

Political Report



Theme: In Praise of Communism

1. Introduction

The purpose of this political Report is to reflect on political developments at the national and international levels. By assessing the political climate we can examine the possibilities and constraints to implement a new paradigm to change the systemic structure of colonial and racial capitalism. We stand at the confluence of new opportunities to advance the NDR and the struggle for socialism in South Africa and the world.

The **first section** of this political Report will cover “*A History of Inequality*”, tracing the origins and interconnectedness of colonial and apartheid rule to the current most unequal society ours has become. It will touch on the fact that for the last sixteen years, the state assumed a 'welfarist' function, and that most of the measures that were adopted did not significantly transform unequal racial, gender and class disparities, but have instead deepened inequality.

This section will then analyse the racial nature of South African capitalism, the tasks we should be engaged into in transforming this society, and how some of the things done in the last sixteen years require a political and paradigm change. We will also look into the post 1994 accumulation regime, and analyse trends in terms of structures of control and ownership, and how these have impacted on the political make up of our society. We will then look at what are the implications for political and socio-economic development, and how the structure of our economic production has streamlined and perpetuated the neo-colonial relationship of our country to mainly the West. We will then flag the issue of the need for economic sovereignty.

The **second section** will touch on the Polokwane moment, what brought about those changes, the meaning of these changes and how they have had an impact on the political discourse in our country. We will look at how certain things which were done towards Polokwane, as sub-cultures, have entrenched themselves within the ANC and the Alliance, and how the forces that were united towards Polokwane have become disgruntled or fragmented. What caused this? Shared views? What are the implications? The section will also look at the relationship between the SACP and the State (and State Power), and our role in the post-Polokwane period.

The section will also look into and analyse the resolutions of the SACP from its 12th National Congress and the Special National Congress on the question of elections and state power within the background of the YCLSA 2nd National Congress on this question. This section will also look into the state of the Alliance, the manner in which some of the issues within the Alliance has been dealt with. This section will

also deal with the battles towards 2012, the mushrooming of an anti-communist tendency that has taken a grip and seem to be fermented by certain sections within the ANC but often tested through certain sections of the ANC Youth League.

Importantly, this section will also discuss the various approaches and thinking within the “left” with regards to our understanding on how we deal with the post-1994 New Tendency.

The **third section** will then deal with the 2009 Elections, the trends, the role of young people and generally the role of elections. The SACP and State Power, 21st Century Socialism and the kind of socialism we seek to build are also a significant part of this section. This section will also look at the forthcoming local government elections and the intention to depoliticise the bureaucracy.

The **fourth section** will deal with the Political Economy post-Polokwane, touching on issues such as the IPAP and the New Growth Path (Social and Green Economy); the crisis of unemployment amongst youth and the impact of the global capitalist crises. We will here return to the questions of ownership and control in our economy in terms of mining, land etc.

The **fifth section** of the report will deal with the Political and Strategic tasks of the YCLSA in the current conjuncture. We will look into the domestic situation, and locate the strategic tasks of the NDR and the struggle for socialism. We will identify as critical the task of deepening the NDR in the current phase, and bring back its basic facets, non-racism, non-sexism and democracy as critical, in intensifying the struggle for Socialism.

We will also deal in this fifth section of our report with the task of building a united and broad youth movement for the NDR and the struggle for Socialism. The ideological battle and the need for action on the part of the YCLSA to entrench Marxism-Leninism in our society are also critical in this section in particular and the whole report in general. That represents one of the running themes in this report. This section will finally be concluded with identifying the tasks of building a strong organisation based on campaigns, building structures, engaging into platforms that attract youth to our structures, etc.

Part A: Assessment of the Political Situation

2. A History of Inequality

2.1 The racial capitalism accumulation regime

South Africa is one of the most unequal societies amongst middle income countries. Income and opportunities are unevenly distributed in racial, class, gender and geographic terms. Despite being classified as a middle-income country South Africa has incomparable mass unemployment and poverty. The benefits of economic growth are not equitably shared. Wealth is not trickling down to the poorest half of the population, the reverse is however true.

How do we account for this high level of inequality? First, the systemic structure of racial capitalism in our country explains the mass poverty and unemployment of the majority of the population. Racial capitalism was built on the back of denying Black people political rights, systematic destruction of their economic well-being, exploitation and oppression, among others. Black people had to be made poor in order to be forced into docile proletariat and meet the insatiable demand for cheap labour by mining and commercial farming. In particular Black females suffered all three injustices that characterised this accumulation regime, class exploitation, racial oppression and patriarchy. This accumulation regime primarily remains intact notwithstanding a number of important changes that have taken place in the democratic dispensation.

A battery of legislation and other state interventions were deployed by various White minority governments to expropriate Black people in order to create a mass of cheap, docile and migrant labour

system out of them. The reserves/homelands subsidised the cost of reproduction for capital in the so-called 'White areas'. Domestic work and subsistence farming performed by African women and old people provided an effective subsidy for White capital for decades. The Chamber of mines justified payment of low wages to African on the grounds that they have 'wealth' in the reserves. Black and females workers were discriminated against through various policies to reserve certain skilled work to Whites. Unequal and unfair discriminatory investment in education, health care and other social development areas held back Black people in general and Africans in particular with Black women abandoned in a generally worse position. The National Party intensified this regime and ensured a large transfer of wealth, jobs, skills, opportunities and property to the Afrikaner. This constituted the first major distributional regime from the small English wealthy enclave.

It is this legacy of colonial plunder and economic subjugation that accounts for the systemic character of inequality in South Africa. The democratic state has inherited one of the most brutal forms of capitalism. It was an economic system based on mass poverty aimed at serving the interest of a White minority. Racial capitalism helps explain the persistence of racial, class, gender and geographic inequality. **Moreover the accumulation regime and within it particularly the structure of production is still centred on the extraction and export of mineral and primary agricultural products, mainly to Europe.** The relative diversity of the South African economy, compared to other African countries, helps to obscure this fundamental truth about the country's economic base.

2.2 The Post 1994 accumulation regime

It is now a well recognised fact that 1994 ushered in a new political order in South Africa. This outcome was a product of several factors including the key role played by young people through internal mass resistance, international pressure, armed struggle and the changed geo-political world order. The creation of a single polity governed by a fairly progressive Constitution (notwithstanding its weaknesses mainly compromises which still needs to be addressed, such as the sunset clauses) is one of the remarkable achievements of the democratic revolution. The Constitution combines political, civil and socio-economic rights as a package that defines the essence of the democratic ideal.

Since 1994, the ANC led government has implemented important political, economic and social programmes to realise the vision of the Freedom Charter and the Constitution. These interventions were important in changing the life-experience of many poor Black people by improving access to water and other basic services.

It is a matter of debate whether this also heralded **substantial** changes to the logic of accumulation that characterised the apartheid-colonial political economy. That is, has the structure of production and ownership shifted substantially from extraction and export of raw materials and primary goods to more high value added activities? How is surplus produced and distributed in the post-apartheid economy? Has the structure of ownership changed? Has the dualistic development – two nations in one country – been changed? These are some of the questions to pose to understand the structure and nature of the post-apartheid accumulation regime. Some of the changes in the economy include:

- **Changes in structure:**

The economy has recorded a long period of sustained positive, albeit, low growth since 1994. Capitalist profits have been restored through the redistribution of wealth from the working class and the middle stratum to the rich. The post-1990s growth reversed the stagnation that blighted the South African economy since the 1970s. Contribution from the primary sector to GDP declined substantially since the 1970s with the services sector gaining momentum

The services sector is now one of the largest contributors to Gross Domestic Product – accounting for at least 60 percent. Growth in services includes the rise of the dominance of finance capital and related services and restructuring of jobs from manufacturing as a result, among others, of outsourcing. The bulk of growth in business services is accounted for by the emergence of services such as the mobile phone industry.

There is intense debate that suggests that the shift towards the services sector has increased '*financialisation*' of the economy. This has been facilitated and supported by the liberalisation of finance and capital since the 1970s crisis, but more so in our economy in the post-1994 period, since the of GEAR regime and more so in the early 2000s when government firmly liberalised finance and capital, an act which resulted among others to capital flight and some of the South African companies leaving the country for London, New York and Melbourne as new bases. Financialisation is basically the rise and domination of finance, mainly money-capital, over productive-capital. In the policy terrain it is manifested for example in the macroeconomic policy through narrow and excessive obsession with inflation targeting in order to protect financial assets. The dominance of finance on non-financial operations takes the form of increased shareholding by institutional "investors" and other finance institutions. This has spawned the so-called *shareholder-value* movement that places pressure on productive operations to increase returns always within a short term time span. In order to solve the principal-agent problem management incentive and pay packages have been aligned to those of the shareholders in the form of share options, bonuses and other incentives. The consequence of financialisation is constant corporate restructuring which includes focus on the so-called core operations and therefore outsourcing.

Mining and agricultural contribution to GDP is lower than their historical contributions although minerals still constitute over a third of all our exports. Of course the portfolio of exports has changed to include autos and heavy chemicals.

Manufacturing has been in a rut for the better part of the post-1994 period. Others have argued that South Africa in fact de-industrialised as many firms could not cope with the rapid trade liberalisation of the mid-1990s. For that matter, heavy industry which is capital intensive dominates the manufacturing sector while labour intensive firms have lagged behind. Consequently South Africa exports highly capital intensive goods and import labour intensive goods from the rest of the world especially from the East.

- **Ownership:**

A few conglomerates own a substantial portion of the JSE-listed companies – Anglo Plc, Rembrandt Group of companies, which together control close to 60 percent of JSE's market capitalisation. There is evidence that the South African economy is highly concentrated – few dominant firms control a substantial portion of several markets. In recent years the Competition Authorities have also uncovered endemic collusive conduct in several industries. For example cartels in milling, bread, fertiliser have been uncovered.

However, some of the conglomerates, like Anglo, have been restructured. This includes divestiture of certain non-core activities. In addition some of the elements of South African capital have been changed into transnational corporations as a result shifting their base from the country to other counties highlighted formerly. Shifting of primary listing from Johannesburg was justified on the grounds that South African capital markets are small and relocating will grant access to international capital market. It was also claimed that the corporations will use the access to capital markets to increase their domestic investment. It was also supported ostensibly in the name of improving South

Africa's "international competitiveness". On the contrary, these former South African firms have focused on global expansion and repatriate substantial surplus-value out of South Africa annually.

In comparative terms, Black (capitalist private) ownership has increased albeit insignificant as compared to its White counterpart. At the gambling centre, the JSE, Black ownership is below 5 percent of overall market capitalisation. Therefore, capital is still predominantly White in post-apartheid South Africa with the objective of transferring wealth to the people as a whole been largely substituted by narrow BEE that benefits a few Black individuals. It is also important to take stock of many unlisted firms to understand the full nature of South African capital.

Merger and acquisition activities have resulted in some South African based companies falling into foreign hands – for example Barclays purchase of controlling stake in ABSA, the mooted take-over of Massmart by Wall-mart; as well China has twenty percent stake in Standard Bank. The latter is presently restructuring among others through retrenchment of thousands of workers and curtailing of sports sponsorships in order to increase its present levels of profit and therefore satisfy "shareholder value"

Liberalisation of capital market has heightened the role of institutional investors and private equity investors. South Africa has joined the rest of the Anglo-American world in the growth of this form of investments. State ownership still plays an important role in the form of a number of state owned enterprises in the aviation, transport, electricity and other industries.

Social capital, in the form of investments by the retirement funds, constitutes another important aspect of ownership in the economy. In theory workers through retirement funds own a substantial portion of the economy. However, in fact it is the fund administrators that determine the nature of investment. Retirement funds are currently propping up the proliferation of shopping malls as part of the logic of the current accumulation regime of supporting a consumerist economy– which is a clear misallocation of much needed investment into the priorities as identified by government. Investments by Retirement Fund globally are directed towards economic infrastructure. We have to take further the SACP Red October campaign on financing development in order to pressurise especially pension funds administrators, towards allocating these resources towards more productive developmental objectives related to achieving the real transformation of our country's structure economic production.

- **Class structure:**

South Africa has also experienced some changes in its class structure. The bourgeoisie remains largely White but a tiny segment of Blacks has joined the rich. The opening of opportunities has resulted in upward mobility for many Black professionals, especially in the public sector. This has led to the growth of a Black middle stratum and a tiny Black capitalist class. The Black middle stratum is however in a fragile situation because of its high indebtedness. It seems that the Black middle stratum and the new rich have assimilated into the consumerism and crass materialism of the White rich.

It is no wonder that this new 'non-racial' elite is indifferent to the plight of the poorest half of the population. It also resists any attempts to redistribute wealth, opportunities and skills to the poor through for example additional taxation. It is insulated from the plight of the poor by high walls. It is urban, cosmopolitan and globalised while the poor are trapped in grinding poverty.

The working class has also been restructured into a core of permanent unionised workers and a periphery of non-unionised proletariat. The mass dismissal of Black "unskilled" and semi-skilled workers since the late 1970s explains the shift of a significant section of the working class into

“informal economy”. Many of the poor falls through the cracks – they do not qualify for social grants and the economy is failing to absorb the mass of unskilled and low skilled workers.

South Africa, due to class reconfiguration as one of the drivers, is now faced with a situation whereby 30 percent of the population accounts for more than 70 percent of income while the bottom 70 percent accounts for the residual. Class differentiation is stark among the Blacks than among Whites. Relative to other periods in our history the Black national group is highly differentiated by class. Black middle stratum formation started long before 1994 but has accelerated in the post apartheid South Africa. The gap between the tiny African middle stratum/rich and the poorest half of the population is widely increasing.

Do these changes constitute a qualitative change in the structure of accumulation? This has been a subject of debate with some arguing that South Africa has entered a post-industrial service economy. Alternatively it has been argued that South Africa has entered a new growth path. However, taking a long term view, it can be argued that the minerals-finance-energy complex is still the centre of South Africa’s economic activities. Surplus may not be extracted from the cheap migrant labour of the past but this does not alter the argument that the accumulation regime has not altered. New forms of extracting surplus include the cheap atypical and sub-contracted forms of labour.

The shock therapy policies implemented by the democratic government in the mid-1990 have worsened unemployment and inequality. Unemployment, measured by both the official and expanded definition, doubled between 1995 and 2000. Today, unemployment has stabilised at higher levels above 20 percent for both the official and expanded definition. Income inequality has widened in the past sixteen years as wealth was redistributed from the poor to the rich. If it were not for social grants the extent of absolute poverty would have been worse. Still, almost half of the country lives in poverty especially in the former homelands.

Parallel to the negotiation on the future political settlement there were discussion between the leadership of the movement and captains of industry. A tacit ‘deal’ was struck that the new government will not attack the property and privileges of the White capitalist class (the Constitution made this formal). Rather, the new government will leave economic transformation to the markets and use surplus from the private sector to finance social development. In this fashion the leadership surrendered its autonomy to determine economic policy to big capital. It also tied its hands by limiting the extent to which it can tax the White rich to finance socio-economic development. The new government accepted the ideology of a *liberal global capitalism* promoted by the White corporate sector which excluded the possibility of comprehensive redistributive measures. This correlates with the abandonment of RDP and its replacement by GEAR hardly two years into the democratic dispensation. The liberal capitalist approach that was adopted is premised on the following five assumptions according to Terreblanche (2002: 424-5):

- a. *South Africa has a high economic growth potential.* The South African economy had a high growth potential that was strangled by apartheid, but its full potential can be realised in the post apartheid period if the White-controlled modern sector is given the required space and freedom via the policy of neo-liberalism
- b. *Integration into the benign global economy will enhance economic growth.* The international community – which played such a pivotal role in South Africa’s democratisation – will be well-disposed towards post-apartheid South Africa, and the country’s economic growth potential can be enhanced by integrating the modern sector as fully and as rapidly as possible into the benign system of global capitalism, by lifting all restrictions on the movement of capital and goods.

- c. *A high economic growth rate will unlock the labour-absorptive capacity of the economy:* if the high growth potential of the economy can be realised through a policy of neo-liberalism and globalisation, the labour-absorptive capacity of the modern sector will be unlocked, which will create enough additional job opportunities to resolve the problems of structural unemployment and under-employment.
- d. *The benefits of a high economic growth rate will trickle down to the poor:* a high economic growth rate, achieved via a competitive free market and integration with the global economy, will generate a large enough trickle-down effect from the modern or first world sector to the informal or third world periphery to narrow the income gap, alleviate poverty, and resolve the social crisis inherited from apartheid.
- e. *The restructuring of the economy should be entrusted to market-led economic growth:* achieving a high economic growth rate is the most-effective – and the least painful – method of ‘restructuring’ the South African economy, and resolving at least in the long term, its dualistic character and structural anomalies after centuries of colonialism and apartheid. Or, to put it differently, the task of fundamentally restructuring the economy as envisaged by the RDP should be entrusted to free market capitalism, neo-liberalism, globalisation, and a high rate of growth.

These assumptions can be challenged on several grounds both theoretically and empirically. The low economic growth and the intensification of the social crisis in the post-apartheid period provide the basis to reject these assumptions. Higher growth will not necessarily translate into more jobs or substantial reduction of poverty. It is the content, quality and structure of growth that matters rather than a narrow fixation with a growth target. As pointed out by Terreblanche (2002:425) these notions did not take into account the following defining characteristic features of the South African economy:

- Its *dualist character*, after 350 years of unequal power relations, unfree labour pattern, and uneven socio-economic development, it is divided into a mainly White-owned and White controlled modern sector, and a Black underdeveloped non-formal sector.
- The deeply institutionalised *inequalities* in the distribution of income, socio-economic power, and property and opportunities; and
- The emergence – over the past 30 years – of a modern, first world, capitalist enclave that is detaching itself from Black labour market and the lumpen-proletariat because they are regarded as irrelevant to the enclave’s operation and profitability.

All these ultimately led to the GEAR period, and a redirection of the long held perspective within the ANC about the *role of the state as an agent for change* within the economy and society to some sort of a “welfarist” state. For this neo-liberal mantra to be wholly accepted, an attempt to change the political role and character of the ANC from its mass character by the 1996 Class Projects had to be undertaken. To this end, as we will argue later, the Polokwane moment was more than a defeat of personalities behind the class project but of the project itself. However, what the New Tendency seeks to do is reverse such gains. Hence, the struggle continues in defense of Polokwane.

2.3 Implications for political and socio-economic development

It is this social reality that the democratic movement seeks to change. Substantial progress in the NDR will be measured by the extent to which we have made a serious dent on unemployment, inequality and

poverty. There is general acceptance that the cautious economic policy – aimed at stabilising macro indicators - is inadequate to the task of economic and social transformation. In addition the political leadership has to regain its sovereignty to determine socio-economic policy from the corporate managerial elite. This must be buttressed by mass participatory democracy.

This is both a political and economic question. At a political level the question is whether the *balance of forces* favours a change of tack OR it constrains the implementation of a radical programme? This question will be discussed below (the political economy of post-Polokwane period). Suffice to underline the fact that the democratic movement faces a historic political opportunity. In this case **there is need for power and paradigm shift towards an RDP-type intervention in the economy**. Mass power is the cornerstone of achieving this power shift in the orientation of the political leadership.

On the economic front the question is what interventions are required to change the economic structure that has characterised South Africa for over hundred years? Dependence on the current economic structure has exposed the vulnerability of South Africa's growth path. In broad terms it is a basic-commodity (with minerals and primary products occupying the centre stage) export-oriented and import-dependent growth path. Notwithstanding the diversification of the export portfolio in recent years to include autos and heavy chemicals, the underlying logic of the growth path is the extraction and export of raw materials.

This growth path is vulnerable on a number of fronts. Post-colonial experiences amply demonstrate the fallacy of dependence on export of raw materials, especially dependency on a single cash crop or minerals. Zimbabwe is a recent example of the failure to transform economic power and structure. Prices of raw materials – determined externally in a liberalised context – are volatile and in the long run tend to be low. During “commodity” booms (high “commodity” prices) countries that rely on export of raw materials suffer the so-called ‘*Dutch Disease*’. Capital inflows into the “commodity” market raises the value of the currency thereby displacing exports of labour intensive manufactures. The reverse happens during capital outflows. The social dislocation is almost similar during outflows and inflows of short term capital are more or less the same.

Exporters of raw materials always face balance-of-payments problems. That is, they tend to face trade deficit because of the tendency to import more than they export. Imports of high value manufactured product and capital goods outweighs the gains from export of low value raw materials. The paradox of raw commodity exporters is that they *produce what they don't eat and eat what they don't produce*. The commodity boom tends to stimulate transfer of profits and income to foreign countries due to this trade imbalance.

Third, raw material exporters are not equal and compete against each other in the global economy. For example South Africa faces competition from other developing countries. It also now faces competition from the large developing countries like Brazil, Russia, India and China. Some policies like subsidisation in the North also distort trade and reinforce the uneven division of labour. New materials like fibre optics and synthetic rubber have tended to displace some of the commodities produced and exported by developing countries. For example fibre optic has displaced copper wire on both functionality and cost. Fibre optics conveys substantial data compared to copper wires and are also cheaper.

3. The Polokwane Moment

The 52nd ANC National Conference (Polokwane 2007) was historic in the post-apartheid era. The YCL played an active role alongside other forces within the ANC to make the change happen. It is perhaps

important to remind ourselves why Polokwane happened. In general, the following reasons can be said to have been behind the Polokwane moment:

- Revolt against the technocratic management of the ANC by leading cadres in government;
- The selective persecution of comrades for corruption and the use of the state machinery to settle internal political, often factional, differences.
- The marginalisation of the ANC, the alliance in particular and the mass democratic movement from policy formation.
- The worsening unemployment, inequality and poverty situation.

All these factors combined created the groundswell for change first expressed in the 2005 National General Council. The revolt against the persecution of comrade Jacob Zuma symbolised the greater dissatisfaction about the state of affairs in the movement. Polokwane unified a range of forces, with opposing interest and motives, against the leadership of former President Thabo Mbeki's group. It included those who had grievances against the leadership of the former President, ANC members who wanted internal democracy and forces agitating for change of direction in economic policy.

The outcome of the conference sent shock waves in South Africa and abroad. A new leadership was elected with President Zuma receiving the most votes. This paved the way for the removal of comrade Thabo Mbeki as President of the country when the tensions between the newly elected leadership and government became untenable. Polokwane also signalled the need for policy shift to address the problem of joblessness, poverty and inequality. However, it did not represent a wholesale rejection of the conservative policies pursued by government, for example macro-economic policy. It did however emphasise the need to subordinate macro-economic policies to the broader developmental goals. Employment creation, education, health and rural development were identified as the key priorities for the movement going forward. The Polokwane conference helped resuscitate the ANC and dislodge the problematic leadership style that had characterised President Mbeki era. It also prompted a walk-out of some disgruntled ANC members who later formed the core that established the 'misnamed' COPE. An important question is whether since Polokwane there has been a significant power shift towards progressive change in the movement?

The social and political reality sketched above suggests that calls to end the NDR are premature, misplaced and dangerous. In fact we need to intensify the NDR to address the historical fault-lines of race, class, gender and geography. Voices calling for the end of the NDR surreptitiously want to impose a liberal reading of the Constitution. In addition they juxtapose the NDR against the values enshrined in the Constitution. They associate the NDR with authoritarianism, corruption, ineptitude and cronyism. This argument is a sham and seeks to protect the status quo and privileges of the rich. It deliberately ignores the ghastly socio-economic and political outcomes if South Africa continues on the current trajectory. Further it distorts the history of South Africa through its gross caricature of the NDR. The current constitution is a production of the national democratic revolution and did not arise by accident. Many died in the struggle to attain the vision of a democratic, non-racial and non-sexist society. However, the Constitution is a living document and a product of compromise and must be constantly adapted to new realities, and therefore cannot escape amendment if it defeats the ultimate goals of the NDR. If socio-economic disparities in our society persist, and the constitution is seen as a stumbling block, then let it be.

It is the current reality that will breed the ground for an authoritarian response among the political elite as they will be acting in defense of the wealth accumulated, especially since 1994. To avoid this outcome, it is in the interest of the people that the alliance should take control of policy processes and shift the discourse towards the project of addressing the historical legacy of apartheid.

4. The 2009 General Election

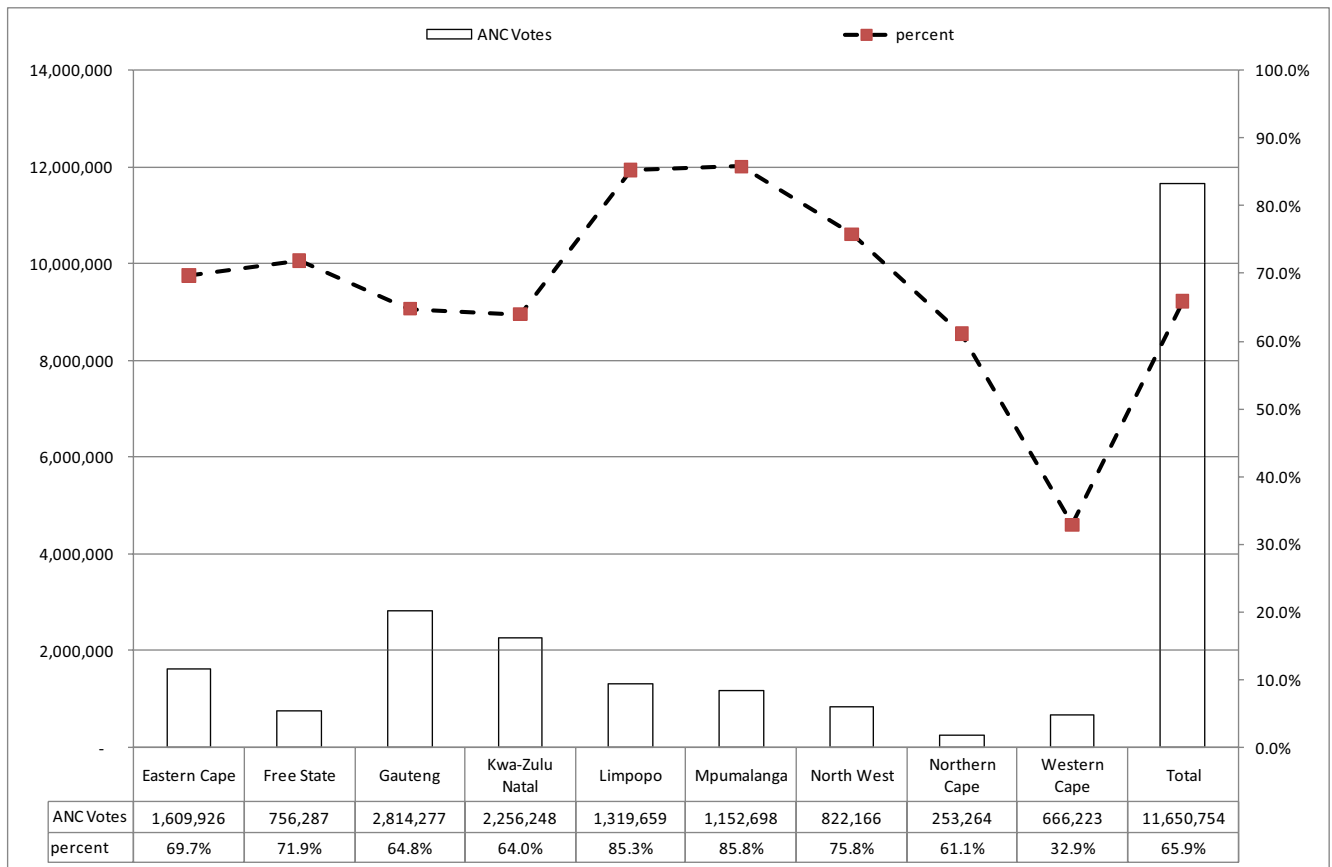
Elections are an essential part of a democratic system. Regular elections ensure that political parties renew their mandate and continuously align their strategies to the wishes of the electorate. They also give the electorate an opportunity to remove politicians or political parties that no longer represent their wishes. As such elections add dynamism in political systems to ensure constant innovation among political parties. So every five years a 'revolution' takes place as the electorate is given the opportunity to rank and select a party of their choice. This is supposed to keep political parties on their toes. The example of Kerala, India, is an interesting case study in terms of how political parties including the Communist Parties are forced to continuously align their programmes with that of the electorate.

It is now a matter of historical record that the ANC-led Alliance won the general elections except in the Western Cape. The ANC-led Alliance campaigned on the platform of jobs, education, health care, rural development and fighting corruption. This found resonance with the voters who gave the Alliance a fresh mandate to implement its electoral promises. The popularity and victory of the movement still dumfounded many pundits who had predicted that its majority will be slashed especially since it was facing a new opposition in the form of COPE. The dominance can be both a blessing and a curse. To the extent that a strong ANC-led Alliance is able to use its electoral strength to pursue progressive transformation then this is a blessing.

An electorally weak ANC and Alliance will not be able to deliver on the promises it makes to our people. However, political dominance can lead to arrogance and social distance from the masses. A political party that loses contact with its base will end up losing elections. Such an outcome will be a serious setback for the revolution. The outcome in the Western Cape illustrates this point more effectively than anything could. Below we offer a synopsis of the voting trends and outcomes.

The chart below shows ANC results for the 2009 Elections per province and the national elections (in total numbers and percentage). ANC received 65 per cent of the national vote. It scored the highest percentage, 85 percent and 84 percent in Limpopo and Mpumalanga respectively. This is followed by North West, Free State and Eastern Cape. The ANC got the least vote (a third) in the Western Cape. Four provinces (Gauteng, Kwa Zulu Natal, Limpopo and Eastern Cape) account for close to seventy percent of total votes cast in favour of the ANC. This suggests that ANC votes in the 2009 elections were concentrated in these four provinces. Consequently (to widen breadth of support) we will have to do more to win support in the remaining five provinces.

Figure 1: ANC 2009 Results



Source: calculated from IEC Report on the 2009 Elections

The one remarkable feature of the 2009 elections was the unprecedented focus on new voters and the youth. Political parties including the ANC fashioned election campaigns to win over these new voters. The methods used (the glitz and glamour) seem to have found resonance with these young voters. It is however questionable whether this type of campaigning results in long-term sustainable support for the ANC. This US-style management of perceptions rather than the deepening of consciousness is a doubtful method to win over uncertain voters for the long run. Sure the message and method need to be couched in ways that reach the youth but this must also deepen the consciousness of the voter by instilling values of what the ANC stands for. Otherwise there is a risk that this ephemeral support will not last but also require substantial money to host parties which can be better used in building a sustainable voting base.

The opposition benches continue to fragment—a situation made worse by the emergence of COPE. The big losers to COPE were opposition parties like UDM, ID and IFP. Opposition parties have cannibalised each other rather than make significant inroads into the ANC support at a national level. However in some provinces opposition parties have managed to reduce the ANC's overall majority.

One of the outcomes of the 2009 elections was the reconfiguration of government by President Zuma. New Ministries like monitoring in the Presidency; Women, Children and People with Disability; Economic Development, were established. Some of the departments were renamed for example the old Land Affairs is now known as the Ministry for Rural Development. The changes are a response to the critique that government lacked coherent development planning, coordination, implementation, monitoring and evaluation capacity.

There are changes into an inclusive approach by alliance partners in the appointment of cabinet ministers and the election of candidates for parliament compared to how the 1996 Class Project engaged into this process. Comparatively speaking, there are more communist MP's and Ministers now as opposed to 1994. As much as these changes should be appreciated, the reality is that these MP's and Ministers remain accountable to the ANC and succumb to its discipline although the alliance partners have – a point that must not be undermined. In 2009 elections, as was the case in 1994, the alliance worked together to determine the election manifesto and electoral list. However, the case now is that only the ANC can recall members from either parliament or cabinet without consultation with the alliance.

The YCLSA debates on the question of the relationship of the SACP and State power, and the debate for the reconfiguration of the alliance, remain very important. Although both the 12th Congress and the Special Congress of the SACP resolved that the Party will contest for elections under the leadership of the ANC, as the YCLSA, we need to reflect on how this will significantly meet the conditions which necessitated the discussions on the SACP and State Power. In particular, we must debate the question of how the working class can achieve its immediate aims and enforce its momentary interests through the present setup of an alliance electoral tactic as embraced by the SACP in any alternative that we are to point out.

How do we deal with the persistent contradictions which may be eminent between ANC policy and the approach of the SACP? What is the general role of SACP members who are ANC MP's? Does the question of the SACP standing for elections on its own an issue of the past or even more relevant now? We believe that this question remains important and should constantly be raised by the YCLSA within SACP structures. However, that question must not be raised in isolation from critically evaluating the position of the working class being able to achieve its immediate aims and enforce its momentary interest. We also cannot allow the Party to be content with power allocated not directly from the ballot, but from an ANC-led election platform and at the dictate and mercy of the ANC. The fact that things have changed now is mainly due to the personalities who are at the helm of the ANC, especially the President. The internal struggle within the ANC to dislocate communists is there, and this is a fight we should not shy from. However, the role and character of the Party as an independent organisation consistent with popular mass work and influence within the state and alliance remains. In the final analysis, our Party is the part of the working class and can never be compromised on the basis of temporary minimum victories and alliances.

This section also bears the following pertinent questions. In the current period, what is the role of the Alliance in taking forwards the struggle for socialism, and how does the continuation of this Alliance, with its unity and contradictions help the working class achieve its immediate and long-term gains? How do we shape the attitude of the Party towards the ANC, and the role of the ANC towards socialism? The party, through its Deployment and Accountability policy and committee, seeks to consistently define the role of communists in society in general, and within the state and government in particular, what should be the attitude of the YCLSA in this regard? In this Congress, we should be able to take stock of past SACP resolutions and assess them against the current reality and contribute on the debate of the SACP and its Relationship to State Power.

5. The Political Economy of the post-Polokwane period

5.1 The International Situation

The international report will canvass in full an appraisal of the global balance of forces. For the purposes of this section we will focus on some key salient issues. In general we can conclude that the international situation is much more fluid unlike in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union. The United State still remains the only super-power but faces challenge from other developed countries for example the European Union. Its dominance also faces challenge from a significant grouping of

developing countries coalescing around the Brazil-Russia-India-China (BRIC) axis. The common issues unifying these disparate countries are the reform of the international institutions like the IMF and the UN, which for many years have been dominated by the US. The second issue is around trade reform which produced a deadlock in the Doha-round as developing countries are resisting further liberalisation in the absence of reciprocal action by the North especially around agriculture.

The emergence of powerful developing countries has also reshaped the core-periphery relations in two significant ways. Traditional relationships whereby developing countries are the net recipients of foreign capital are changing. China for example holds a third of the US treasury's debt while firms from India have taken over some British automobiles. For example the Tata's take-over of Land Rover is reverse capital movement from developing to developed countries.

The relocation of substantial manufacturing from developed countries to low-cost centres like China and Vietnam has changed the historical division of labour between the developed North and the under-developed South. Historically, manufacturing – seen as a high-value activity – was largely concentrated in the North with the South focusing on supply of raw materials. Cheap Chinese imports are behind the lowest inflation in the United State. The North has however moved up the value chain to focus on knowledge-intensive such as product Research and Development (R&D) as well as governance of global commodity chains or Global Production Networks (GPNs). Indeed capitalist production has become more global and controlled by a few MNC located in the North.

This development adds a new dynamic in international politics especially the relationship between the developed North and the South. The emergence of a powerful group of countries including the Asian Tigers has created a second-tier of pivotal states in the international arena (estimates suggest that China has displaced Japan as the second biggest economy while Korea is regarded as the tenth biggest economy). This economic power gives this set of countries some bargaining power in the global arena relative to other developing countries. It however does not follow that they will wield this power to ensure progressive outcomes. Still, any international strategy cannot ignore the fact that the international situation is far more different than twenty years ago.

It is also important to take into account the mutual interdependence between the new tier of countries on the one hand and the developed North on the other hand. For example it is not in the interest of China, notwithstanding its rhetoric in public – that the US fails. This will wipe off substantial Chinese savings. The US on the other hand needs the cheap imports from China to maintain low inflation. Little wonder that the US has toned down its belligerent attitude to China including on the question of human rights. It is thus apparent that the developed and developing countries are locked into a mutually depended relationship. This has far reaching implication for a strategy to change the balance of forces. Specifically, it is an open question what posture will be adopted by this new tier of developing countries on key questions like the environment, democracy, trade and transformation.

The global economy is still trying to shake-off the after-effects of the 2008-till-present crisis. The recovery is still far from restoring growth to the pre-2008 levels. It is in this context that the US is engulfed in a battle to fight off deflation (sharp reduction in prices to the extent that assets are worthless). As countries try unilaterally to stimulate their economies this has unleashed what has been termed the '*currency wars*'. In essence there is an attempt to stimulate exports through for example depreciating the value of currencies. This is what the Fed in the US is trying to do. However, this recent intervention by the US Fed has led to world-wide condemnation.

Manipulating the dollar has triggered flight of short term capital to countries like South Africa that have relatively higher interest rates. Obviously this negatively affects the economies of these countries by raising the value of their currency and thereby rendering their exports internationally in a vulnerable position. As such, the US has displaced the pain of adjustment to other countries, something it has been doing for the last thirty years. In this context there is pressure on China to slow down its economy by either appreciating the value of the currency or raising interest rates.

Global capitalism is therefore in a serious crisis with no clear short-term solution to kick-start growth. Coordinated global approach is made more urgent by the imperative of saving capitalism from the biggest crisis since the Great Depression. It is ironic that such global coordination is unlikely to emerge and the spectre of tariff barriers being raised across the globe looms large. Capitalism thus not only faces a crisis of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall, but it also faces a dialectically-linked realisation crisis as the goods produced are not finding markets due to rising unemployment and trade barriers, thus a crisis of over-accumulation of capital. These crises are likely to add fuel to an already difficult situation. We see global protest in many countries against measures to curtail government spending for example in the UK and Greece.

This brings us to the political question for the left. It is ironic that when capitalism is at its weakest the left is still fragmented and fighting disconnected national struggles. The absence of a cohesive left force internationally undermines efforts to grasp this historic opportunity to drive through radical transformations. The Congress must be seized with the question on how to develop a united left force at the global level to provide leadership to the many disparate national struggles. This vacuum is likely to be filled by right-wing responses as recent elections in Europe and the US have shown. Such a situation is a perfect breeding ground for right-wing opportunism whether faith-based or political as also the Mid-Term elections in the US illustrate, which were driven by a right-wing Tea Party led by the defeated Sara Palin.

People are also increasingly turning to religion to provide answers and solace in this difficult economic situation. That in itself poses some serious challenges to the left. How do we explain the contradiction where rightwing forces gain an upper hand over the left while rightwing policies and capitalism have and are clearly plunging society into crises? What is to be done? These are some of the questions we must answer in order to emerge from our congress with a clear programme of our tasks both at national and international spheres to advance a left agenda in particular, socialist alternatives.

5.2 The Domestic Situation

Previous sections have outlined the socio-economic conditions that continue to blight the South African society almost two decades since the 1994 democratic breakthrough. Gains registered by the democratic movement have also been highlighted. In this section we offer a general assessment of the domestic balance of forces. We do this in order to assess the possibilities and spaces available to radicalise the NDR.

The ANC's popularity and dominance of politics is a source of strength for the democratic movement. For that matter the ANC has been put into power on a progressive platform to accelerate change. No political party seems likely to dislodge the ANC from its position of hegemony. For the foreseeable future, notwithstanding isolated areas, the ANC grip to power seems unassailable. The continuing future of this is conditional upon the ANC making progress in improving the material conditions of the majority of the people. .

Electoral strength on its own is not adequate to ensure a progressive outcome. The balance of class forces is the decisive factor that will ensure that the ANC implements measures to change the policy landscape. The ANC was the majority party in 1996 but implemented conservative economic policies. The balance of class forces then culminated in the implementation of GEAR. Strategic challenge facing the progressive forces is how to ensure that working class interest shapes the policy discourse in government? That outcome depends clearly on building working class power.

However, no amount of focus on the internal context including balance of forces is sufficient for desired outcomes to be achieved. It is important that we extensively examine South Africa's external position and the impact of the international balance of forces in the country. For example there is a possibility for the working class to still be constrained to make the progress that it wants even if it could win the balance of forces domestically, that being subject to a possibility of unfavourable international balance of forces

including the increasingly dominant role of MNCs in our economy. What would be our response to that situation? Is that not what the ANC has partially found itself in over a larger proportion of the period since the inception of the democratic dispensation (irrespective of the fact that in many instances, the conservative economic policies of the ANC were more submissive to conditions set by local capital in its desire to maintain economic control and power? Under such possibilities how would we differently conduct the NDR from what is going on presently?

That said, we can broadly say that the domestic balance of forces are mostly favourable to a progressive agenda. In the first, instance, the global economic crisis has shaken confidence in the neo-liberal dogma and has also opened up spaces to experiment with new ideas. Unless we occupy this space by articulating a coherent agenda the right-wing may remobilise by for instance recreating their old ideas. This happened in the aftermath of the 1997 economic crisis. The World Bank and IMF were forced to repackage structural adjustment programme by calling them Poverty Reduction Papers.

Within the ANC-led alliance we have also witnessed an attempt to redirect the course of the NDR by a New Tendency. The anti-Mbeki coalition quickly unravelled after the 2009 elections. It is clear that the glue that bound us together was not ideology but common disenchantment with the Mbeki-era. It is clear that what the left had identified as a principled opposition towards the way in which the ANC and the Alliance were run, and the need for change, was used as mere rhetoric by some within the ANC to get rid of former President Mbeki.

The rupture of the Polokwane alliance (to use a term) has manifested in two inter-linked ways. In the first instance is the whipping of anti-communist hysteria within the ANC. This '*red-gevaar*' ploy is an attempt to mobilise ANC members against the supposed take-over of the ANC by COSATU and the SACP. Second, there has been a premature opening of the leadership contestation for the top-six positions. In addition, assertions by those who started this premature election campaign that President Zuma's position itself is not safe due to the fact that there is no unequivocal stance that he will serve two-terms, has further deepened divisions not only within the ANC but also with its alliance partners. The NGC has called for a moratorium on electioneering for the 2012 ANC Conference, and the need for discipline even amongst its structures and members. However the die is cast as a grouping within the ANC has now put their colours on the mast in terms of their preference for leadership. In this context the Nationalisation debate has been used to intimidate people from expressing their views for fear of not being supported in the 2012 Conference. There is no doubt that the campaign is being conducted clandestinely, and there is no reason to believe that it would not follow the same lines highlighted above.

As indicated above, government was reconfigured by President Zuma after the 2009 general elections. It remains an open question whether the hoped for improvement in development planning, coordination and implementation has been achieved. In fact it is too early to evaluate the impact of the changes in government. Recently, the President reshuffled his cabinet by removing seven Ministers and appointing new ones and 4 deputies. Although the reasons for the reshuffling have not been openly stated, it is clear that the President's signal is to accelerate delivery. Some of the former Ministers were dogged by corruption allegations, and this clearly could have also influenced the President's decision to change his cabinet.

The substantial reshuffling of cabinet mid-term is an unprecedented act in the post-apartheid era. There is no doubt however that the President seems to be focusing the energy of government on implementation. Evidence of this includes the signing of performance agreements with Ministers. We must emphasise that the tradition which began with the appointment of this cabinet, although the prerogative of the President, should be premised with consultation with the SACP and COSATU. This was one of major problems pre-Polokwane, a commitment towards a strong alliance should not be undermined by continuing with this tradition.

At policy level government and the ANC leadership have been sending mixed signals. On the one hand they suggest that the 'fundamental' of macroeconomic management will be retained. In contrast, there is

a signal that policy is likely to change on some questions like rural development, a New Growth Path strategy and reprioritised industrial policy interventions. Is this not perhaps the time for the Alliance to boldly have the courage on economic questions and wrest control from the corporate sector especially given the fact that the neo-liberal agenda has failed our economy? To what extent does Cosatu's Growth Path and the SACP's interventions of the New Growth Path complement various interventions generated from the ANC NGC on the way forward, and a bold recommitment towards changing the economic trajectory in order to change the lives of our people?

There is clear commitment by the current government to deal effectively with corruption both in the public and private sector. We should however restate, as the YCLSA, that corruption is inherent within capitalism, and that at the core of capitalist production is the corrupt and exploitative relationship that exists between the capitalist and the workers, and thus, the fight against corruption is also in itself a struggle against capitalism. Corruption is equally theft from public resources meant to improve the quality of life of our people. There is a distortion that the campaign against corruption is a fight against wealth accumulation by Black individuals, and an inference that rich Black people are corrupt. This is not true, the reality is that "tenderpreneurship" is a threat to entrepreneurship, and that it should be fought at all levels as it distorts the economy, promotes political infighting and destroys possible job opportunities. We assert that there is a link between corruption and the manipulation of democratic processes within our structures as individuals use their largesse to fund electoral platforms within our organisations.

The campaign against corruption, in the current instance for example when government is looked at from its programme on the matter, is not a fight against legitimate business dealings but against the corrupt nature of some of the dealings under capitalism. We have to also insist that allegations of corruption should never be used as a platform to purge political opponents, as was the case in the build up to Polokwane, but individuals who are accused of corruption should not hide behind this principle, and should rather clear themselves on any corruption allegation.

Finally, we must intensify the campaign to ensure that politicians, in particular public office bearers and representatives do not hold any business interests. If someone wants to be a politician, then they must focus on servicing the people and not filling in tender documents. That is one of the reasons why politicians are better paid.

Part 2: Political tasks facing the youth

6. Political and Strategic Tasks of the Young Communist League

6.1 Overview

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 gives the YCL 'inside' privilege to shape the politics of the alliance and ultimately government policies. 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 and young people in general. While the youth movement must pioneer new ideas it must be careful not to confuse radicalism/militancy with recklessness.

6.2 Defending and deepening the democratic revolution

History teaches us the important lesson that it 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 NDR. The NDR has reached an important junction – one route is a naked capitalist project with a non-racial minority at the helm or a mass project that **substantially** addresses the historical fault-lines of class, race, gender and geography. What type of a 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 NDR.

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 inevitable that a minority will reap immediate benefits due its relative skills, connections and so forth. **BUT** that is not the basic goal of the NDR. 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’s 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 from extreme levels of disempowerment. For as long as the economy narrowly depends on consumption by a minority capital will seek opportunities elsewhere.

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.

6.3 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 *within a given set of particular historical conditions*. 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 direct 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 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.

6.3 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 future¹. 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 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.

Occupying the space already polluted by the glitz, bling and glamour generation makes it even more difficult for us to challenge the ideological space entrenched by capitalism. Challenging such ideas in society, entrenched on a daily basis by the mainstream media, would require an organisation that is principled and prepared to swim against the ideological tide. What kind of celebrity (and therefore role model) is imposed on society by the media? In our society, celebrities are determined on the basis of what car they drive and what lifestyle they lead, and not on the basis of the values entrenched by revolutionary morality, the ideological warfare and the real transformation of society is still a distant future. When those within the liberation movement choose to defend flagrant display of wealth and opulence, instead of challenging those who are involved in such a lifestyle, then we are too far from the ideals set by the *Freedom Charter* and the goals of the NDR.

We are the YCL of the South African Communist Party, which declared long ago that even though it is guided by the scientific ideology developed or discovered by Marx and Engels, both German Europeans, it finds resonance in the values of *ubuntu*. The simplest and basic weapons of our ideology can even be better explained by pre-civilisation African knowledge expressed through idioms and bed-night stories. Our Marxism is connected to these. The Marxism-Leninism of *African Communists* is embedded in love and respect for fellow human beings, humility and humbleness, equal contribution to production, distribution and exchange of commodities through the battering system, respect and care for the elders and many others. The current ideology, whose basis is capitalist social relations, promotes disrespect,

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

greed, hatred and arrogance and relegates these true values of our forefathers, thus, for Mandela's *ubuntu* to succeed, capitalism has to be defeated.

6.4 Building alliances

It is a truism that the working class should win as many supporters to its cause (building working class consciousness) 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 we participate in the Progressive Youth Alliance, and importantly, how we have mobilised various youth forces behind several of our campaigns.

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 us 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 we will find resonance and synergy with the broader youth movement

The coalition of various and even opposing political and social forces through the Jobs for Youth Summit and our engagement with formations such as Afri-Forum Youth and the Freedom Front Plus and many other initiatives are an important platform to ensure that we place our agenda, even amongst those who hate it the most, on their table for engagement with the hope of winning them over. It also expressed the confidence we have about the ideas of socialism and of a national and democratic society.

6.5 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 lines. We are therefore an important instrument to agitate for socialist ideas among young people. It is important that the league captures 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 Re-Establishment 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 league.

A programme of building a strong organisation is therefore a necessity. We should draw our strength from the unity and organisation of our members. The elements of an organisation building project should entail:

- a) **Mass recruitment:** centred around our Operation Khula and its specific goals and time-frames;
- b) **Building branches and units of the league, together with Youth Clubs:** as a basis for a national footprint, and ensuring that young people throughout the country are organised through this structures;
- c) **Campaigns on issues confronting the youth:** which is an areas we have always excelled, including our campaigns on *Jobs for Youth*, for Free Education, HIV/AIDS, male circumcision and on access to sanitary towels by working class women;
- d) **Political education:** this is central to the existence of the YCLSA as a preparatory school for the SACP. The primary task of the YCL is to introduce young people to the ideals, vision and programme of the SACP, and ensure that we *mobilise, education, agitate, learn and fight* against capitalism;

- e) **Cultural programmes:** as a way of life for the youth. We cannot afford to build structures of the YCL that will merely become their political home without these structures being central to the inculcate working class culture. We see culture as a weapon of *working class* theory; and finally,
- f) **International solidarity and work:** the struggle for socialism, just like its anti-thesis of capitalism, is an international struggle. We have to ensure that the values of democracy, national unity, freedom of women from patriarchy, social and economic justice, solidarity, collectivism and environmental sustainability are values which are shared internationally by young people.
- g) **Resource mobilisation:** we need financial sustainability in order to service and finance the revolution. Financial independence of the YCLSA equates to its political independence, and thus, its uncompromising ability to fearlessly confront the challenge facing young people. We have to turn the little contributions by our members into a sustainable financial resource for ultimate stability.

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.

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. *Materialist* (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 with be the condition for the free development of all”.