

**YCLSA 4<sup>TH</sup> NATIONAL CONGRESS**  
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**DISCUSSION DOCUMENT**

**Political and Strategic Tasks of the Young Communist League**  
**Radical Transformation and the new deal for youth**

*A New Introduction to the YCLSA Strategic and Tactical Perspective*

This is the Strategic Perspective of the YCLSA as adopted at the Mafikeng National Congress in 2010. The Document is presented here with a new introductory sections that deals with the question of a 'radical economic transformation, proposes elements of 'a new deal for working class youth' and finally refreshes the tasks of the YCLSA. This is the base document for discussion at the National Congress.

Secretariat

### **1.1. Engaging with the concept of radical transformation**

The concept of a **radical transformation** or the **second phase** of the transition has been bandied about within the ANC-led alliance. It was actually the platform on which the ANC contested the 2014 general elections. This calls for a YCL imbued approach to this notion of a second phase of transition and what are the implications for young people and the links to a socialist transition.

Implicit in this concept is that the **last two decades of the transition** from apartheid were **not marked but substantive changes in power relations** or in the **economic structure**. This should not be confused with the '*no-change*' argument that asserts that only cosmetic changes were made since the democratic movement assumed power.

Rather, the progress made in the past two decades is **not substantive enough** to argue that the **basic contradictions of colonialism** and **apartheid** have been resolved. That is, the progress **in the NDR has not yet led to a fundamental reconfiguration** of the race, class, gender and geographic contradictions.

In fact, in some respect it makes sense to talk of a recasting of these contradictions as inequality is deepening. In economic terms **control and ownership** still rest with predominantly a white elite who have been joined by a tiny black elite that has benefited from de-racialisation of the economy. The majority of the toiling masses remain **predominantly black and trapped in low paying, insecure and precarious jobs**.

This poses serious challenges to the multi-class alliance led by the ANC. The deepening of the class, race and geographic schisms might unravel this historic alliance without a progressive outcome. Alternatively, the **democratic movement** and the **working class** might define a logic to sustain the multiclass solidarity for a progressive and democratic path. The future path depends on how class contradictions play themselves and how they are managed by the democratic movement.

It is thus relevant to engage with the concept of radical transformation as an attempt to define a logic that can bind the democratic forces and inform the trajectory of economic and social policies pursued by the state and the democratic movement. South Africa faces challenges similar to many post-colonial societies where the revolutionary project either stagnated or was infused with a new dynamism. For socialists in the democratic movement the special task is to connect these debates to imagining the transition from capitalism to socialism in the current epoch.

The democratic forces engage in these debates in a favourable but fluid policy and political context. The neo-liberal fix, dominant for the last thirty years, has been discredited but not yet defeated. The **cataclysmic global economic crisis** from which the world capitalist system is still struggling to emerge has opened the space for exploration of **alternatives**, even though **largely within the capitalist framework**. Many countries in Europe, Latin America, Asia and Africa even the US have explored non-neoliberal solutions to what has been described as the Great Recession. However the space is highly contested as evidenced in the swing to the left and to the right in recent elections across the globe and rise of extremism.

Against this backdrop, how might we interpret the notion of a radical transformation or the second phase of the transition. For young socialists active in the liberation movement **the first prize is to consolidate the democratic gains and development of the productive forces** in such a way that this concretely lay the basis for an alternative to capitalism. This obviously requires engaging with the capitalist system inherited from colonialism and apartheid. Radical transformation must mean the following:

- 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 programmes. 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 programme 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 programme 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.

Policy coherence is very crucial in this regard. Macroeconomic policy must be subordinated to the goal of building local industrial capabilities. Competition and trade policies must assist in breaking up the stranglehold of entrenched monopolies, help lower cost of industrial products and wage goods. Industrial incentives must be directed to strategic areas to support the development of the productive sectors (manufacturing, mining, agriculture and construction).

A strong entrepreneurial thrust is crucial to enable the development of local capabilities. A coordinated strategy is very important to **support small entrepreneurs and cooperatives to access finance** and markets; and receive business support. Both the state and large enterprises should play a more robust role in supporting the emergence and growth of the small enterprises and cooperatives. For example, the big retailers may be required to put local produce on their shelves at their cost.

Big business itself has a crucial role to play in building local capabilities and penetrating world markets.

**State enterprises must be aligned to the goal of local industrialization rather than pursue narrow commercial interests.** As such, the infrastructure spend of the big parastatals must be directed toward meeting the infrastructure needs of the country. Beside infrastructure is also crucial to support localization and skills development.

The debate should be opened regarding **new areas in which the state must build capacity** either on its own or in collaboration with the private sector. In this regard, **nationalization of some of the commanding heights has to be considered to ensure strategic participation by the state in heavy industry crucial to providing inputs into the downstream manufacturing sector.** This is nothing novel or new. The apartheid state built large state owned companies to provide energy, water, electricity to support industrialization. However, the state must not be used to feather-bed inefficiency and as a source of accumulation by management and the boards of these companies.

- 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.

It goes without saying that a strategy to address inequality must **raise the social wage** thus **reduce the pressure** on workers' take home pay. This requires **heavy investment in public health care**, public transport, telecommunications, education and basic services. The quality and affordability of these for urban and rural poor is something worth investigating.

The spatial divide has to be confronted in a variety of ways. Redistribution to poorer regions must be increased through budget allocation. Provincial and local economic development plans must contribute more to closing the apartheid geography. This might require **a decision to reserve public spaces** for access by both the **poor and the rich**. The **tendency to zone off public spaces** for development earmarked for the rich reinforces the spatial divides of the past.

Densification of human settlements will go a long way also in overcoming the apartheid geography, minimize inefficiency associated with long commutes and build integrated communities. As such, **low cost housing solutions must be found in the inner city** rather than the current programme of promoting urban sprawl in the way RDP-houses are built.

- 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?

If all of the above measures are implemented to the full there will be a tremendous improvement for the black working class. Yet, it will still live and work under a capitalist society, albeit better compared to apartheid and colonialism. How then do we consciously lay the building bloc to socialism during this phase? Here we attempt some tentative answers:

- The working class should have experimented with being in control both politically and economically. That is it cannot be a subject of pity and welfare from the ruling class. As such workers' takeover of companies should form part of the strategy during this political phase. If not, working class should be empowered through training, political education and practical experiments to run complex organizations.
- The working class should experiment with political power and democratic participation. As such, zones of working class power should be created within our communities, work places and the state. Whether the current formal systems created by the post-apartheid state are sufficient has to be put to the test.
- The productive forces have to be developed to the extent that there is an adequate capability to produce the basic necessities of life and complex industrial products. Obviously, it will not be possible for one country to produce all it needs and as such we need to explore non-exploitative collaboration with other countries.
- Class struggle and solidarity will have to be sharpened to confront the entrenched power of capital in the state, the work place and the communities. The working class has to be emboldened to confront both the state and the capitalist system. The relationship with the state is dialectical in that the current political system largely favours the working class but the state can be panicked to crush independent working class action.
- The idea of an alternative post-capitalist society enjoys popular support by a wide section of the society. The cultural dominance of a materialist and narcissistic individualism will have to be countered by a more community driven and collective culture and consciousness. Organisation, mass campaigns, mass media and alternative artistic expressions will have to be harnessed to the goal of building a counter-culture.

## **1.2. A new deal for the black working class youth**

There is a compelling case to focus on the aspirations and desires of the working class youth as a strategic choice for the YCL. The category youth is not homogenous but stratified in terms of class, race, gender and geography. Although we speak in general about youth empowerment the most marginalized and excluded youth are the young people from working class and rural areas. Working class youth bear the brunt of unemployment; social exclusion and often lack the agency to take advantage of the opportunities opened up by democracy.

Many of the so-called not-in-employment-education-or-training (NEET) youth are young people from working class families and communities. Majority of young people in conflict with the law are young people from working class families. The drug scourge of '*nyaope*' afflicts mostly black working class communities. In a nutshell working class youth is trapped in a vicious cycle of lack of economic opportunities and are poorly organized to take up opportunities where they exist. They need an organization that can articulate their concerns and mobilise them to be agents of change.

The YCL, as working class youth formation must take up the issues of working class youth to ensure:

- a. That youth empowerment programmes are targeted to address the needs of youth from working class communities. For example, there are limited programmes dedicated to the out-of-school youth that do not possess a matric or degree. It is even doubtful that some of existing interventions can work for this cohort. In fact, programmes are designed for those who already can organize themselves or have some capability and aptitude to seek information.
- b. One of the lessons in any revolution is that the people must be their own liberators. The YCL is better placed to provide the necessary organisational tools to empower young people to be their own liberators. In this regard a YCL branch must organize young people to access opportunities, participate in community development and political education programmes.

The new deal for young people from working class communities should focus on:

- a. **Job creation** for youth, through a job-rich **reindustrialization** strategy. The YCL Congress has to develop proposals for the reindustrialization of South Africa and creating decent jobs for youth.
- b. Connecting young people to employment opportunities including short term employment such as the Expanded Public Works Programme. An industrialization strategy is the best tool to reorient the South African economy on a job-rich path.
- c. 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.
- d. In this respect, it is necessary to scale up the National Youth Service to draw large numbers of young people into community service. Developing the productive sectors (manufacturing, agriculture, mining
- e. Creating work exposure measures for those young people that do not have degree and diplomas.
- f. Improving working condition and pay for youth across the economy including in the services sector.

### **1.3. Positioning the Young Communist League for struggles ahead**

The two preceding sections lays out in broad brush strokes the political and developmental challenges confronting the progressive youth movement. In this section we outline the key roles that the YCL should prosecute in the coming period. The propositions put forward in the last Congress Strategy document remain largely valid and what is developed here should be seen as augmenting them.

The YCL has grown by leaps since it was reconstituted and has taken its place in progressive youth alliance. Still, the YCL has a special or unique role that is not currently being fulfilled by other youth formations. This can be described as mobilising youth for socialist transformation and building the Communist Party. Few of the political youth formations in South Africa are explicitly for socialism and this place a huge responsibility on the shoulders of the league to consciously and consistently agitate for socialism among the youth. The league is an incubator of future leadership and also the defenders of the revolution.

The political and developmental challenges and opportunities sketched above cannot achieve themselves but require strong organization and determined conscious effort. In broad terms, we can set the task of the YCL during this period as follows:

- a. Mass mobilization and conscientisation of the youth: working with other progressive youth movement and the democratic movement generally the YCL has to step up efforts to recruit young people and deepen their political consciousness. Specifically, the YCL must recruit members for itself and the Communist Part as well as increase awareness on the struggle for socialism. To that end, a political education and recruitment programme must be implemented in a disciplined fashion by the league. The YCL branch must be a hive of activity and there should be no dull moment.
- b. Organise mass campaigns to draw young people in political activism: there is no greater teacher than practice and campaigns provide an effective way to capture the minds of the youth, steel them in progressive political activism BUT more importantly change their conditions. In that respect the league must identify issues around which it will mount campaigns to connect with the struggles of the working class and confront the youth developmental issues. These can be conceptualized on a number of fronts, namely political, education and training; community and work place struggles and international solidarity.
- c. Contribute to the struggle of ideas to win more of our people to the socialist cause: The ideological hegemony of neo-liberalism and capitalism in general has to be confronted if we are to secure the future for socialism. The league has to occupy a centre stage in the battle of ideas and tap into the energy and enthusiasm of young people themselves. In this regard the league should use the talent of the youth to develop proposals for economic development and youth development specifically.

## **2. From Mafikeng to UWC: How do we move forward**

The aim of this section is to sketch the political challenges confronting the YCL for debate at this Congress. The YCL straddles two political fronts – i.e. the alliance and the mass democratic movement. Participating in alliance processes give the YCL ‘inside’ privilege to shape the politics of the tripartite alliance. At the same time the YCL has an interest in championing youth development as an autonomous formation under the guidance of the SACP. YCL must continue to find relevance by taking up issues affecting the youth. If it were to lose touch with this constituency it will be hard to mobilise young people under the banner of YCL. The YCL owes its existence primarily to its members. While the youth movement must pioneer new ideas it must be careful not to confuse radicalism/militancy with recklessness.

### **2.1. Defending and deepening the democratic revolution**

History teaches us the important lesson that is not uni-linear but moves in waves bringing progress and setbacks. Sociologists say history is not teleological or does not follow some predetermined path toward an inevitable outcome. Human action or urgency is therefore pivotal in shaping the course and outcomes of history. But as Marx once pointed out we make history in condition not of our own choosing. History can be reversed as attested by the collapse of many ancient civilisations and by the collapse of former soviet bloc and many promising revolutionary projects. Change and progress are not synonymous. There can be change without progress such as for example descent into fascism.

It is against this background that we ought to approach debates around the trajectory of the National Democratic Revolution (the NDR). The NDR has reached an important junction – one route is a naked capitalist project with a non-racial minority at helm or a mass project that **substantially** addresses the historical fault-lines of class, race, gender and geography. What type of future will the current crop of young people inherit? The YCL is therefore in a privileged position to contribute towards shaping the future course of the National Democratic Revolution.

It is now trite to appreciate the relative progress of the NDR in the post-apartheid South Africa. The dominant discourse within the ranks of the democratic movement leans towards a mass-empowerment type revolutionary project. It cannot be taken for granted that this project will continue to be hegemonic as illustrated by ongoing debates within the ANC-led democratic movement. The contest is between two schools of thought regarding the characterisation of the NDR and what is possible.

At one end of the spectrum is a nascent view that by dislodging the apartheid regime the NDR has completed its task. Of course this is a gross simplification of the approach that has found favour with a section of the leadership of the mass democratic movement. In this scenario the task of the democratic movement or government are construed in a very 'reformist' fashion. Arguments like 'de-racialising' capitalism – a vague notion – fall within this perspective. In its crude form it includes notions that the 'black' son must eat regardless of how that wealth is generated!

Conceived in this narrow view the aim of the NDR is therefore to insert the black majority and the black working class into the un-transformed structures of white capital. This perspective cannot explain the reproduction of dualistic development – i.e. stupendous wealth coexisting with mass poverty. The perspective also lacks a coherent and systematic programme to eradicate the structural unemployment, inequality and poverty.

The dominant discourse, - at least in the sense of having mass appeal – is the historical position that still insists on the need for a revolutionary transformation of this country. For as long as the structure and institutions that reproduce inequality exist the attainment of the basic aims of the NDR remains in jeopardy. We must recall that the current economic structure was designed to benefit a minority while confining the majority into a position of servitude. It goes without saying that radical transformation will entail changing the structure of ownership, production and distribution. It is inevitably that a minority will reap immediate benefits due its relative skills, connections and so forth. **BUT** that is not the basic goal of the national democratic revolution. The revolution is about mass empowerment which necessitates the remaking of South Africa into a democratic, non-racial and non-sexist South Africa.

The past sixteen years may have laid some foundation but much needs to be done to deepen the democratic revolution. This implies that the political task of the *youth movement is to propel the democratic revolution towards a fairly equal and transformed society*. As such, it is important to guard against the hijacking of the NDR by a narrow, acquisitive, muscular and parasitic **black nationalism** on the one hand. In class terms this implies that we defeat the ascendancy of the ideology of a minority black capitalist and professional class.

On the other hand it requires defeating white monopoly capital stranglehold over the economy. Capital will continue to play an important role in the current phase of the NDR. The relationship between capital and the democratic movement is one of conflict and mutual dependence. It is also important to understand that capital is not homogenous even though it may be ideologically opposed to a radical democratic project. Capital's long term survival requires that the economy be transformed to draw in a majority of black people into the economic mainstream. For as long as the economy narrowly depends on consumption by a minority capital will seek opportunities elsewhere. It is therefore important that the democratic movement win over sections of capital to the democratic project.

The antidote to the narrow nationalist ideology is the 'liberatory' non-racial politics of the democratic movement. At the core of this non-racialism is the acceptance that we need a project of mass empowerment that addresses the systemic nature of inequality and exclusion.

It is against this background, that the YCL has to **defend and deepen the democratic revolution**. It is important to unpack these concepts. Tyranny and authoritarianism will not announce their arrival. Sitting on our laurels we may wake up one day and find that the political space to operate has been shut down. Many post-colonial societies have slipped into authoritarian regimes – both civilian and military – in which a small oligarchy benefits at the expense of the people by pillaging natural resources and the public purse.

It is therefore of paramount importance that the youth movement defend the democratic space. The politics of fear, personality cults and authoritarian control of the organisation and the state should be a thing of the past. We must be at the forefront of the struggles to ensure internal democracy in the organisation and defend the political space in which we currently operate.

South Africa's inequality means that many of our people cannot enjoy the political and socio-economic rights enshrined in the Constitution. It is a character of class societies that wealth tends to mediate citizens' enjoyment of democratic and universal rights. Through their monopoly the rich tend to have a disproportionate influence on policy and the political process. Such a situation dilutes the universal equality promised by the Constitution for example the right to vote.

For as long as mass poverty, unemployment and inequality persist democracy will remain shallow as only a minority will have influence. It is from that perspective that we talk about *deepening democracy*. The youth movement is confronted by a big challenge of empowering the masses of our people to take advantage of the democratic space that has been opened. It requires that we organise our people to participate in structures of popular governance and insist on popular participation in policy-making. We must be guided by the slogan – *Nothing about us without us!*

The YCL cannot act alone or in a vacuum. It must build alliances with other progressive youth movement and the broader democratic movement to attain this goal. The league must also be exemplary as a movement characterised by intense internal democracy. Of course this does not mean tolerating a free-for-all anarchy that does not respect organisational processes and democratic centralism. However, we must be the image of the society we want to build and should stand for democracy even if this makes us unpopular.

## 2.2. The Struggle for Socialism

A lot has been written about socialism in recent years, mostly why it is not feasible. The YCL's task is to defend and popularise the idea of socialism among the young people to counter this anti-socialist backlash. A useful starting point is a definition of socialism. Socialism is a society in which:

“the economy is socially owned (by all), democratically controlled, utilised to meet the needs of all people, subject to democratic and humanistic planning based on the principle that the “free development of each will be the condition for the free development of all, Le Blanc, p.8.”

Socialism is fundamentally a **post-capitalist** society in which the means of production are socially owned, democratically controlled and used to the benefit of all. Elements of socialism can be present in a capitalist society but fully developed socialism can only exist after a rupture with capitalism. This is an important point to stress since social democracy is often confused with socialism. Social democracy is essentially using the capitalist market to improve the living conditions of the working class without altering the private ownership of the means of production. However whether petty ownership and a market (exchange of goods and services) are incompatible with socialism at least in the earliest stage is a moot point.

Socialism is also an ethical and ideological framework in addition to being an economic system. In the first instance is the control of the economy for the benefit of all. Arising from this is an ethic of cooperation and social solidarity which should be distinguished from the selfishness of capitalism and all class based society. Cuba is a prime example of a country that strives to build a socialist ethical society even if the economy may not be fully developed socialism.

By definition socialism is a transitional society in which the working class is raised to a position of the ruling class. The working class has the historical tasks of raising the level of development such that a truly classless society – communism can be constructed. The gradual development of socialism is supposed to lay the basis for the withering away of the state and classes and as such a communist society.

The Soviet experiment was the first historical project to attempt socialist construction *after* and not *within* capitalism. Later distortions in the Soviet Union should not obscure the historical significance of the 1917 Revolution. In the South African context we have argued that the NDR is the route towards socialist society. However what about the rest of Africa and the world? The YCL confronts the contemporary challenge of theorising about the transition to socialism not only in South Africa but across the globe. The current generation of young communist ought to trouble themselves with the development of a theory of world revolution. In addition, it confronts the task of developing a vision of socialism that is truly democratic (in the sense of proletarian democracy) and is socially owned and controlled.

The soviet experience show that state control is not synonymous with democratic control by society. Rather an oligarchy used its privilege position to perpetuate itself, exploit the working class and build a huge apparatus to achieve its aims. Hence sometimes the soviet experience is sometimes loosely called a state capitalism project. Socialism and communist should be about expanding human freedom in the true sense by ensuring that all people benefit from the social control of the means of production. Anything short of this ideal cannot be defined as socialism.

### **2.3. Ideological warfare – raising the class consciousness of the youth**

The Young Communist league faces a titanic battle for the heart and soul of young people. Young people are bombarded by the culture of crass materialism and individualism promoted through the mass media and popular culture. The education system support this ideological brainwashing of young people by suppressing critical thought and promoting the values of capitalism.

We need a counter-culture that inculcates the values of the democratic movement and of the working class in the minds of young people. These values include selflessness, social solidarity and caring about what is happening around you. We cannot take it for granted that the ANC dominance of the politics necessarily mean that the values young people are brought under are democratic and progressive. That is why it is important that we launch a conscious programme to change the class consciousness of young people. We need to use political education and cultural programme to deepen the understanding of socialist and communist alternatives among young people.

Of necessity this requires effort to deepen understanding and confidence in our theory of revolution – Marxism-Leninism. Marxism, according to Le Blanc, drawing on Lenin's three source – can be summarised as having the following five fundamental component: 1) a philosophical approach to reality; 2) theory of history; 3) analysis of capitalism; 4) political programme for the working class and 5) a vision of a socialist future<sup>1</sup>. Annexure A provides a full explanation of these elements.

Marxism can be conceived as a "*way of thinking*" (Isaac Deutscher) and a "*guide to action*" (Lenin). Interpretation of these two ways of understanding Marxism has produced different variants since the death of both Marx and Engels. However, as noted by Le Blanc (pp.8-9) "Marx was seeking to resolve a

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Le Blanc, From Marx to Gramsci: A Reader in Revolutionary Marxist Politics, pp.4-9

number of inherently irreconcilable dilemmas in the epistemology (theory of knowledge) and sociology of the social sciences. Schematically, the contradictions are:

1. An activity theory of knowledge versus a copy theory;
2. Voluntarism, according to which men make their own history versus structural constraints of mechanistic determinism;
3. Human nature seen as essence versus human nature seen as re-created by history;
4. Class role and persona of persons as against diverse individual motivations, and the mechanisms that mediate between the two concepts;
5. The “logic of history” versus moral condemnation of inhumanities;
6. Scientific inquiry as either theoretical or historical, for it cannot be both simultaneously; thus one has either a logical explanation through a conceptual prism or an empirical explanation seeking to identify actual sequences.
7. A general theory of “society” and its determining mode (or even requisites) versus a historicist theory of specific, qualitatively different social formations.

Marxism is not a dogma but a dynamic theory that provide tools of analysis. The general conclusion drawn by Marx about the nature of capitalism and the necessity for revolutionary change remain relevant today. However, Marxism is not a formulaic theory that contains set answers for any social phenomenon. Human knowledge in terms of nature, society, history and theory of knowledge has advanced since the time of Marx. Further, capitalism itself has changed from the ‘atomistic’ small scale enterprises to large highly concentrated global enterprises. Marx gave us the tools our task is to find answers in the contemporary period. Lenin argued that practice is the criterion to measure the relevance and usefulness of any theory. Besides, there is a two-way feedback system between theory and practice.

## **2.4. Building alliances**

It is a truism that the working class should win as many supporters to its cause in order to weaken the hegemony of the capitalist. From time to time and under different conditions the working class will form strategic and tactical alliance to advance a particular goal. This is also true for the YCL and that is why it participates in the Progressive Youth Alliance.

The YCL’s objective in participating in and forming alliance is informed by the twin objective to rally as many youth formations around immediate challenges and crucially to win over as many young people in to the cause of socialism. The strategic task facing the YCL is to define a programme of mass activism to unite the broadest coalition of young people around youth development issues. It is through struggles around issues affecting young people that the YCL will find resonance and synergy with the broader youth movement

## **2.5. Strengthening the organisation**

The re-establishment of the YCL was a well inspired move by the South African Communist Party. It has created a vehicle for mobilising young people along socialist/communist line. The YCL is therefore an important instrument to agitate for socialist ideas among young people. It is important that the league capture the imagination of young people and attract them to socialist ideas. The organisational report will demonstrate the strides that have been taken to build the league since the Vaal Congress.

A strong and vibrant organisation is one of the weapons in the hands of the oppressed and exploited. The ultimate goal is to draw a mass of young people into the ranks of the league. In particular, we must draw young people from working class communities and other sympathetic youth into the folds of the leagues.

A programme of building a strong organisation is there a necessity. The youth league should draw its strength from the unity and organisation of its members. The elements of an organisation building project should entail:

- a) Mass recruitment
- b) Building branches and units of the league
- c) Campaigns on issues confronting the youth
- d) Political education
- e) Cultural programmes, and
- f) Resource mobilisation.

The YCL must also contribute to the building of the broad mass democratic movement in particular the SACP. A strong YCL will not thrive if it is surrounded by weak formations in the democratic movement. Special attention

## **Annexure A: Five Components of Marxism according to Le Blanc**

ONE: A *philosophical approach to reality that is*

1. *Dialectical* (reality is a complex, interacting, developing totality; it evolves through the contradictory interactions among and inherent within its component parts; things can only be understood in their contexts – i.e. their own course of development, and their interactions with other aspects of reality).
2. *Materialists* (reality is based on the structure and dynamics of matter and energy; we may not yet understand all the laws of nature, but things that we cannot understand are not the result of “supernatural” or mystical causes; God is a creation of people, not the other way around; human beings and human societies can best be understood not on the basis of their expressed ideas but on the basis of how they live, their way of life);
3. *Humanistic* (human beings are – for people – the most important part of reality; essential qualities of being human include: a striving toward self-determination [or freedom], creative labour, and community [or meaningful relations with others]; those things which stunt, mutilate, oppress or degrade people must be fought against; a society should be developed which allows for the free development of each person).

TWO: A *theory of history* which

1. Sees human society as having evolved through stages: primitive “tribal” communism; slave civilisations; feudalism’ capitalism (with some significant variations in non-European societies – for example, in some cases involving what Marx called “the Asiatic mode of production”); capitalism has not always existed and will not always exist;
2. Integrates economics, political science, sociology, anthropology – emphasising that the activities and relationships enter into in order to get things they need and want form a social structure and way of life (including power relationships among people) which must be grasped if we wish to make sense of their religious, intellectual and political practices, precepts and conflicts;
3. Give emphasis of technological development and economic productivity as helping to shape – often decisively – broader historical developments (for example: the creation of economic surpluses through agricultural innovations made possible the rise of slave civilisations; the creation of even greater productivity through the development of industrial technology under capitalism makes possible a future society of abundance for all);
4. Stresses the centrality of class struggle in human history – which from the time of the ancient slave civilisations, has involved ongoing tensions and conflicts (“now hidden, now open”) between exploited, labouring majorities and the privileged minorities who appropriate the economic surplus created by the majority’s labour.

THREE: an *analysis of capitalism* in which (among other things)

1. Capitalism can be defined as: an economy that is privately owned (by a minority), and basically controlled by owners, used for the purpose of making profits for the owners; a form of generalised commodity production (that is, in

which more and more aspects of life are drawn into a buying and selling – or market – economy);

2. It is grasped that under fully developed capitalism a majority of those in the labour force can only make their living by selling their labour-power (ability to labour) to the capitalists, and that the source of the capitalist's profits can be found in the actual labour that the employers are able to squeeze out of the workers.
3. It is understood that capitalism – in its necessary pursuit of profit – is incredibly dynamic, continually evolving (into highly concentrated and increasingly efficient economic enterprises) and expanding into ever more realms of social life as well as into ever more areas of the globe;
4. There is an identification of devastating internal contradictions within capitalism (such as the tendency toward overproduction; and a tendency of the rate of profit to fall, due to utilisation of more and more technology) leaving to periodic economic depressions, and the contradictions between social organisation but private ownership of the economy generating a variety of other problems and dislocations;
5. Related to this last point, innumerable social problems – including war, poverty, racism, sexism, erosion of democracy, ecological devastation, etc – are traced to the economic dynamics and the structure of power inherent in capitalism itself.

FOUR: a *political programme for the working class* which insists that the emancipation of the working class can only come from the workers themselves, while at the same time seeing this evolving majority class as the key to the liberation of society from the problems generated by capitalism – but more specifically identifying the advance of the working class as coming from:

1. The organisation of increasingly inclusive and socially conscious trade unions to defend immediate interests of the workers;
2. overcoming competitive divisions that fragment the consciousness and power of the working class;
3. the formation of an independent political party of the working class which will seek to “win the battle of democracy”;
4. the struggle for various social reforms being blended into a commitment to place power exclusively in the hands of the working class majority (that is, what is sometimes called ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’, but workers’ state or workers democracy are clearer formulations);
5. an understanding that the capitalists may use violence to prevent the workers from taking power, and that the workers’ movements must be prepared to see such capitalist violence is not allowed to triumph;
6. the commitment of the triumphant working class to initiate the socialist reconstruction of society;
7. an understanding that the working class, combating the global capitalist system, must organise cooperatively across national boundaries and organise effective international organisations to advance their struggles; and that socialism too cannot triumph unless it is built on a global scale.

FIVE: a *vision of a socialist society* in which the economy is socially owned (by all), democratically controlled and utilised to meet the needs of all people, subject to democratic and humanistic planning based on the principle “that the free development of each will be the condition for the free development of all”.