

# Political Report to the Fourth National Congress of the YCLSA

10-14 December 2014  
Cape Town

Society does not consist of individuals, but expresses the sum of interrelations, the relations within which these individuals stand.

Marx, [The Grundrisse](#) (1857)

## 1. We are still here, eleven years later...and remain a breath of fresh air

Today marks exactly eleven years since more than 500 young people met at the re-establishment Congress of the Young Communist League at the University of the Vaal. Meeting under the theme "Crush Capitalism: Build Socialism Now" the delegates were determined to forge ahead with the launch of a working class youth formation whose preoccupation would be a socialist future.

At the time, defined as a breath of fresh air in youth politics and tasked with changing the status quo, the YCLSA leadership elected at that Congress went to the length and breadth of the country to re-establish branches, districts and provinces through organizing and campaigns on issues that had long taken the backburner and interest of youth formations.

In those early years, when we called for free quality public education at all levels of the system, and universal access to basic healthcare, and declared that we will defy the capitalist system if there is no access to finance for youth co-operatives and enterprise, we were dismissed as a utopian bunch that did not understand the prevailing post-apartheid challenges and that we will fizzle out within a year.

We were clearly determined and were confident of the support of young people in the townships, universities, in the workplaces, in the countryside, in FET colleges, in prisons and everywhere else where they were found, because the Ten Youth Demands we adopted in 2005 resonated with their needs, interests and aspirations.

The reestablishment Congress was in sync with the pulse of youth when it properly identified unemployment, poverty and inequality as the local and global challenges that confronted young people and that these would worsen with impending capitalist crises. With foresight we anticipated the implications of the closing down of teacher, nursing and agricultural colleges and understood that this will go at the heart of the skills crises that we today are confronted with.

The YCLSA became the democratic space within which young people who believe in a better, socialist future, mobilized and declared that our task is to "Build Socialism in our Lifetime".

Contrary to the prophets of doom, the naysayers, the capitalists mouthpieces, and anti-SACP agents, we are still here with 90 000 members, and stronger than ever in more than 1 200 branches throughout the country. When people speak about the campaigns for the provision of sanitary towels to young girls, or the now popular campaign for safe male circumcision, or the campaign for quicker, cheaper and easier access to ID documents, or the call for the reopening of an inquest into the assassination of Chris Hani, or provision for quality transport and transformed spatial planning in and around Moloto Road, or the banning of the publication of matric results in their current form, or the integration of youth development institutions, or the closure of shebeens near schools, the name of the YCLSA comes to mind. This is because we championed and spearheaded these demands to change the lives of young people.

Throughout the years, we have innovatively led young people through political engagements on various platforms such as the YCLSA Discussion Forums and Bua Thursdays, and through our publications *Hola Batsha* and Y-Reds.

The celebration of these eleven years of the existence of the YCLSA is about changing the discourse on youth development and making an impact on the lives of ordinary young people. It is also a declaration that we will forever continue to be involved in every manner where the working class and poor young people are affected.

In the last decade, young people both locally and globally have gone through various transformations of their respective societies and the world as a whole. We have witnessed the power of youth when they occupied Tahir Square in Egypt and Wall Street in the US to demand political and economic change. Technology has played a significant role in the ideological capture of young people, both for reactionary and revolutionary acts. The consumption of instant media through Facebook and Twitter and the use of these and other social networks have become tools for organization and mobilization, whilst empowering young people to bypass traditional bureaucratic forms of media to express themselves and oppose tyrannical governments.

We are meeting in Cape Town, a home where the first communist activities began and spread throughout the whole country through the work of the SACP. This is the home of communists. It is here where a meeting of the various fragments of communist organisations met in July 1921 to declare that:

“It is time for the Labour Movement in South Africa...to hearken to the call of the times to discard its futile reformism, its misleading careerism, its petty middle class opportunism, its subservient snobbery and cowardice, of the past – all typical of the ‘social patriotic’ Second International which failed the workers so miserably at the outbreak of the great war, and which is even now being rehashed as the “2 1/2 International”

The declaration of the founding Congress further stated:

“It is time to recognise the historic and titanic nature of the fight, and to unite all our forces in countering the enemy's palpable activity with an even more active Red forward movement, political and industrial, of all the workers; a Great Push so militant, well organised and unified by solidarity as to deliver, in co- operation with the advanced Labour Movement of the rest of the world, the knockout blow to a hated class and system.”

We are reconnecting with the founders of the SACP as we declare our intentions henceforth to ‘establish the widest and closest possible contact with workers of all ranks and races and to propagate the Communist gospel among them’, thus our theme is a call to intensify youth mobilization for socialism.

As we meet here today, other young people have converged in Johannesburg for the National Congress of COSAS, and others have just met for the National General Council of SASCO and the Consultative Conference of the ANC Youth League a week ago.

As we meet here today, we have just emerged earlier in the year from a successful national general elections campaign that saw the ANC led alliance emerge with more than 62% electoral majority.

This Fourth National Congress also pay homage to the former leaders of the YCLSA, dead and alive, from the previous generations, including Mike Feldman, Norman and Leon Levy, Louis and Sadie

Forman, Esther Barsel, Paul Joseph, Duma Nokwe, Barney Fehler, Eric Laufer, Harold Wolpe, Ismael Meer, JN Singh, Timol, Willie Kalk, Stanley Silwana, Thomas Mbeki, Sara Sable (the first National Secretary of the YCL), Eddie Roux, Moses Mabhida, Joe Slovo, Ruth First, Chris Hani, Govan Mbeki and Moses Kotane amongst others.

As the theme for this Congress declares, our aim is to “*Intensify Youth Mobilisation for Socialism*”. What does this actually mean? What are the tasks of young communists over the next decade? How do we define our role in taking forward the political program of the South African Communist Party, the South African Role to Socialism, a programme to which we contributed in its formulation as a summary of the tasks for building socialism? We will deal with these questions and enquiries further in this report.

## **2. The role of the YCLSA and youth organisations in building a socialist society.**

When he addressed Komsomol's Third National Congress in 1920, Lenin summed up the role of young communists in socialist societies in one word: learn. At our Second National Congress in Durban we extended Lenin's advice to our youth in a non-socialist setting and included the tasks of *fight, educate, agitate* and *organize* as the primary tasks of the YCL of South Africa.

We extended these tasks because we understood that to learn in a vacuum, without action, without building the YCLSA into a fighting force, without agitating and organizing for socialism and further, without educating the youth in general about the inevitable transition to socialism our tasks would be incomplete.

At the 2005 National Policy Conference of the YCLSA we emerged with the Ten Youth Demands, which encapsulated the challenges of young people at the time and summed up a guide to action. Many of those demands have been met to a certain extent, and thus, the need to continue with agitation for, the fight about, the need to organize and educate in attaining these demands.

The YCLSA is the youth wing of the SACP. We are therefore the preparatory school of the SACP, whose task is to organize young people behind its political program of building socialism as the future.

Because, as Lenin said at the above mentioned Congress, ‘it is the youth that will be faced with the actual task of building a communist society’, we therefore have to understand the five tasks that we are faced with.

And so, as Lenin responded rhetorically to the question he had posed with “What must the youth learn?” We ask what must they fight for, and what do we mean by educate, agitate and organize.

We must *learn* socialism. We must learn as young communists how capitalist society works. We must understand the exploitative nature of its structure and organization, in other words, the essence of its many contradictions. If we are to build an alternative society, we have to understand why capitalism is wrong and must be dismantled. Just as Karl Marx analysed capitalism, we should scientifically analyse the capitalist economy in our country. This is needed to *educate* the youth about socialism and why it is the most rational and fair form of social organisation that will lay the basis for the development of communist society. But learning is also the dialectic of unlearning.

The *fight* for communism is also the battle for the hegemony and dominance of its ideas against its vulgarization by the exponents of capitalism. We therefore have to unlearn the capitalist way of doing things and thinking about the world and commit ourselves to replace this unlearning with the learning of what socialism and communism are.

Part of the critical tasks of young communists, as an incubator for future communists, is that of political education. Through political education, we empower young people not to accept the current society as it is but to interrogate it on its inadequacies and inability to realise un alienated human development and potential or even meet the basic needs of all our people.

Through political education, we also empower young people not to be an extension of others but to remain independent beings within organizations, and to deal with the phenomenon of 'members of members'. Young communists should be the most advanced of cadres within the party and the working class. They should lead by example, and completely dedicate and immerse themselves into the life of the party to ensure that we realize socialism and beyond that communism.

We must *fight* for socialism. As our theme for the Congress indicates, we should use the current period of the YCLSA to *intensify youth mobilization for socialism*. As we state later in the report, socialism will not fall from the sky ready built, because it is about the fundamental organic restructuring of the economy. Young communists should everywhere be prepared to wage a relentless fight against all forms of exploitation under capitalism. In many instances, and in previous societies, the change in relations and forces of production are not a picnic, but comes via revolution, thus, the need for young people to constantly wage a relentless fight against capitalism.

We must constantly *agitate* the youth in favour of socialism through campaigns and a wide array of political and organizational work. Through the Jobs for Youth Coalition, we are constantly engaging young people and agitating them to revolt against the system. Through agitation, we also learn and educate each other, as this is a form of practical work. Campaigns have become the lifeblood of the YCLSA work as assimilated from the SACP as a form of organizing and agitation.

The only way in which we can constantly grow our ranks will be through organizing. This is a critical task of young communists, as we seek to grow from strength to strength. We have experienced uneven growth. Factionalism that sought to undermine the growth of the YCLSA has also plagued us recently. We have at times forgotten that we do not exist in order to hand out leadership positions. We should move away from the culture of cut-throat politics and the fight for leadership positions that weakens the organization.

At the end of the last congress, we had to take decisions to expel some comrades who disrupted the unity of the YCLSA by using foreign methods to contest for leadership positions. This must never be repeated in any gathering of the YCLSA.

We must anchor the YCLSA campaigns into the future by building on the successes of the current campaigns. The Draft Programme of Action prepared by the National Committee for discussion at this Congress reflects on the urgency of some of the campaigns that we need to undertake. This includes building on the campaigns on:

- **Job creation** for youth, through a job-rich **reindustrialization** strategy.
- Connecting young people to employment opportunities including short-term employment such as the Expanded Public Works Programme and Community Works Programme.
- Opening training and second chance opportunities for young people that have not completed secondary education. In this respect, government and private sector have to be urged to design programmes that can benefit this category of young people.
- In this respect, it is necessary to scale up the National Youth Service to draw large numbers of young people into community service.
- Creating work exposure measures for those young people that do not have degree and diplomas.

- Improving working condition and pay for youth across the economy including in the services sector.

The YCLSA should not lose sight of some of the pressures that young people are confronted with which are results of their socio-economic conditions. These include the problems of HIV/AIDS, drugs and substance abuse, teenage pregnancy and loss of life through violent crimes.

### **3. Unpacking the Relationship between the SACP and the YCLSA...Once more**

Over the years, the YCLSA has been dependent on the guidance and leadership of the SACP for its continued existence. As we meet here today, many former leaders of the YCLSA have graduated into the ranks of the SACP in its various structures after being inducted in the YCLSA. We are proud of these comrades as they continue to exonerate the party's decision for having formed the YCLSA. In the words of the General Secretary of the SACP, one of the most significant decisions that the Party has taken since its unbanning has been the re-establishment of the YCLSA.

The relationship of the YCLSA and the SACP takes an *organizational, political, dialectical and constitutional* form. YCLSA structures are an integral part of the SACP, and thus an important component of Party life and organizational activity. The YCLSA should at all times form part of SACP campaigns and programmes, and should be at the forefront of these campaigns and programmes. Through this, YCLSA cadres are organically and practically integrated into Party life and begin at an early stage to be part of the Party. There can never be a distinction and contradiction between the YCLSA programme and that of the SACP. In some instances, there were attempts to try to drive a wedge between the SACP and the YCLSA in the provinces, districts and branches of both structures.

I am reminded of the words of the late and former President of the ANC, Oliver Tambo, who warned that we should "Beware of the wedge-driver, the man who creeps from ear to ear, carrying a bag full of wedges, driving them in between you and the next man, between a group and another, a man who goes round creating splits and divisions. Beware of the wedge-driver, comrades. Watch his poisonous tongue".

We have always ensured that we intervene urgently when such problems arise. We have always insisted that the Party would be weakened if we have a weak YCLSA, and similarly, the YCLSA will be weakened, and almost face oblivion, if there is a weak SACP. Part of the scary trend that emerged from the last Congress of the YCLSA held in Mafikeng was when some YCLSA cadres wanted to use structures of the YCLSA to contest for leadership within the SACP by seizing leadership of the YCLSA.

We remain convinced that although, naturally, members of the YCLSA should graduate into Party leadership, this should not in any way and form be seen as some hostile takeover of the Party intending to ultimately deviate it from its programme. We will continue to remain vigilant against such tendencies and expose them wherever and whenever they rear their ugly head.

But equally, the *political* nature of the relationship between the YCLSA and the SACP is based on our assimilation of the SACP programme, the South African Road to Socialism. The YCLSA contributed immensely in the development of the programme, and believes that its implementation lies at the heart of the realization of a socialist future. Part of joining the YCLSA includes acceding to the political leadership of the SACP, and the understanding of its programme and commitment to its implementation.

There have been those who sought to suggest that because of this political nature of the relationship, we have therefore become the lapdogs of the SACP, whilst others suggested that the National Secretary of the YCLSA is the stooge of the SACP General Secretary. The intention of this categorization is to suggest that for the YCLSA to be seen to be autonomous, it has to be confrontational in its political relationship with the SACP. The incoming leadership of the YCLSA must never fall in this trap. We are afforded all the opportunity within the Party to engage with the determination of the party political programme.

To hurl insults, intimidate Party leadership that we will oust them, or to conduct ourselves as though we were a Party within the Party would only invite temporary popularity through newspaper headlines whilst severely damaging, dividing and weakening both the SACP and the YCLSA.

To build a robust and militant youth formation does not have to be done on the basis of disrespect, ill-discipline and utter rudeness. As young communists we remain cognizant of the fact that our militancy and robustness should be directed to the enemies of socialism and communism, and not against the party leadership. What happened to the ANC Youth League since 2008, where its then leaders saw themselves as the real representatives and leaders of the ANC can never be the definition of the relationship between the SACP and the YCLSA.

If we are called stooges and lapdogs, we are prepared to wear that mantle with pride for we have come to understand that the YCLSA is not an independent political organization from the SACP, but an integral part of SACP structures with complete autonomy and a complementary programme of action. This relationship can never be defined by even the sworn enemies of the working class and the poor, whose intentions are to drive a deep wedge amongst working class political organisation.

The *dialectical* nature of the relationship is informed by the fact that the future of the SACP is the YCLSA, and that there can never be a YCLSA without the SACP. We have always insisted that there can never be an SACP branch without the YCLSA, and consequently there can never be a YCLSA branch without the SACP. The role of an SACP branch in relation to the YCLSA is to induct YCL members into the party life and organisation; help them prepare and execute campaigns and also ensure that they conduct themselves in line with party practices and programmes. This defines the *dialectical* nature of the relationship between the SACP and the YCLSA.

The relationship, as we said, is also *constitutional* in nature. The constitution of the SACP establishes the YCLSA with a clear programme, that it is its preparatory political school. The details of what the YCLSA should be are contained in its constitution. When the ANC took a decision last week to turn the ANC Youth League planned National Conference into a consultative one, there was and continues to be a discontent about the intervention of the ANC in youth affairs. The progressive movement have always defined its youth league structures not as separate structures, but as part of the broader structures of the movement that from time to time should deserve attention, tutelage and guidance.

We should however, be careful not to expect in the process youth formations that would be submissive, contained and always a replica of the mother body. In that case, we would not be where we are had Mandela and others not used their activism in the ANC Youth League to present a concrete political programme for accelerated transformation of both the ANC and society in 1994. If that was the case, the SACP would not, for instance, had a fresher and more urgent look into its relationship with state power and elections. Had that been the case, for instance, the NLM would not have looked urgently at issues of economic freedom and the need for a radical economic transformation. We need vibrancy, militancy and action; and anything short of that would put the youth movement and society in general into a long slumber.

#### 4. Young people and the Second Phase of a radical National Democratic Revolution

Since 1994 the ANC-led government has done much in transforming the lives of black South Africans and in reversing the damage that was done by the ugly system of apartheid. There are significant gains that have been made in the provision of housing, electricity, water, roads infrastructure, schools, healthcare facilities, two more universities and many other forms of social infrastructure and programs that drastically transformed the quality of lives of black people.

This also included various acts of legislation passed by Parliament and implemented by government. Among other things these have changed the labour market and guaranteed protection for basic labour rights, forced companies to empower black businesses extend ownership to historically excluded individuals, ensured that there is land restitution and redistribution, afforded women and children more social and physical protection from abuse, and guaranteed basic human rights through the one of the most progressive constitutions the world has ever seen.

Various sectors of the economy were encouraged to reach consensus on how they will transform the ownership and control of historically excluded individuals through various charter agreements, with the most significant ones being mining and finance, as well as, by government initiative through the campaign led by the SACP, a land summit that endorsed thorough land reform.

Reminding ourselves of all of these does not mean that all has been smooth sailing and that the transition from apartheid to democracy has not had some of its gains reversed, distorted or resulted in unintended consequences. The sad reality is that even those who enter the middle class run the risk of falling back into poverty given generations of exclusions, and being victims of finance capital and remaining forever indebted shows that no matter how many gets pulled out of poverty, a lot more remain trapped.

The fact that unemployment is still high, inequalities are deepening much further from even the small target as set by the National Development Plan, and that there are rising poverty levels given the high increase in the number of people in the social security net shows that our work is far from done. We still have to go the distance if we are to tamper with apartheid forms of social and economic relations and the institutions it had build to protect monopoly capital.

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We have always defined the objective of the struggle of our people as the liberation of blacks in general and Africans in particular from *political and economic bondage*, and the *building of a non-racial, non-sexist and democratic and prosperous South Africa*. We understood that this is a *continuous struggle* that will not end with the defeat of the political representatives of the system of apartheid, but will also include a long and arduous, but yet tougher struggle for economic emancipation of our people.

Overall, the struggle was not only about the occupation of the Union Buildings, the seat of government, and Parliament, where democratically elected parties represent our people, but that it also included completely transforming the monopolistic character of our economy and ensuring that there is transformation in the ownership and control of the commanding heights of the economy. If the Johannesburg Stock Exchange remains controlled by white monopoly capitalists, then the struggle continues.

For communists in particular, this has entailed the strategic aim of advancing working class hegemony. The deepening triple crises of unemployment, inequality and poverty will not be completely resolved as long as the structure, ownership and control of the economy has not been transformed.

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South Africa's population is a youthful one. More than 20.1 million are between the ages of 14 and 35 constituting close to 40% of the population. Many of these young people are in schools and universities, with the intake of young people furthering their education having passed the million mark. When we look at the unemployment figures, young people constitute more than 60% of the unemployed workforce, whilst a good 3.4 million of them are not in school, skills centre or in employment. According to South Africa Survey 2013, only 6% of South Africans have a university qualification.

Young black South Africans are the most affected by the legacy of apartheid, with the majority of them trapped in poverty, without better prospects of employment and alternative forms of incomes and if employed, would be subjected to poverty wages that will not lead to a qualitative transformation of their lives. The demographic of the prison population, and the recently released statistics of the number of young black male South Africans who die of unnatural causes is a stark reflection on the socio-economic realities that our youth are faced with.

All political parties represented in Parliament, without exception, target young people because of their vulnerabilities both in terms of their composition and the issues that they raise. In fact, the last election was won or lost on the basis of the attraction of the youth vote to each of the political parties.

Young people are therefore a significant force either for continued change of their conditions or its further perpetuation. We are not victims who should deserve pity, but a locomotive for the transformation of the South African society and economy. If you look at the so-called service delivery protests nationally, young people are always at the centre of these protests, not only because of their energy and impatience but also because tardy delivery affects their lives. The challenge for us is therefore to ensure that we realise the potential of this force and channel this frustration to ensure that it is at the centre of transformation of the South African question.

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The critics of government often argues a narrative that suggest that the South African failure is significantly that of state failure, and that the private sector should move in and run the show whether it be in electricity, or the challenges in SAA, or SABC, or in the police, or in any of the state-run institutions or parastatals. This narrative suggests that those who have been elected have failed in executing their responsibilities in leading South Africa, despite the fact that the ANC continues to enjoy majority support, and the president whose government has made the major impact on basic needs of our people has been the most vilified.

If we look at, for instance, the issues that are being canvassed in the Marikana Commission of Enquiry, we find that the narrative around culpability centres only on the state. Lonmin and private capital has almost completely been exonerated. Their exploitation of workers and their terrible bad faith during negotiations have been airbrushed out of what has happened. Instead, all the focus is on the actions of the police and the whole commission is effectively prosecuting the state (especially its security apparatus). A commission that should have ideally been about probing why the conditions of workers in the mining sector have not changed in 50 years whilst the South African mining sector continues to churn our dollar billionaires to the Forbes List and the Rich List.

A '*radical economic transformation*' and the '*second transition*' would therefore be amiss if *they do not place at it's the centre the youth question, and placing young people at the centre of the ownership and control of the economy of South Africa*. We are placing before this fourth Congress a set of proposals on what needs to be done in order to engage with the so-called the youth question.

What are a set of demands and priorities for the immediate consideration by the movement (alliance) in general to respond to the youth question? The National Committee believes that we should use the next term towards the Fifth Congress as the need for "A New Deal for black working class and Poor Youth". This Deal should encompass a set of priorities and a set of tasks that we will campaign and lobby for as defining the strategic and tactical nature of the second transition and a radical economic transformation.

Essentially, we believe that *the only way that the second transition can be regarded as truly radical is through the use of legislative, political and mass power to transfer the ownership and control of key economic and productive sectors into the hands of the entire working class, with priority emphasis initially on the most oppressed majority of the working class - the black working class*. Priority targets for transfer of ownership should be *land, mining, finance and energy* where our people have been excluded from in terms of *ownership and control* of these sectors.

The approaches and sets of interventions that have been implemented before have been averted and subverted by weaknesses in the capacity of the state to enforce them, or the co-option of a section of black capitalists who have essentially been turned into rent-seekers and become compradorial.

The use of the state to coerce capitalists to empower black people into their businesses have continuously and utterly failed even with the various revisions of the black empowerment codes, whilst the economy has predominantly remained in the hands of white and monopoly capitalists. The reliance on sectoral determinations of transformation though charters have significantly failed, with many of the commitments made, for instance in the Mining Charter, far from being attained.

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There is a need to also change the skewed dependence on the export of raw materials and shift towards beneficiation, instead of the highly import oriented consumptive nature of the economy. However, we have to beneficiate what we own and control as part of the resistance in terms of changing this structure have been the foreign and imperialist owners of the economy. The policy approach of building black industrialists will also fall into the same trap that black economic empowerment fell, where a certain clique of elite black businesspeople were essentially co-opted and paraded as the success of transformation of the economy when the rest of our people have been excluded.

The attack on black businesspeople as the contemporary enemy of our people, has become fashionable, but is a mere deviation from the real enemy of the progress of the National Democratic Revolution. The stance taken by trade unions, such as Numsa, and political parties, such as the EFF, of rubbishing black businesspeople is to mistake the tree for the forest, and is similar to the attack that has been levelled against the ANC led government in the manner it has responded to the challenges of leading government.

As has been witnessed with the ownership patterns in the mining sectors, black mine owners have been highly indebted to financial institutions who have financed their empowerment deals and therefore created a distortion in terms of ownership and control. They have been reduced into shareholders and non-executive board members who earn dividends without real impact on

transformational issues. This is not to make light of the fight against capital no matter what its colour. But it is important for strategic and tactical purposes to properly identify our opponents and our allies.

It is also important that we distinguish our approach from the rest of the neo-fascists who claim to be genuine representatives of the working class and the poor whilst in truth they seek to strike a compromise with monopoly capital. The calls for nationalization of mines that has been led by the EFF and supported by Numsa, for instance, and the so-called United Front, is merely a farce intended to turn the state into a shareholder in the mining industry. We are not calling for the substitution of monopoly capitalism with state capitalism, a path that has been followed, for instance by China. We are calling for the ownership and control of these sectors of the economy by the workers and the people as a whole, and that the role of the state should be elevated to provide quality and basic needs through the taxes that the people will be paying to it.

We fully agree with the SACP position that a radical economic transformation programme should hinge on various pillars, which includes (i) industrialisation and beneficiation; (ii) transformation of the education sector, (iii) strengthening state capacity and (iv) the mobilization of our people behind this programme. This approach by the SACP should be strengthened by our perspective and call for a new deal for black and working class youth.

Attendant to this approach also are various tasks that should be pursued. These tasks include the strengthening of the capacity of the state to coerce and ensure the implementation of the new laws that will lead to change in the ownership and control of the economy. There will be serious implications for the state and the people, including possible violent resistance and sabotage of the South African economy as was the case in Zimbabwe. The state and its institutions have to be readied to ensure that it responds to such resistance but to also support those who will be charged with the responsibility of running the economy.

Already, even without any threat to those who own the economy, there are forms of isolation and punitive measures to our economic sovereignty through the use of the so-called rating agencies such as Standard & Poor and Fitch. These forms of coercion would obviously intensify if we were to implement measures that tamper with those who own our economy.

There are significant strides that have been made through access to political power that has advanced the implementation of the National Democratic Revolution. Progress has been made in dealing with racial and gender exploitation as component parts of the struggle for total emancipation. However, the complete break from the apartheid societal superstructure is mainly dependent on the resolution of the economic question. The reliance on the state and its institutions to ensure that black people in general and Africans in particular are liberated from political and economic bondage is an unsustainable tactic. Currently, for instance, many relies on the state for employment, business and the general protection of their rights.

There is no other way, for instance, that we can explain why there are increasing levels of corruption in the public sector as it has become a significant role player in the economy. In fact the state is the largest employer in SA. Many people are dependent on the state sector for their empowerment and employment and therefore would compete for government business. The state has become the engine of empowerment for Black people at political, economic and financial levels. This is no accident. The key question is where is capital in the advancement of Black people beyond creating the rent seeking *indunas* sitting on company boards?

We would like to restate our condemnation of the looting of state resources that happened in the name of security upgrades at the private residence of the President by companies that inflated prices and

led to the ballooning of costs to more than R250 million. The YCLSA has consistently called for those who have been fingered by the Public Protector's Report, the Inter Ministerial Task Team and now the Special Investigative Unit to be brought to book, and take responsibility for the repayment of the money that was looted. This is at the heart of the abuse of the tendering system, and the greed associated with it. We remain opposed to the grandstanding and personalisation of this issue by the political parties represented in parliament, and believe that their intention is to deviate us from the real issues of corruption whilst scoring cheap political points.

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One of the fundamental reasons why apartheid persisted was its use of the coercive power of the state to underdeveloped black communities through lack of education, mis-education absence of basic healthcare and proper food security. This was its greatest arsenal. To take away the dignity of black people, and to deny them the right to participate in the economy, and consequently to get them to believe, through mis-education, that they are children of a lesser god.

Changing the economy is therefore, at the heart of ensuring that we completely defeat apartheid and neo-neo-colonialism. It is however unfortunate that there is a growing trend of people to fraudulently claim to possess qualifications whilst they do not. Whilst it is important that we should not place primacy on the certification of individuals over other forms of education and skills development, and the elitism that has become associated with being certificated, it is critical that we expose those who lie about their qualifications in order to have access to better jobs, even those that may not require the stated qualification.

There was a case in point of SAA, and now of the SABC where, at the heart of the issue, is qualifications. We believe that there must be a distinction made between the integrity of people who occupy such positions, and how they have compromised the institutions they lead through fraudulently claiming that they possess them, and their skills on the other hand. Society must act harshly against those who are found to have committed academic fraud.

The YCLSA is deeply concerned about the continued impact that the load shedding of electricity due to the constrained capacity of Eskom has on long-term economic activity of the country. The expanded provision of electricity now to more than 7 million households without an expansion of electricity generation will cost us. It is important, equally, that Eskom should consistently inform our people on reliable schedules that they would implement load shedding so that they are better prepared. However, these are immediate interventions.

The long-term interventions should speak to a sustainable programme for electricity generation. We are in these crises exactly because of initial disinvestment in state owned companies and earlier calls for the privatization of Eskom and other parastatals. We need a YCLSA that will campaign radically in opposition to any attempts to privatize electricity as this will have long-term consequences on costs and access. We must also build on the demands for access to clean electricity generation as part of the long-term strategy.

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There is growing confidence among right-wing racists and supremacists and an increase of neo-liberal closet racists in our country. The confidence of challenging the state to maintain, for instance, exclusively Afrikaner privileges in the forms of academic and other forms of public institution is nothing but separate development of HF Verwoerd in another name. Groupings such as the Freedom front Plus and Afri-Forum presents themselves as reformed fighters of Afrikaner rights who advocate for

exclusively for Afrikaner privileges have over the last few years gained significant confidence to even challenge the government in court for such privileges. Similarly, others are using costs to exclude black people and maintain exclusive privileges.

The manipulation of prices of houses in places such as Camp's Bay, the continued apartheid spatial development of towns and cities, where private property developers determine the direction of development, exorbitant prices in academic fees as is the case in schools such as Hilton College OR University of Stellenbosch, costs of prices in shopping malls, are all intended to protect white privilege and build white enclaves with sprinkling of acceptably middle class black people.

The same applies to access to fair administrative justice, as we have seen with various cases, including the Oscar Pistorious, Shrien Dewani, former Fidentia boss J Arthur Brown and others such as Radovan Krejcir, which have exposed the fact that there is justice for the rich and injustice for the rest of us. The polarization of society on the basis of the historical privileges of predominantly one racial group speaks to the class issues that confront our country to this date.

As we pointed out at the National Council last year, those who say to us that raising these issues is equal to taking South Africa backwards, and that young people not see themselves in shade of colour, are oblivious to the different economic realities confronting us. We should unite our people, but this unity cannot be built on the foundation of continued black poverty and white wealth. We have similarly challenged the idea of 'born frees', and declared that apartheid never died in 1994 and that it is continuing. We want to repeat the point we made at that National Council that those who ask us to forget the psychological and social scars inflicted on us by apartheid that we inherited from our parents should be prepared to forego the huge inheritances from their parents who gained them through the same system.

To sum up what we presented in the Strategic and Tactical Perspective of the YCLSA document on what we mean by this 'new-deal', we mention four critical areas of work that the YCLSA will have to present as part of the discourse for a radical economic transformation, which are:

- a. **Politically**, empowerment of the working class to lead and to be its own liberator. In this sense, **the working class becomes the active motor** that drives change and its interest manifests in organizational and political programs. It also requires that the state's policy interventions do much more to change the material conditions of the black working class.
- b. In **economic** terms, the **entrenched power of white monopoly capital** has to be **challenged** through a dynamic program that uses the knowledge and resources accumulated by this capital to build new sites of accumulation and production. South Africa must embark on a forceful and coordinated program of reindustrialization on the back of the domestic and regional demand. That means building capabilities within South Africa and the region to produce locally more of the products that we use.
- c. Confronting the yawning inequality gap through a combination of measures including **redistribution of income, assets and wealth**. An income policy must be developed to raise wages for low paid workers, provide a safety net for the unemployed and transfer some income from the wealthy. Career path, **flattening work place hierarchies** and **skills development** are important parts of a workplace equity strategy. Such an approach can also help lift the poorly paid black young workers status and wages thus close the historic apartheid wage gap. In tandem, it is important to improve working and living condition for millions of workers in the economy.
- d. The link to socialism: **socialism will not fall from the sky** but has to be fought for and consciously constructed. How do we know that sufficient ground has been laid for the socialist transition during this second phase or radical transformation?

## 5. Building unity of the movement for the success of the radical phase of the NDR

The crisis in COSATU is an outgrowth of deep-rooted, systemic processes, structural forces and changes in old developments of political contestation within unions. The crisis must be understood in the context, post-1994, of South Africa's re-integration in the world capitalist system that is imperialist dominated from which it was partly, not wholly, isolated during the struggle against apartheid.

Post-1994 imperialist workplace restructuring in the form of neoliberalism increased casualization, perpetual temporisation of employment and labour brokering to cut production cost with labour as the main target and to maximise profit private capital accumulation. Permanent employment and hard-won labour rights and benefits were attacked by this neoliberal restructuring which also produced retrenchments and thus contributed to persisting high unemployment rate, poverty and inequality.

In the South African economy in general the share of workers in the national income declined. In contradiction the pressure on the employed workforce was rising especially among the black workers who had to use their wages to take care of their extended families as the impact of unemployment increased. It is estimated that the average family size of these workers is five. In so far as the restructuring at the level of the state is concerned it included efforts to reduce deficit and generate surplus. The 1996 class project was proud about this in the midst of ever growing material and cultural needs of the people.

The HIV and AIDS denialism that characterised those years was located in this context. In the process many lives were lost while the link between HIV and AIDS was denied by our "intellectuals par excellence". Further restructuring at the state level conformed with the general rules of neoliberal imperialism instead of challenging it. It is in this context that high-road liberalisation of trade, capital, finance and currency markets and deregulation in varying degrees across sectors were imposed under the macroeconomic strategy the so-called Growth, Employment and Redistribution (Gear). There was also privatisation of state owned assets across the three spheres of the state resulting in retrenchments, casualisation and the increased use of labour brokers in privatised and outsourced entities and operations.

As the SACP discussion document 'Going to the root' points out, there was insufficient attention paid to restructuring the colonial features of our economy and redefining its relationship with the imperialist powers in a counter-hegemonic way. The result was the failure to address the problems of what was already a triple crisis of unemployment, poverty and inequality. To the extent there was economic growth unprocessed minerals exports played a key role used as raw materials in advanced or advancing manufacturing economies.

The breakout of the international crisis of capitalism in 2008 worsened the problem. Unemployment increased as global production plummeted, retrenchments increased and the demand for raw material exports declined and growth collapsed. Pressure on the employment workforce increased leading to high wage increased demands in the face of the ever-rising cost of living in addition to persistent unemployment, poverty and widening inequality. The trade union movement experienced fragmentations as the boundaries of the established labour legislation were tested through increased incidences of "unprotected" industrial action.

Although loud-mouthed trade unionists would like to project themselves as the champions of the fight against inequality and often compare entry level workers with CEOs they increased their own pay and benefits. A new trend of the CEOization of trade union general secretaries and their deputies took root in certain instances. In fact while some condemned ministers their own pay and conditions fast became indistinguishable from that of the ministers and even some heads of state. Interaction between those trade union leaders and workers was increasingly securitised with the former surrounded by increased number of bodyguards. While unions were established to fight against exploitation increasingly they took active involvement in labour exploitation through investment companies.

More and more a trend towards business unionism in the trade union movement has emerged. The

rise of fragmentation within the labour movement was in part driven by this. More and more contestation increased for positions of leadership in line with the increased benefits that come with occupying those positions from the shops steward level up. The positions of full time shop stewards in upstream industries became as contested as were the positions of secretaries at regional, provincial and national levels.

Patronage in some unions arrived along with increased factionalism. Being a shop steward in some instances brought about "benefits" in this regard. Certain positions in unions became highly paid when compared to others in a manner that could never have been imagined before. Being a union official was no longer a matter of pushing the struggle in that context and in those instances but a career that bred opportunism and conformists to the hand that feeds.

Within the union movement some comrades also abandoned solidarity. An injury to one was according to their conduct no longer an injury all but an opportunity for them to scavenge on the carcasses of their "sister unions". Fundamental principles such as industrial unionism and in particular COSATU were violated. The principle of 'one industry, one union' has been opportunistically abandoned. The basis for unity was destroyed, deep divisions plague Cosatu instead of solidarity and defending each other. All of these are linked with personal political ambitions. This ambition characterizes the call for new political organisations to be created along with calls for COSATU to split from the ANC-headed Alliance.

It is in this context that the Numsa leadership clique has relentlessly been attacking the Alliance, the ANC and scape-goating the SACP at every opportunity coupled with a drive for the polarisation of organised workers in the name of "unity". While this is presented as a socialist program it was first, among others, presented internationally in the heartland of capitalism the United States (and Canada) where it is said to have been accepted or understood.

The main question facing this Congress is what role should the YCLSA play in defending the unity of organised workers under the leadership of COSATU. While discussion on this point takes place one thing is certain. Every attack on the SACP is an attack on the YCLSA. The YCLSA cannot fold its arms or become indifferent to such attacks. We must defend the SACP and its leadership and serve as the first line of the Party's defence.

It is also important for us to strengthen our strategies concerning young workers across all sectors of the economy.

## **6. The Global Economic Crises and the shifting International Balance of Forces**

The roots of the global crises lie in the Bretton Woods international agreement signed in 1944 under the hegemony of the U.S. (with the dollar becoming a reserve currency, convertible in gold) and aimed at domesticating capital in an attempt to prevent systemic shocks as those that took place in the 1920s-1930's. The agreement was intended at regulating markets under the supervision of a multilateral international institution - the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which was to provide liquidity as a last resort.

That regulating disposition was caused by the crisis of 1929 - 1930 and didn't reach three decades of existence. By 1971, it too was in crisis, with the unilateral decision of putting an end to the dollar-gold convertibility by the U.S. During the 1970's, capitalism already skidded into low productivity, and its average profit declined and the system demanded the free and unrestrained circulation of capital in order to save capitalism

By 1979 the U.S. - the great hegemonic imperialist power, triggered the increase in interest rates in order to strengthen the dollar, imposing greater losses to indebted peripheral countries, in the Third World - the crisis of foreign debt! Starting in the American capitalist center, the march of global financial liberalization was imposed. Hence, the 'regulation rules' are cast off and the unrestrained

'virtues' of what became known as neoliberalism were imposed - a set of commandments based on financial openness to dependent countries and financial deregulation in 'central countries'. A new consensus was imposed: praising the absolute reorganizing role of the market in relation to the liberalizing of capital accounts and financial deregulation, causing, in the search for capital's maximum profit, the unsustainable expansion of credit, the injection of 'bubbles' in financial markets, causing recurring banking, financial and indebtedness crises in the so called peripheral countries.

The nature of capitalism and, its highest stage, imperialism, cannot be changed - if it is changed, it is no longer capitalism! Instead, adjustments are made within the limits of capitalism itself. The attempt in 1944 to prevent crises such as the one that shook the economy in after 1929 failed. A more liberalized globalized situation ensued based in the dynamic of modern communications. Macroeconomics rules were inverted in the post war period. The consummation of the financialization of economy on a global scale led to the hypertrophy of the financial sphere, pushing capital to its speculative and parasitic apex. Cumulative imbalances aggravated and huge flows of financial capitals that lacked backing moved freely among central economies. As in every crisis, there was a detonator - the route of growing liberalizing excitation led to the eruption of the crisis with default of Lehman Brothers in the US. That was the sign of a crumbling neoliberal building.

In 2007 another systemic crisis of capitalism was installed, with greater dimensions than those of pervious years. The crisis, being systemic, had a direct impact on central economies. It is still spreading and now Europe is its epic center - nobody can say what will really happen.

It is always the major sectors of the population - the workers, who have to face heavy the consequences, leading to massive unemployment, despair, hunger and marginalization.

Contemporary imperialism -

- the world now, on the one hand confirms the sharp Marxist analyses about capitalism and its tendencies, and in the other hand, present relevance and validity of the Leninist theory of imperialism

- today's conditions of the crisis of capitalism (above) reveal the dramatic relevance of analysis by Marx, Engels and Lenin on the nature and historical limits of capitalism, confirming the tendencies they suggested

- the first dimension of Leninist theory of imperialism that gains importance nowadays is the tendency for 'unequal development of capitalism'. For Lenin, "under capitalism, unequal development is inevitable, occurring by leaps, in different companies and segments of industry and in different countries"

- a second matter that reinforces the relevance of Leninist analyses about the fundamental characteristics of imperialism, is what we identify 'as a new race for natural resources (minerals, sources of energy, water, biodiversity and arable land- what Lenin called "the partitioning of the world among major powers"

- Imperialist countries try to guarantee the control of raw materials for their monopolies. In this imperialist (intra-imperialist wars) race for these strategic assets, geographical zones that are abundant in these resources, such as Middle East, Africa and Latin America, become targets of neocolonialist strikes. New conflicts and new imperialist wars will occur due to this, as recently witnessed in the aggression against Libya, Syria, et al.

- The current capitalist crisis will not have a homogenous impact among countries and regions in the

world. One important novelty that resulted from the present crisis of capitalism is the phenomenon of the economic emergence of countries called BRICS. Associated to this, is the fact that in BRICS, in several countries of South America and others countries in transition to socialism, the impact of the present economic crisis, has been nominal in comparison to the U.S., Europe and Japan.

The transition in the international situation and the anti-imperialist struggle

- This transition- marked by relative decline of the USA and the rapid emergence of countries. The so called periphery, especially China - marks an important (main) characteristic of contemporary international situation, which has important implications upon the correlation of forces in the international balance of forces

- North American 'single polarity' is not holding. The tendency is towards multi polarity, particularly in political and economic spheres. Putin's Russia is gradually putting this matter on the agenda of world affairs

- BRICS and other alliances such as Venezuela, Cuba, Syria, and Iran trying to defend their independence and national sovereignty (for varying degrees) quickly become targets of imperialist aggressions and pressures, particularly from US and its military arm NATO

- The decline of American hegemony doesn't mean the decline American imperialism – it will be the main economy of the people and nations for a long time to come.

The rise of BRICS, and alliances and regional unions that are objectively anti- imperialist

In the SADC region and the continent there have been efforts towards deepening regional economic integration by strengthening existing free trade areas and expanding or creating new one's in order to ensure greater cooperation amongst African countries. Hopefully, by the end of this year, we will realize the first draft and initial agreement towards regional integration, under the auspices of the AU. The reality is that the framework within which this regional integration is premised, is on the basis of pursuance of growth targets as dictated by the IMF and the World Bank, without dealing with growing poverty levels, inequality and unemployment. The role played by external powers in destabilizing such regional integration, and in order to ensure that Africa still maintains its destructive accumulation path of being an exporter of raw mineral resources and consumer of imported luxury finished goods continues.

The AU-inspired Agenda 2063, which African countries signed on the back of the celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the OAU, will not succeed if it continues on this trajectory as has become the case.

The militarization of the world by the most aggressive elements of imperialism (the US, Nato, and to some extent the EU) poses an immense danger to people everywhere. The US AfriCom military expansion programme is a threat to the peace, stability and autonomy of Africa as a continent and a community of nations. Imperialism is also concerned with destabilizing progressive governments and movements worldwide, as we see in South America, in the decades-long blockade of Cuba, and the efforts to derail the progressive NDR in South Africa. Imperialism worldwide, and capitalism nationally, is destroying the very bases of life itself in its drive for profits, by ceaselessly undermining the environment and leaving a legacy of environmental destruction that will affect the development of nations far into the future.

The YCLSA remains committed to supporting the struggles of the people of Swaziland, and should continue to participate in the Swaziland Solidarity Network. SWAYOCO remains our ally in the fight

against the oppressive monarch. In the immediate, this Congress should call for the release of all political prisoners, the exertion of pressure on the Swaziland's regime to ensure that they move towards free and fair democratic practices and the inclusion of its people in the determination of the future of that country.

The YCLSA has continued with its international work and solidarity, with the focus on the last remaining colony of the African continent, Western Sahara, which requires ongoing support and agitation to ensure that Morocco complies with UN and others international protocols and precepts

The YCL takes its commitment to internationalism seriously, and to the ground. Many branches and other structures have actively been involved in discussing, dissecting and debating international issues and struggles. One of the most prominent amongst the international struggles that the YCL SA is part of and at the forefront is the Palestinian struggle against Israeli Apartheid and Colonialism.

Israel's regime of apartheid and colonialism, we must be clear, is not only a threat to the indigenous people of Palestine but also to the Middle East as a region. Indeed, Israel's behavior or misbehavior has implications globally, not least because it would be impossible without US military, financial and moral backing. The Palestinian struggle is one of those struggles like that of the people of Cuba which not only affects those that are immediately oppressed but goes to the heart of the empire, as Israel in many ways, from an anti-imperialist lens, is an active proxy of the US's imperial agenda both in the Middle East region but also more widely. The YCLSA exposed this matrix of imperialism when the US President was in South Africa recently.

The situation on the ground in Palestine is both bleak but brave. Bleak in the sense that Israel is increasingly becoming a fascist regime that does not have any respect for human life. Between the months of July and August 2014 Israel launched deadly attacks on the Gaza Strip that led to the death of over 2000 Palestinians, of which more than 500 were young people, 73% under the age of 12. Israel's recent attack on the Gaza Strip, however, is not an isolated incident. Israel also attacked the Palestinian Gaza Strip just two years ago with more than 1400 people being killed, 400 of them young people.

The Palestinian people have displayed enormous courage and bravery in the face of such utter brutality from the Israeli regime. The Palestinian political leadership of the two main parties, Fatah and Hamas, has come to be reconciled in recent months proving to be successful in moving the political agenda of the Palestinian people forward. In addition, the growing political movement for boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) against Israel is also growing and uniting the various Palestinian factions and formations – both political but also youth, worker and other organizations.

Israel on the other hand seems to be going down an extreme rightwing path particularly with the Israeli Prime Minister's recent dissolution of the Israeli parliament and dismissal of two ministers (who are seen as more to the centre but still right wing). In addition, Israel's racism seems to be finding expression in discriminatory policies not only against Palestinians but increasingly against African refugees. Israel's commitment to a two state solution is becoming increasingly questioned with its continued settlement construction – which was recently escalated in East Jerusalem- and illegal occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

It is in this context that the YCL SA finds itself. While the YCLSA must continue to provide ideological leadership and an analysis of the imperial forces that underlie the Israeli-Palestinian issue we also have a responsibility to take on, shoulder and respond to our comrades in Palestine and those progressive Israelis that see through Israel's colonial project of controlling the land and resources of the indigenous people.

YCL SA and its branches across South Africa have a special task in how they respond to Palestine-Israel, and to contextualize it as a prominent part of the imperialist matrix. The growing solidarity movement has employed a strategy of boycott, divestments and sanctions (BDS) as an attempt to hold Israel accountable and uses similar tactics like those of the anti-apartheid movement. The BDS strategy, called for in fact by the oppressed Palestinians, is to isolate Israel just as how Apartheid South Africa was isolated in the 1980s and has managed to attain significant victories in recent years as well as much popular support.

Locally BDS SA has launched a consumer boycott campaign against retail giant Woolworths, this campaign (the #Boycott Woolworths campaign) evaluates the role of multinational companies that are complicit in the occupation of Palestinian land by Israel (either directly or indirectly via suppliers). The demand is to boycott Woolworths until Woolworths terminates its trade relations with Apartheid Israel. We must commend branches of the YCL SA who have actively taken up this campaign and made it their own. Capitalism thrives on the suffering of the working class, and this campaign is a challenge to capitalism, colonialism and an unapologetic fight against Israeli apartheid.

The YCL SA, both at a national level as well as at a branch level have also been actively involved in the growing annual awareness raising campaign titled "Israeli Apartheid Week". This is a practical campaign that all branches should be encouraged to participate in but not merely as spectators. Instead the YCL should provide leadership in organising information sessions, workshops and other events during this week.

## **7. Conclusion**

This is my farewell address to any YCLSA meeting as its National Secretary. It has been the shortest eleven years of my life. Most of my youthful and young adult life has been about, for and with YCLSA. This is an important journey in my life and the life of many comrades that we shared the YCLSA trenches with, that we traversed the country and been to 'no man's lands' contributing to the future of socialism.

There are many comrades whom I begged the National Committee the indulgence of thanking in this report, on both a personal and political level. Comrade David Masondo, the former National Chairperson of the YCLSA whom, together with those elected with me at the re-establishment Congress and at the Durban Congress, had to carry the baton from the National Steering Committee and bring life to this creation of ours. All of those comrades gave their all to forget the differences we had in Vaal and together joined us in behind the steering wheel to build the YCLSA. I want to thank all those comrades from the bottom of my heart.

Comrade Yershen Pillay, the current National Chairperson of the YCLSA together with the whole team that was elected in Mafikeng had been the most exciting of teams. At times when I felt that my youthful age is on the other side of the West they would remind me that age is nothing but a number. I hope that those who are remaining as part of this team, and those who will be joining in to continue to build YCLSA, will do so with the understanding that the future of socialism lies in your hands. As we have over the years disappointed critics, you shall too, with pride, lead the youth of the country towards that brought socialist future.

Comrade Blade Nzimande, the General Secretary of the SACP, together with the entire Central Committee who has been to all of us, especially myself, a leader and a parent whom without with the YCLSA would not be where it is today. Although there have been many over the years who wanted to be the "wedge drivers" and create animosity between the SACP and the YCLSA, this has failed and because we chose to ignore them, both the SACP and the YCLSA have grown stronger and stronger. There has never been a need for us to throw our toys out of the cot and revolt against the party leadership as they always had time to engage with us, and hope that that form of leadership will continue.

To all those who were there from the beginning, I say to you thank you. You have made my YCLSA days the most exciting of my life. I will continue the struggle, and will always be there for the YCLSA, as and when I am needed. I will not close the door behind me, for this is where I belong, forever. And as Karl Marx, said, I have no last words. Last words are for fools.

Thank you.