

New Unity Movement

The WORKER



Knowledge is Power

November / December 2017

Biennial Conference – Back Page

ANC CONFERENCES

The race for the presidency of the ANC leading up to its elective conference in December and the discord at the June/July Policy Conference have dominated media reports and debates in ANC circles. This is a manifestation of a power struggle in all bourgeoisie parties. What separates candidates for the presidency is merely the vehemence of their opposition to patronage, corruption, factionalism and papering over the cracks in the organisation.

In the “Transformation” workshop, the Bell Pottinger instigated “*White Monopoly Capital*”, was ditched in favour of “*Monopoly Capital*”, however this hasn’t stopped senior ANC members from using the former when it suits a specific audience.

The call for *radical economic transformation* is merely a red herring to obscure the fact that SAs “Black majority” (in the broader sense) remains marginalised after 23 years of “*democracy*”. It seems that the only thing radical about this transformation exercise is the word, “radical”. None of the senior ANC can adequately expound on what is exactly meant by the term. The real intention is to create an enhanced buffer between the classes, to safeguard the interest of the capitalist, particularly in their own ranks.

Can all this change anything in the country? **CERTAINLY NOT!!!** Will there be a better life for the millions of people living in SAs multitude of slums and shantytowns? Will all SAs citizens be furnished with potable water and sanitation, in suitable well-planned housing units? Can unemployment be something of the past under these economic conditions? Are there implementable and feasible plans to eradicate poverty and achieve equality? Until we’ve achieved these minimum basic human rights we’ll all just be slaves to this capitalist system.

The Zuma dynasty is obviously not the only problem facing SA; it’s the whole fabric of SA society. We have to change the fundamentals in this country to achieve our freedom.

SERVICE DELIVERY

South Africa’s economy is in a mess and this is fuelling social unrest in the country. Rising levels of unemployment, poverty and degradation in South Africa’s sprawling townships and squatter camps as well as social infrastructure deficiencies such as basic lack of piped water, the inability to provide affordable electricity to the majority, negate what is documented and envisioned in the National Develop Plan (NDP).

The recently released auditor-general’s report on poverty levels and inequality is adequate evidence of the NDP’s imminent failure.

SA has been dubbed the protest capital of the world with one of the highest rates of public protests in the world.

In February 2014, it was reported that there had been nearly 3 000-protest actions in the previous 90 days – more than 30 a day – involving **more** than a million people. It is expected that service delivery protests may take on an organisational character that will coalesce into a full-blown movement. Quelling of protests and violence in society has been repressed and grievances around housing and land have been mounting.

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SERVICE DELIVERY SADLY LACKING IN CAPE TOWN!! A PICTURE PAINTS A THOUSAND WORDS

HOW LOW CAN YOU GO?

In a newspaper article in the *Herald* of 25 October 2017 Nwabisa Makunga, deputy editor reported on a recently *tell-all* book by Crisplan Olver in which he alleges that corruption of the worst kind had occurred in the Nelson Mandela Metro.

Olver had been seconded to the Metro by Pravin Gordham who was at the time Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs to “clean-up” the affairs of the ANC in the Metro.

The book has reference to fraud and corruption in the housing department of the Metro.

The book allegedly uncovers what has been termed a sophisticated “rent-a-protest” scheme by dubious council officials.

According to the report, the scam works as follows: Council officials use the mass-based support in shantytowns to stir up protests. The more prolonged and violent the protest, the more it increases the pressure on the municipality to purchase available land in the area for the community.

Apparently, according to Olver upon investigation, land in Walmer, Seaview and Uitenhage belonged to one businessperson, bought at market value and two years later sold to the municipality at seven times the buying price. Investigations by Olver also showed a pattern between community protests and questionable land deals. The landowner would name a price in collusion with the corrupt officials. Under pressure, the municipality has to

buy the land at an inflated price. Contractors in on the scheme will get contracts to build houses no matter what the standard of the homes as long as a house is erected in a reasonable time. As we know, all over the country there were reports of shoddy workmanship and contractors walking away with millions without fulfilling contracts.

All these deals were concocted with the connivance of corrupt officials. Is this a microcosm of what is happening in the rest of the country? It shows in graphic detail how public institutions are being broken down, how public servants and business are fleecing the public purse.

IB Tabata’s “*Awakening of a People*”, published in 1950 was intended as clarification of the real issues facing the oppressed as well as a guide to new methods of struggle. Tabata’s seminal work today still provides a key to the political position that is to be taken by the oppressed majority in South Africa. In addition, 2017 marks the centenary commemoration of the Bolshevik Revolution. These two occurrences, seemingly unrelated, cultivate fertile ground for the “*Re-Awakening of a People*”.

DECEMBER CONFERENCE THEME:

“RE-AWAKENING OF A PEOPLE”



THE AIDC – THE MINI BUDGET IN PERSPECTIVE

In face of debt crisis and state capture: AIDC calls for public audit of the debt

“AIDC demands the establishment of debt audit commission made up of eminent academics, trade unionists and civil society representatives that will audit the public debt including all SOEs. How much of the debt now pressing the fiscus is odious debt?”

“The government faces difficult choices”, Finance Minister Gigaba said in his Mid Term Budget Statement (MTBPS). But he made no choices. All decisions were postponed to later. On the one hand, the Minister and the MTBPS document provided a shocking account of the deep economic crisis facing South African society – reflected in the projected rise to over the benchmark 60% debt to GDP ratio by 1921/22 or the R50.8bn revenue shortfall in this budget year and rising. On the other hand, what measures the government is going to take are shrouded in darkness, except for Mr Gigaba’s signalling that the government remains committed to its failed economic policy.

South African economy hasn’t been hit by a natural disaster. It faces the outcome of a distinct economic policy, which now threatens our sovereignty. Trade liberalisation, relaxation of capital controls and the fixation with an extractivist development (mining, fracking, oil drilling in the sea) have laid the economy bare, open to shocks coming from the world market.

With an increasing budget deficit and retention of a miserly expenditure ceiling, the doors are opening to an IMF bailout. The corporate friendly phrases in Mr Gigaba’s speech signalled that there is no plan B. In February 2018, we can expect harsher austerity, meaning cuts in social spending rather than tax increases for the rich and empowered corporations.

Gigaba’s quoting of President Zuma when talking about nuclear power must be seen as keeping open the possibility of signing a deal with Russia. This disastrous move might already be confirmed before the Finance Minister (who ever this will be) presents the 2018/19 budget in February. The thing lacking right now is for the Gupta cronies to consolidate their control over the ANC and the state before making this move.

The present debt crisis connects back to the debt of the militarised and corrupt apartheid government. With the Zuptarisation of the state-owned enterprises (SOEs), the demand for the cancelling of odious debts must be seriously raised again.

AIDC demands the establishment of debt audit commission made up of eminent academics, trade unionists and civil society representatives that will audit the public debt including all SOEs. How much of the debt now pressing the fiscus is odious debt? How much of the debt is owed to companies in the Gupta sphere?

What needs to be examined is how much of the debt that has been created by the disease called State Capture, such as the R70 of the debt involves companies like SAA and Eskom for which the government must stand as a guarantor? All such loans must now be scrutinized; independently of a government that is marked by corruption and graft to its core. If they are the result of illegal deals and corruption they should be annulled.

Ever since the crisis first hit in 2008, AIDC has warned that trickle down economic policies based on economic growth is illusory. Growth this year was revised down by almost half, to 0.7%. To stabilise society the government must prioritise redistribution from the rich to poor. Instead, the Mid Term Budget signals clearly – but does not spell out – that tax increases for the rich and corporations will be timid, if it materializes at all, but that cuts in social grants are more likely.

If the government wouldn’t be hell-bent on a mega project, but used its money wisely and in a socially responsible way, a 4.3% budget deficit would not be a problem for an accountable and democratic state. But as it stands now the promise of R948bn investments in infrastructure projects, the bulk of them in support of extractivism and land grab, should worry us. The levels of mismanagement and corruption are too high. South Africa should invest in small-scale socially useful projects that promote renewable energy and development that the people urgently need and demand.

Given that South Africa faces a multifaceted crisis of both the economy and its ecology, not to speak of a massive social crisis under which the social fabric in society is collapsing, Plan B is urgent. This involves higher levels of state investment to drive a wage led and low carbon development path capable of creating decent work and re-industrialising our economy on a sustainable base. To halt this crisis, social investments and investments in renewable energy is necessary.

Mr Gigaba wishes to stay on a business as usual policy. This will continue to trap the majority of South Africans in poverty and the government in a vicious circle of debt and more austerity. Solutions exist to raise funds and resources to build back the condition of our economic independence and sovereignty. The political will is missing. The lie that the government is standing on the side of the oppressed is exposed by its inability to push rich corporations and wealthy South Africans to pay their fair share.

The alternative to a radical turn of economic policy is a march over the cliff where economic and social disaster awaits.

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(AIDC)

STATE CAPTURE IN SA #STATECAPTURE

What is the definition of state capture? State capture is a system where corrupt politicians are significantly influenced in their decision-making to their own advantage and the advantage of outside individuals or institutions.

It applies to situations where small corrupt groups use their influence over government decisions in order to strengthen their economic positions.

This phenomenon occurs prevalently in capitalist countries. It occurs when the power-hungry oligarchs manipulate governments to enrich themselves, all this at the expense of the citizenry of the country.

In South Africa over many years, the Ruperts and Oppenheimer's have had undue influence over decision making in the country. Now a new player has entered the playing fields – the Guptas.

What makes this so different?

Surely, it cannot be that the Guptas are of Indian descent. Nor that they have just recently acquired SA citizenship, although that may be a contributory factor.

In fact, **THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE**. These criminal acts are committed by capitalists that are attempting to boost their super profits by despicable means at the expense of the citizenry of a country.

TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK (TLGFA) AMENDMENT BILL

This act if not discriminatory, sexist and oppressive enough is now being amended and is being sneaked through to benefit the ruling ANC. In mid-October, the government published a notice of amendment to the TLGFA in a Sunday newspaper. Comments were elicited from the citizenry. Deadline - **THE NEXT DAY!** OBJECTIONS, new deadline sought - extension **27 October**. Public hearings will take place between November 2017 and March 2018. According to reports, the government is attempting to imply that change to the ACT is minimal. How can this be minimal when this bill seeks to give traditional councils (Leaders) the legal go-ahead to make deals with companies without consulting rural people? They have in any case been doing this for some time. These measures are attempting to emasculate the rights of citizens who happen to live in the areas under control of the (CONTRALESAs) Leaders in the traditional councils. Under the amendment, decisions will be taken for the citizenry by the Traditional Authorities

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME: *RE-AWAKENING OF A PEOPLE*

15/12/17	ARRIVAL OF DELEGATES	18:00 – 21:00 PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS OPEN SESSION
16/12/17	09:00 – 13:30 CLOSED SESSION OF CONFERENCE	15:00 – 18:00 NEF COMMEMORATION GUEST SPEAKER PROF. CRAIN SOUDIEN OPEN SESSION 18:00 – 21:00 Snacks, interacting/networking with guests/members OPEN SESSION
17/12/17	09:00 – 15:00 BUSINESS MEETING (CLOSED SESSION)	

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