

Do not show me a young rebel,  
whose eyes are bright  
and whose tail is bushy.

Young rebels are fine and good,  
but they are merely doing  
what the young are meant to do.

Show me an old rebel.  
One who keeps punching  
when his hands are arthritic,  
when her hair is white  
when his friends are all dead,  
when her knees are shot,  
when it hurts him to pee,  
when her shoulders are so bad  
that it would be much easier to punch down  
than to punch up.

Show me an old rebel  
who keeps standing up after being knocked down  
over and over again,  
year after year,  
decade after decade,  
who after the thousandth blow  
merely spits out a tooth  
and says "Son, you have no idea what you're dealing with, do you?"

Are you a young rebel?  
Are you sticking it to The Man?  
Are you upsetting the gray brainiacs  
And knocking over their word castles?

That is fine.  
Youth will be youth.

But show me a young rebel  
who became an old rebel,  
who stuck with it through the setbacks  
and the beatings and betrayals,  
who watched the hippies become yuppies  
and the protesters become pundits  
and still kept a fire lit  
amid the monsoons of infiltration  
and the hurricane of heartbreak,  
who will close their tired eyes for a final time  
without ever once having cast them to the ground  
or peered up in imploring subordination.

That, my friends,  
that is a true spirit.

If you are still a fiery rebel  
even as everything is ripped away from you,  
I will be humbled and awed by you,  
because I will know that whatever you find on the other side  
will be met  
with the same defiant glare.

And I will sing your song when you are gone.

**Caitlin Johnstone - July 2023**

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