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Conversations with the
President



Abridged Address by President Cyril Ramaphosa to the ANC Manifesto Review Rally

**Dobsonville Stadium, Soweto, Johannesburg 3
September 2023**

The African National Congress stands before you today as the people's organisation, to introduce its review of and account on the mandate you, the people, gave the ANC in the 2019 National and Provincial Elections.

This mandate is contained in the 2019 Elections Manifesto which was developed through extensive

consultation and participation with the masses of our people across the length and breadth of our country.

This report back is the latest chapter in the long story of our people's collective struggle for freedom and our continuing efforts to build a better life for all.

Over the next two months we will be taking this Manifesto Review process to the different parts of our country, engaging communities in cities, towns, villages, factories, farms and our places of work.

This Manifesto Review Process is a listening exercise that takes place in a South Africa that is a markedly

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different place than it was 30 years ago. It is a better, more just, more humane and more inclusive country.

The decisive peoples' mandate given to the ANC in 1994 was based on their belief in the vision that it stands for, a National Democratic Society that is people-centred and democratic, that is non-racial and non-sexist, that is prosperous and inclusive, and where the people govern and participate in their own development.

Over these three decades, guided by our Constitution, we have constructed a democratic state that represents all the people, and foregrounds the interests and representation of the poor and of women.

Although the challenges we face today are deeply rooted in our past, over the last 30 years we have developed a Constitution, policies, laws and programmes, that seek to unite and build a better life for all South Africans, in our diversity.

Millions more people have houses, electricity and access to water

and sanitation services. This government continues to stretch every sinew to expand access to quality and affordable health care to everyone.

South Africa has, since 1994, built one of the most extensive systems of social grants on the continent. Together with other elements of the social wage, such as free basic services, health care, education and subsidised housing to poor and working-class South Africans, the ANC government continues to provide comprehensive social protection to millions of poor and vulnerable. The extent and depth of poverty and deprivation means that more than 18 million people receive one or other form of government grant.

This government remains committed to protecting the hard-won cause and rights of workers to organise, collectively bargain and other labour rights.

Our journey also saw the unleashing of the talents of young South Africans, who were born without the shackles and indignity of apart-

heid. Their talents and creativity are seen in education and arts, in media and music, in literature and culture, science and innovation, in entrepreneurship and in sports.

The above are but a few ways in which life is better today than it was in 1994. However, much more must be done to work with the people to build a better life for all.

We therefore ask people from all walks of life to engage with our critical review of the implementation of the 2019 election manifesto.

Let me now highlight a select few sections of the 2019 Manifesto and give verbal feedbacks on these.

Transform the Economy to Serve the People

The ANC made the commitment in the 2019 Manifesto to transform the economy along a developmental growth path that will create jobs and decent jobs.

Shortly after we made this commitment, the world experienced one of the most tumultuous and difficult periods in recent history.

Standing here, in this stadium filled with people sitting close to one another, it is almost unimaginable to recall that a mere 8 months after the 2019 elections we faced the global COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-19 was unprecedented in its devastation and impact on every aspect of our lives.

We also experienced the violence of July 2021 where over 350 people tragically lost their lives and great damage was caused to our economy.

Just as the world began to emerge from the pandemic, we began to feel the impact of the war between Ukraine and Russia. During this period, our country was hit by a series of extreme weather events caused by climate change.

Over the past five years, the ANC government, working together with labour, business, and civil society, focused on addressing the long-term challenge of building and growing an economy that serves all South Africans and not just a minority - an economy that protects and creates jobs, decent jobs, especially for young people and women.

The pandemic exacerbated South Africa's pre-existing crises of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

It is estimated that our country suffered more than 2 million job losses and thousands of businesses were shut down during this period.

The ANC government, working with the people, saved many lives threatened by COVID-19, but also saved and protected millions of jobs that would have disappeared

without government intervention.

The ANC government also provided vital income support measures for workers and the unemployed, which had a profound impact on their lives and the lives of their families.

The **Temporary Employment Relief Scheme (TERS)** provided wage subsidies to 5,7 million workers, minimising the impact of job losses and company closures.

The **R350 Social Relief of Distress Grant (SRD grant)** benefitted nearly 10 million unemployed people, mainly young people and women.

Whilst more than 16, 3 million people are employed in our country, unemployment remains unacceptably high with between 8 - 10 million people, on the expanded definition of unemployment, being without a job.

Women and young people are most affected by unemployment and we must work harder to change the structure of the economy so that it creates jobs, and better jobs, for our people.

Since it was established, the **Presidential Employment Stimulus** has benefited over 1.2 million people, especially women and youth. This is in addition to other public employment programmes such as the Community Works Programme (CWP) and the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP).

It has been two decades since the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) Act was passed. The ANC government remains resolute in broadening own-

ership of the economy, as one of the building blocks for changing the economy to become more inclusive and serve all the people.

We will pass the Expropriation Bill, which is currently in the NCOP and will grant the state the authority to expropriate land for public purposes or interests and establish that nil or zero-rand compensation will be deemed just and equitable in accordance with the law.

As mandated by the Manifesto, the ANC government has emphasised and prioritised the importance of various policies and **initiatives to support small enterprises, co-operatives, women and young entrepreneurs, and the informal sector in the townships and villages.**

Our country has, since 2007 been forced to grapple with the challenges presented by loadshedding and ensuring the security of our energy supply. Loadshedding has had negative effects on the economy, peoples' overall quality of life and the safety and security of citizens.

The ANC government continues to implement the Energy Action Plan, under the stewardship of the recently appointed Minister of Electricity and it is undeniable that the frequency and severity of loadshedding is beginning to show signs of decreasing.

The tremendous gains made through the electrification of millions of houses have been set back by loadshedding and blackouts. We are concerned about communities and businesses across the country, including the community of Soweto, who have experienced prolonged blackouts. Government



is working day and night to attend to these challenges.

We will not rest until power is restored.

Advancing Social Transformation

We remain unwavering in our commitment to opening the doors of learning and culture to everyone. Government has done well to expand support for Early Childhood Care and will effect continuous improvements in this area. Fifteen years of compulsory education, along with free schooling for the poor, and a daily meal for over 9 million students, have seen near 100% attendance by South African children at educational institutions until at least the age of 15.

The number learners who passed matric increased from 78% in 2019 to 80% in 2022, with none of the provinces performing below 70%. This was despite the challenges of COVID-19 pandemic and loadshed-

ding.

The performance of learners from poorer schools is steadily improving with the share of bachelor passes in no-fee schools improving from 55% in 2019 to 64% in 2022. This shows the positive impact of our efforts to provide support to learners from poor and working-class backgrounds.

The number of students in post-school education and training, from poor and working-class backgrounds, who receive NSFAS funding increased from 580,000 to 770,000 between 2018 and 2021.

Health care is provided for the more than 50 million South Africans who do not have access to private health insurance, meaning that the overwhelming majority of South Africans continue to rely on the health care system.

To improve access to health care and through its focus on primary health care, the ANC-led government between 1994 and till now built 1749 clinics and 56 hospitals.

However, there is still significant inequality in access to quality health care.

The ANC government continues with efforts to accelerate the full introduction of the National Health Insurance (NHI) which will enable every South African to receive appropriate standardised quality health care regardless of their ability to pay.

The NHI Bill is currently in the NCOP, having received enthusiastic support from the majority of participants during the public hearings in the provinces and we urge Parliament to finalise this important legislation as soon as possible.

Between 1994 and 2019, 3, 2 million free houses were built benefiting millions of people. This has meant a massive extension of home ownership, growing the productive assets of our people.

During the 6th administration, through the Integrated Residential Development Programme, government has delivered more than 8 245 social housing units in identified restructuring zones; more than 19 000 affordable first home finance houses; more than 198 000 RDP houses and serviced more than 183 700 serviced sites. In addition, government handed over close to 100 000 title deeds to households and families.

Nearly 18.6 million South Africans - up from 2 million in 1999 - are receiving social grants, including 8.4 million receiving R350 monthly Social Relief Distress (SRD) grant introduced for unemployed people during the COVID-19 pandemic.

While there is popular support for this SRD grant, there are concerns that there are many deserving people who are excluded from the grant and that the value of SRD has not kept up with inflation.

Over the next few months, the ANC government will tackle these exclusions and ensure that the value of the grant is reviewed.

Fighting corruption and promoting integrity

We have embarked on a wide range of measures to implement the recommendations of the State Capture Commission, which together should help to ensure that such activities are never able to happen again.

The ANC government has also taken steps by amending sections of the Companies Act in order require the identity of shareholders of companies and address concerns about tax avoidance and illicit financial flows. This include actions taken against illegal imports and illicit cigarette sales.

The ANC, as an organisation, has also taken steps to fight corruption and strengthen integrity though, requiring that members and leaders who are facing serious criminal charges should step aside.

The ANC Government has issued Guidelines on Conducting Lifestyle Audits and provincial departments are being technically assisted to implement lifestyle audits and discipline management.

However, the scourge of corruption persists. In this Manifesto Review, we need to understand how corruption manifests itself and the further steps we must take to eradicate it.

Build Safer Communities

As we meet here today, we are painfully aware of the impact of crime of the lives of our fellow citizens. We all need to feel safe in our homes, schools, workplaces, places of recreation and streets.

Our 2019 Manifesto therefore committed to strengthen policing to help rid our communities of all forms of crime, drugs, gangsterism and violence against women.

We reiterate that gender-based violence has reached crisis proportions, affecting every community and touching the lives of most fam-

ilies. GBV and Femicide along with high levels of crime pose a serious threat to the freedom and dignity of South Africans.

Following the first Presidential Summit on GBV held in 2018, we adopted a National Strategic Plan on Gender- Based Violence and Femicide (NSP GBVF).

Subsequently, we have strengthened the response of our criminal justice system to GBVF and improved the support provided to survivors, through legislative reform, increasing the number of places of safety and a range of other mechanisms.

In more broader efforts to prevent crime, government continues to invest in the upgrading and building of police stations, as well as the purchasing and maintenance of vehicles. There is also a move towards greater use of technology for crime prevention, including surveillance cameras in public spaces and drones.

During this past financial year, a total of 10 358 new South African Police Service members were enlisted and this enhances the capacity of SAPS to fight crime.

The security cluster is taking action to deal with the scourge of illegal mining that destabilises and terrorises our communities and undermines our economy.

The Border Management Agency is now operational. This will help to improve the security of our borders and deal with illegal migration and the illicit flow of goods across our borders.



Our ultimate aim is to see a sustained reduction in violence against women and children and an overall decrease in levels of crime more broadly.

Strengthen Governance and Public Institutions

Our 2019 Manifesto emphasised the importance of active citizenry and the participation of the people in the process of transformation.

We have taken steps to strengthen the link between the people and state institutions, in all spheres and arms of government with the people.

South Africa has, since 1994, consistently held regular, free and fair elections. The ANC is very proud of this achievement and will continue to do everything in our power to protect the integrity of this democratic exercise.

We have also introduced measures to tackle corruption and patronage in the state, including through oversight visits by Parliament and Legislatures, spot checks in departments, investigations by our Chapter 9 institutions, measures such as lifestyle audits of public servants and stopping public servants from doing business with government.

In the 2019 Election Manifesto, we committed ourselves to:

“Re-building and renewing a capable and developmental state, re-organising the way government interacts with the people, rebuilding and improving local government, and improving public accountability and responsiveness to the needs and concerns of the people, and rebuilding and improving the local government system.”

Again, we can report progress in several areas.

We continue to promote participatory democracy and in-line with our 2019 Manifesto, we promote improved and regular interactions with communities through government izimbizo and other forms of feedback to the people.

Through the District Development Model, we are seeking to reconfigure the designing, planning and implementation of service delivery. We are seeking to change the relationship between the spheres of government, the communities they serve, and the stakeholders with whom they need to work.

We have amended legislation to improve accountability and reduce corruption at local government. We have adopted a framework for the professionalisation of the public service. We have strengthened the powers of the Auditor-General.

We have also strengthened the monitoring and evaluation function in government, including strengthening performance agreements and monitoring with Ministers and Premiers, as well as the monitoring and evaluation function in the ANC.

Build Unity and Embrace Diversity

Working to unite all South Africans to overcome the divisions of the past and build a country in which all belong, remains a key priority of the ANC. This becomes especially important given our history of apartheid, racism, patriarchy oppression and discrimination.

The ANC re-affirmed our commitment to fighting racism and sexism in our 2019 Manifesto and vowed to advance nation-building and social cohesion.

We continue to implement a range of measures to build social cohesion, some of which include increasingly introducing **indigenous languages** in public schools, with over 2,400 targeted in this term of government. This aims to foster greater understanding of different cultures between learners and break down cultural barriers.

We continue to celebrate arts and culture, our sporting activities, and holidays to express our diversity in our nation-building process. We welcome the advances, despite extreme odds, that are being made by women in sport and support their demands for equal pay for work of equal value.

The Prevention and Combating of Hate Crimes and Hate Speech Bill was revived in March 2023 and has been published for comment by the NCOP. This will broaden protections against hate speech and hate crimes in our society.

Building a Better Africa and A Better World

South Africa moved from being a pariah state prior to 1994, condemned for human rights violations, to being seen as a reliable and influential partner on our continent and in the world.

The key pillars of democratic South Africa's foreign policy include the promotion of human rights, peace and stability and the strengthening of trade and investment with other



countries.

Our foreign policy aims to promote the national interest based on the well-being, safety and prosperity of our citizens, whilst at the same time working to build a better Africa and a better world.

We advance these values in the United Nations and other multilateral forums, in the African Union and North-South relations, and in forums of the Global South particularly BRICS.

These issues have been priorities in our Manifesto since 1994 and found expression in our programmes in government. The two recent events of the BRICS Political Parties Plus Dialogue convened by the ANC and the BRICS Summit convened by government, attest to this.

South Africa has played an increasingly prominent role in finding solutions to international issues, including leading on the African Leaders' Peace Initiative to broker peace between Russia and Ukraine and ensure the supply of grain to countries on the African continent.

Guided by the Freedom Charter's call that "there shall be peace and friendship" South Africa continues to work tirelessly build increased collaboration, and work closely with partners across the world to entrench peace and democracy.

Comrades and compatriots, the South Africa of today is profoundly better than the South Africa under apartheid!

Our task is now to work together to ensure that the South Africa of tomorrow is better than today.

The ANC shall never retreat from the struggle for the fundamental transformation of South Africa to achieve full emancipation and free the potential of each person.

We recall the words of the first president of democratic South Africa, Isithwalandwe/ Seaparankoe Rolihlahla Nelson Mandela, when describing the task before us:

"After climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are more hills to climb."

Amandla!

Message of the Veterans' League to the Manifesto Review Rally

Comrade President and ANC leadership I bring you warm greetings from the president of the ANC, Cde Snuki Zikalala and the NEC of the ANCVL.

Comrades gathered here today when we were fighting apartheid we and many others across the world regarded apartheid as a crime against humanity. Part of that inhumanity was the requirement of all black South Africans to carry the dompas or passbook or risk arrest and deportation out of urban areas. The place in Johannesburg to sort out passbook matters was 80 Albert Street. On Wednesday evening this week, another crime against humanity was perpetuated in the same venue - Seventy-four people lost their lives in a torturous inferno in the same City where we are hosting this manifesto review today.

Comrade President, the further tragedy is that events like these, perhaps not on the same scale, are happening too often in our country. Let's remember our people who died in the slime dam disaster in the Free State, the flooding in KZN, gang violence in the Western Cape and everyday violence against women and children. Too

many South Africans are facing hardships on a daily basis.

The Veterans' League welcomes the decision of the ANC to consult our members and members of the public on what they would like to see in our manifesto. It is difficult in a manifesto to make promises to address complex problems that lead to tragedies such as what has happened in the Johannesburg CBD.

However what is in the control of the ANC is to deliver stronger, principled, decisive and competent leadership in the next elections. A leadership at the national and provincial level that will be better able to address complex problems such as that which faces the City of Johannesburg and many other municipalities in our country right now. Our leadership must be concerned about all the people in our country.

The VL hopes that once the ANC NEC has received feedback on the demands of the people, it will be able to match the content of what we promise in the manifesto with the skills and attributes of those that the ANC will nominate to serve the people in the national and provincial legislatures. Only

then will we be able to deliver to our people and improve the quality of life for all.

This matter was canvassed by the Veteran's League when we reviewed the state of our country and the tasks that lie ahead at our third national conference.

Our members bemoaned the fact that so many municipalities are unable to provide quality basic services to communities and that this has a direct impact on having a reliable revenue base. Veterans noted that residents frequently complain of incorrect billing systems and expensive municipal rates and tariffs.

We observed with horror the cholera outbreak which is suspected to be linked to poor quality of water service delivered by some municipalities and the widespread vandalism of municipal infrastructure. To add to these woes, veteran league members alleged that non-responsive and untruthful councillors add to the frustrations of our communities.

We spent a significant amount of time looking at the relationship between the strength of the ANC and its ability to govern.



We looked at the crises that confront many local governments and traced a link between this dysfunction and the performance of the party.

These are not nice things to hear Mr. President. But this is what Veterans' League members said at the Conference because they observe these things on the ground. We believe that it is better to speak out these truths, acknowledge them and commit to addressing them as the ANC moves forward.

The Veterans' League shall make an input into the manifesto review process. We will consider proposals that can bring hope to women, young people, children and the aged across the country. Proposals that show that the ANC cares about front-line service delivery, solving crimes, repairing roads, increasing electricity supply, improving health and education and importantly reducing unemployment and inequality.

As important as what we promise to do, is how we value the voices

and participation of the people of our country. People must be the agents of their own destiny. The manifesto should include proposals to strengthen the structures of people's participation from ward committees, community police forums and school governing bodies to the revival of civic associations and street committees. In this year that we commemorate the 40th anniversary of the United Democratic Front, we need to reignite the concepts of people's power and active citizenry.

Lastly, the Veterans' League also wants to see in the manifesto the pledges of those who get nominated to stand as public representatives and a commitment to holding public representatives to account.

We as the Veterans' League do not want to see any candidate who has committed a crime or is alleged to have committed a crime, especially relating to the plundering of tax payer's money on the election lists of the ANC. Nor do we want to see any candidate who is alleged to have abused women or children on

the lists. It is morally wrong and will lose us votes. We also believe that greater consideration to the Zondo Commission report and especially the recommendation relating to political parties and government.

As the VL we stand ready to support the ANC to improve service delivery and enhance active citizenry now. Elections are not won through campaigning alone. They are won through delivery to the people. And showing that we care. And we stand ready to campaign for the ANC.

Cde President, on behalf of the Veteran's League we congratulate you and the leadership of the ANC who have embarked on this consultative and participative process to develop the manifesto for the 2024 elections. This demonstrates the commitment of the ANC leadership to revive and renew the ANC and be ready for the 2024 elections ■

Amandla!

Now is the time to roll up our sleeves

COSATU Message of Support: ANC Elections Review Manifesto

Please accept the warm support today of COSATU and its Affiliates. We are pleased to be here with you in this important process. The Federation held its CEC this week where we resolved to support the ANC in the 2024 elections and to work flat out across all workplaces and communities to ensure the Alliance is victorious across the nation.

Our critics say the ANC and government have made many mistakes and they are correct. We have not been shy as COSATU to criticize our comrades when they fall short and to demand action against those who fail workers. But the ANC remains the only political party that has time and again stood with COSATU and workers.

The ANC is a contested terrain. Its successes from defeating the apartheid regime, to building our constitutional democracy, from the largest roll out of public services to the poor, to opening the economy to all, have been built with the sweat and blood of workers. We will not hand over these hard-won gains to political parties

who openly oppose the rights of workers and call for the mass privatization of the state.

It is the ANC led administrations which drafted our progressive Constitution and labour laws that defend the rights of workers including to form trade unions, to the delivery of water, housing, social security and many other public services to millions.

Some say do not tell us about the past and correctly ask what have you done now? It is this 6th administration that passed into law a National Minimum Wage raising the wages of 6 million farm, domestic, security, construction, retail and other workers.

No one could predict in 2019, fresh from the elections, that we would be compelled to go into a global lockdown to manage the devastating COVID-19 pandemic. This came at a cost of more than 100 000 lives and 2 million jobs. Despite these massive challenges, we were led decisively by President Ramaphosa.

We worked closely with government and business as labour at

Nedlac. Together we rolled out vaccines to over 60% of South Africans, mobilised millions to adopt the PPEs and other health and safety interventions.

We delivered a massive relief package releasing R64 billion from the Unemployment Insurance Fund to help nearly 6 million workers, billions in tax relief to help businesses avoid collapse and the SRD Grant helping 10 million unemployed.

These came with serious challenges of corruption, but they saved the nation from total collapse. It is this spirit of social compact between government, business and labour that is key to rebuilding the state, growing the economy, and reducing unemployment.

On Friday the Compensation of Occupational Injuries and Diseases Amendment Act came into effect extending cover to 900 000 domestic workers. The Employment Equity Amendment Act also came into effect requiring companies doing business with the state to comply with the Employment Equity and the National Minimum Wage Act.



As we head towards the last stretch of this administration, it is fundamental that we finish what we committed to in the 2019 manifesto. Parliament must pass the:

- National Health Insurance Bill to create quality and affordable healthcare for all.
- Expropriation Bill to accelerate access for land for the poor in all communities.
- Two pot pension reform bills to allow struggling workers early access to parts of their pension funds.
- Companies Amendment Bill to compel companies to disclose the wage gaps between the highest and lowest paid employees.
- Public Procurement Bill to tackle state corruption and boost localisation.

Whilst we applaud the progress

made, we must not hide the failures. We must remember the wise words of Amilcar Cabral, “tell no lies, claim no easy victories”.

Corruption remains a cancer throughout society, with our own comrades included. We welcome the progress made within the ANC and government to renew and to remove, expel, arrest, prosecute and convict those who have stolen so much. But more must be done. SARS must be empowered to conduct lifestyle audits, the headcount of the SAPS must be boosted, courts must be resourced to fast-track corruption cases.

State capture took a massive toll on the state. The crises at Eskom, Transnet, Prasa, the SABC, Post Office and municipalities have been devastating for workers. We welcome progress at Eskom, including its debt relief but more must be done to restore our SOEs and mu-

nicipalities to be the enablers of economic growth they once were. Interventions must take place in local government to ensure their employees are paid. All employers including the state must respect collective bargaining and our labour laws. We remain opposed to privatization and any attempt to weaken the state's role.

Some of our own supporters ask why they should vote for the ANC in 2024? They are right to be angry. We all are. But the working class simply does not have the luxury of giving up, of handing our country over to criminals. We have come too far to abandon the struggle for a better life for all. We have made too much progress and have too much still to do, to simply walk away.

What is needed now is to accelerate the cleansing of the ANC, rebuilding the state and our SOEs, finishing the remaining Bills at Parliament, increasing access to the SRD Grant and the Presidential Employment Programme for the poor and unemployed, arresting those who break the law, abuse women and steal from the poor.

COSATU is determined, working with the ANC and the SACP, to ensure not only do we have a bold and progressive 2024 manifesto to deliver that better life for all, and that we ensure the Alliance emerges with an absolute majority across the nation.

Now is the time to roll up our sleeves, unite the movement, fix the state, grow the economy, reduce unemployment and heal the nation. Amandla! ■

A Call for Renewed Vigilance and Compassion to Address Suicide Crisis

There are currently no national statistics regarding suicide incidents at schools; hence, there is a need to initiate a National Suicide Incident Report Protocol, *writes Angie Motshekga.**

As the basic education sector, we are grappling with a grim wave of suicides that has swept across our schools, taking the lives of our learners too soon. Defined as the act of deliberately ending one's own life, suicide has metamorphosed into a substantial public health issue with severe social, emotional, and economic repercussions.

Recent tragedies underscore the urgent need for collective intervention, including the loss of two girls from Tsakane Secondary School and other suicide attempts in various parts of Gauteng and beyond.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), over 700,000 people succumb to suicide annually, with a staggering 77% of these tragedies occurring in low and middle-income countries. Alarming, it is the fourth leading cause of death among young people aged 15 to 29 globally.

In South Africa, our youth are not immune to this crisis. The South African Depression and Anxiety Group



(SADAG) reveals that teen suicide is rising, particularly among females aged 15 to 19. As we commemorate World Suicide Prevention Day today, an initiative of the International Association for Suicide Prevention and the WHO, we advocate a whole-society and whole-government approach.

The triggers are varied and complex, from mental health challenges, past

traumas, and substance abuse to societal pressures, bullying, and personal crises. Although facing different risk factors, young men and women are equally vulnerable.

For those of you who may encounter a young person in distress, I urge you to listen without judgment, offer support without conditions, and seek professional assistance. Remember, suicide might not always have visible signs, but the differ-

ence you can make by being attentive and compassionate can be life-saving.

We envision a future where our schools are not just centres of academic excellence but also havens of mental and emotional wellness. To realise this vision, we must forge ahead with a proactive, collaborative, and informed approach to suicide prevention.

Our current governmental response to the epidemic is evolving. To spotlight the crisis and foster awareness, I have directed the psychosocial unit to initiate a National Suicide Incident Reporting Protocol. The data we will collect will be more than numbers; they will guide our strategies, interventions, and policies to combat this scourge. We must report on this issue nationally at least annually, akin to our approach to learner pregnancy.

I implore each one of us to play a pivotal role in nurturing the mental health of our learners. Let us foster open dialogues, facilitate access to specialised support, and educate all stakeholders on the critical warning signs of suicide.

To those who have braved suicide attempts or are grappling with suicidal thoughts, remember that your life has immense value. You are not alone in this ordeal, and various resources and individuals are on standby to assist you in this critical juncture of your life.

As the Minister of Basic Education, I must highlight the integral role of the existing policy in responding to the crisis, i.e. the Integrated School Health Programme (ISHP). It is a joint initiative with the Department of Basic Education supported by the Department of Health and

Social Development.

A key objective of the ISHP is to identify and address early health barriers to learning. It adopts a tiered approach, serving learners in various phases — from the foundation phase focusing on basic screening and health education to later phases addressing critical issues such as substance abuse and sexual and reproductive health education. The programme is structured to enhance not just the physical but also the mental well-being of our students, ensuring that they are supported at every critical juncture of their development.

Here is the truncated national response to suicide prevention.

In the Eastern Cape and Northern Cape, it is admittedly concerning that no formal campaigns have been undertaken so far. This beckons a call to action for stakeholders in these regions to actively mobilise resources and strategically map out awareness initiatives in the near future.

In contrast, Free State is prepping to raise awareness through a campaign scheduled for the second week of October 2023 in Motheo District.

Meanwhile, Gauteng has taken a commendable step forward, with plans set for a suicide prevention event from 11 to 16 September 2023. Furthermore, the province is enhancing its efforts by partnering with the South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG) for regular suicide prevention sessions facilitated through a Learner Support Agent (LSA) framework. This strategy leverages SADAG's experience in schools, showcasing the province's dedication to nurturing a supportive environment for

learners.

Furthermore, Kwa-Zulu Natal has initiated mental health campaigns inclusive of inputs on suicide prevention. Likewise, Limpopo has hatched plans to facilitate suicide awareness campaigns, preferably before the resumption of National Senior Certificate examinations in October 2023.

Mpumalanga stands out with its quarterly suicide prevention awareness campaigns, showcasing a sustained commitment to this critical issue.

The Western Cape has adopted a more personnel-intensive approach, with over 69 social workers and psychologists on board to address learners' mental health challenges. Though direct suicide campaigns have not been conducted, the province is undeniably making strides through training sessions on trauma, anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation.

In the face of these wide-ranging efforts, North West province, similar to a few others, has yet to launch awareness campaigns, signalling a need for a concerted approach and unified action.

It is clear that while several provinces are taking robust steps forward, others are trailing.

Together, as a society unified in purpose and resolve, let us stand firm against this silent yet potent adversary. Let us vow to safeguard the lives of our young ones, ensuring that they witness the beauty and potential that every new dawn brings ■

Motshekga is the Minister of Basic Education in South Africa

The face of Poverty in South Africa is Black

■ By **Sephoka David Sekgobela**

There are certain things that we should never allow ourselves to be silenced about. South Africans of goodwill across the colour bar, should not shy away from discussing in a civil and respectful manner hard-core issues – poverty, unemployment, inequality, race relations, etc., but should rather try harder to find solutions to the challenges related thereto.

Diagnosis of the issues at stake should enable us to identify the nature, causes and circumstances of the problems, and responses should enable perspectives and techniques to interrogate new ways of thinking about the identified problems. The said perspectives and techniques may help close the gaps, minimize inequalities and offer directions towards the resolution of poverty, unemployment, and inequality.

South Africa is emerging from an era of unequal opportunities due to unjust apartheid policies of the past, which afforded certain race groups more opportunities than others. These policies left a sad legacy, which resulted in the control of the economy in the hands of a few, mainly whites. The majority of blacks, Africans in particular, are

still trapped in the shackles of the so-called triple challenges – unemployment, poverty, and inequality. They are still economically marginalized and/or languishing outside the mainstream economy, in the periphery thereof. Due to the ill-gotten wealth by apartheid beneficiaries, the wealth gap between blacks and whites is drastically wide.

Apartheid education policies were systematically designed to ensure that white people received the best education possible while blacks got basic bare minimum education. The apartheid government deliberately offered Africans inferior education and decreased their access to high-level jobs. Skills, education and occupation of responsible and rewarding jobs were highly skewed in favour of certain group of persons. More than three decades after the dawn of democracy in South Africa, no meaningful and/or remarkable progress seems to have been made towards the attainment of total liberation of the majority of our people and the creation of a non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous South Africa.

The majority of Africans are still outside the mainstream economy, and those that are in the econom-

ic mainstream are the poorly paid unskilled and semi-skilled persons. Poverty, illiteracy, lack of skills, limited ownership of factors of production, typically coincide with being indigenous African in South Africa. Access to markets and capital are still major problems to the majority of the entrepreneurs from the disadvantaged background. Local markets tend to favour big and well-established white-owned businesses. The mainstream financial institutions are also not keen to finance SMMEs belonging to Africans.

South Africa has one of the world's most unequal patterns of distribution of income and wealth. In a global perspective, South Africa is the most unequal country in the world in terms of income disparity. Inequality results in deeply entrenched social and economic exclusions that inhibit sustainable human development and self-actualization. The combination of inequality with poverty, high unemployment and slow economic recovery sets challenges throughout the entire society, giving rise to other social ills such as crime.

Almost thirty years later into democracy, South Africa is still grappling with the so-called triple chal-



lenges – poverty, unemployment, and inequality. Thirty years after the attainment of democracy, the inequality gap does not seem to be closing, but rather continuing unabated, and widening even further. The rich goes richer, whilst the poor get poorer. However, not all these challenges seem to bother others, especially apartheid beneficiaries. The pain of living under apartheid is unbearable.

It is indeed true that those Africans who have lived under apartheid are still traumatized. There are those who have personally experienced the pangs of apartheid brutality. Is it not being insensitive to be expected to forget about the pain inflicted on our forebears that continues to linger on presently in us, and likely to continue with our children and grandchildren? Why should Africans be expected to just forget and “move on”, as if nothing happened in the past? For as long as the effects of apartheid injustices persist, Africans should

not keep quiet, but should instead increase the volume, to the annoyance of those who are still in possession of the looted booths from apartheid system. Theft is a continuous offence.

Without knowing and understanding the effects of the legacy of apartheid, it would be impossible to understand certain behaviours and phenomena as they unfold in our country today. Most people are bitter that apartheid beneficiaries are defending their ill-gotten gains from apartheid and colonialism. They are continuing to challenge every transformation initiative to redress the imbalances of the past, and would like to reverse all post-apartheid democratic gains through the courts. To their advantage, they are mostly winning their legal battles against the government, when the government tries to address the socio-economic imbalances of the past.

On 20 August 2023, Mdumise-

ni Ntuli, ANC’s Head of Elections and Campaign, and NEC member, penned down, in his personal capacity, an interesting article online, “Right-Wing Denialism of Race and Racism is Disingenuous”. He retorts that, “This is why we must talk about South Africa’s race-based poverty, inequality and unemployment — generally referred to as the “triple challenge””.

These are indeed some of the things that South Africans across the spectrum should be seriously discussing, instead of being distracted with frivolous court actions by the right-wing minorities for trivialities such as singing “Kill the Boer” slogan, because everyone knows that no one would be killed as a result of the singing of a struggle song. Sideshows should not distract the government. Winston Churchill once said, “You will never reach your destination if you always have to stop and throw stones at every dog that barks at you”.



Politically, 1994 was indeed a watershed moment when South Africa's first democratic government was elected with a mandate to redress the inequalities and imbalances of the past in every sphere - political, social and economic. It is, however, a fallacy that apartheid ended and therefore racism, when South Africa became a non-racial democracy in 1994. Apartheid beneficiaries would like to suppress the discussion on racism due to stereotyped prejudices of the past. Whether they agree or not, white people benefited greatly from apartheid in more ways than one.

Despite democracy, most South Africans continue to experience socio-economic hardships in almost all fronts. The rainbow in Desmond Tutu's "Rainbow Nation" is fading away, as racism seems to be rearing its ugly head once again. The Madiba Magic euphoria has subsided, and reality has dawned that South Africa is still a divided nation. It is former President Thabo Mbeki, who declared that "South Africa is

a country of two nations - the one white and relatively prosperous and has ready access to a developed economic, physical, educational, communication and other infrastructure, and the other, and larger nation, is black and poor, and lives under conditions of a grossly underdeveloped economic, physical, educational, communication and other infrastructure".

There are things that should have been done in earnest when time permitted and tangible results attained, but were not done – land restitution, transformation of the economy, etc. For instance, when it comes to land ownership, the failures of the government's land restitution initiatives are more glaring. Land is by far the most important benefit white South Africans gained from colonialism and apartheid. Despite the fact that they only make up 8,4% of the population, white people own over 70% of the land in this country. Land is the source of wealth, and land ownership has ultimately given white people eco-

nomie dominance over black people, because they own the bulk of fertile agricultural and mining land, with Africans left with "nothing more than dry, dusty and rocky fields of sand and mountains".

The 1994 democratic breakthrough provided the ANC as a liberation movement with the opportunity to pursue economic policies, which holds inclusive growth, development and wealth distribution at its core in order to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor within the country. The government had the opportunity to redistribute wealth, boost the SMME sector, and have sustainable black economic empowerment implications. Small businesses, particularly those owned and operated by blacks, are supposed to form an integral part of the national economy and economic policy. The promotion of SMMEs is being regarded as one of the key strategies to encourage sustainable growth in the economy. SMMEs are a source of job creation in most successful economies of the world.

What is required is for the government to create an enabling environment within which SMMEs could gain access to capital in order to thrive and create more jobs, and masses could reduce reliance on government grants. The government should break the dependency syndrome in terms of which the people are comfortable in their poverty, and expecting the government to provide for them. The government should be actively and/or directly involved in facilitating the immediate entry of suitably qualified and deserving African entrepreneurs into the economic mainstream of the country through procurement reforms and other related activities ■

Dear President Ramaphosa

■ By **George Magoma**

I extol the ANC's candid admission of its failures, and hiccups experienced during its course of leadership.

The review of the 2019 promises of working together with communities and a quest for a better life for all is one of the rare yet inevitable steps that no other party in the history of politics has done.

Admittedly, in the course of leadership and governance, the blurred line between the party and the state will become too much obvious when the blindness of society becomes too obvious to expose how much the ANC, its led government have dismally failed to live to a dream of a better life.

Ask me, the 2019 promise of a better was a pipe dream.

We know of the catastrophic effects of the 2019 coronavirus, the inflationary global economy, climate change, global conflict, rampant corruption, illegal mining, porous borders, the scourge of gender based violence, endemic crime, abject poverty, an afflicted nation-



al grid, high unemployment and a weak local government. The list is endless. All these are biting on the nation.

All these problems are not new. They are on your desk. The leadership role of the ANC in society is waning, drifting far away from society on account of the factors mentioned, the psyche of the nation that is at lowest ebb, sinking with it deeply the hopes of society. This is attested by low voter apathy and the declining fortunes of the ANC at the ballot.

I hope that this open letter resonates with what society perceives of the ANC and its leaders. And reflective of the soul and poignant

mood of the nation.

In conversing with you through this painful letter I am not doing so from the chains of an armchair of criticism but activism motivated by your organizational commitment of working together with communities from a point of a contract with communities towards a better life for all.

I've traversed this path with the ANC since my first vote in 1994 and perennially ever since. It's a path of significant strides eclipsed by own goals. And surmountable weaknesses within. These own goals have far-reaching implications on the National Democratic Revolution and a promise of a better life, the Free-

dom Charter, and the aspirations of society.

We've listened and heard your frank admissions of the 2019 Elections Manifesto Review. This is highly extolled but should not be rhetorical. You're crisscrossing the country to reconnect with communities as part of renewal and to unite the nation on a common agenda of reconstruction and development, and a quest for a united, non-sexist, non-racial democratic society based on equality and justice.

President, the mood on the ground needs upliftment, hope and leadership.

Yes, your organization has done a lot in many areas. We now enter a perilous space in the history of this country. The glue that unite us is disintegrating. Instead of leadership, power is now a coveted high price adorned with tiaras of opulence and a new status of elitism, with all gluttonous eyes on the feeding trough when the masses are hungry, wallowing in despondency.

There's an emergence of political parties not as an alternative to the ANC but leadership by all means necessary. Politics is now a vocation. There's a new form of gangsterism against the ANC by the coterie of the rich, parasitically rising on the dais of populism and falsehoods as if the ANC is the enemy of the people. These acts of opportunism are under the hand of the corrupt within the ANC.

We appreciate the ANC's 2024 candidate selection criteria, the renewal principles of ethical leadership, and most importantly, a culture

of urgency and servanthood. On Sunday the 3rd September on the review of the 2019 election manifesto I left the Dobsonville Stadium convinced that the ANC is a people's organization. I've reconnected with the ANC. The question is, has society reconnected with the ANC?

Let me advise you. Rise and say, we apologize, we have learned from our mistakes. Looking into the future, the irritation of the eyelashes that blind us of yesterday, tomorrow's vista of a nation in harmony and opportunities as envisioned by the Constitution of the country is expressed in the Freedom Charter and the foundational principles of the ANC and the essence underpinning its existence.

As a people, we're enemies to the nation, with threats of boycotting the ballot to the detriment of civil responsibility and allegiance to the nation. This will be suicidal and regressive, for the revolution would be obsolete.

We've seen your extraordinary leadership during the coronavirus pandemic, the National Student Financial Aid Scheme, economic policies, Employment Equity, rebuilding of State Owned Enterprises, improving ESKOM, social relief, the yearn for a peaceful and better Africa and a better world through the BRICS Summit and many other achievements.

Through BRICS, we've asserted, cemented and repositioned our stature in the global community. Admittedly, we are a new force that drives change towards a new global order.

In closing, please rise decisively to

extricate us from the morass. Ernesto Che Guevara once observed, "We cannot be sure of having something to live for unless we are willing to die for it." Regardless of the mission drift, the masses of our people still live for the ANC.

Borrowing from President Samora Machel of Frelimo the NDR has reached "the hump of a camel. It needs to replenish to cross over & survive". It is equally possible, that as it replenishes itself to cross over, it may not survive. Nature is not in a state of rest, stagnation, immobility.

For me, we must rise and take collective responsibility for the past and the future. Renewal should lead to confrontation of the weakness both the ANC and the state. In many ways, like the Sandanista in Nicaragua, we are learning that "Our revolution, also creates conditions, for counter revolution".

As a nation, in our fit of hopelessness, we don't vent my ire by burning and destroy state poverty, play a racial card, commit crime or anything inimical to the country and its future, hence this letter.

In the fight against inequality and injustice and in raising our consciousness of our role and activism in society, George Orwell says "Once they become conscious they will never rebel, and until after they have rebelled they cannot become conscious".

The nation needs your response. Panic not in the formulation of your response. We will vote for the ANC in the 2024 National General elections. We just need more confidence and assurance ■

The BRICS Business Women Alliance Summit 2023 culminates in an inaugural eThekweni Declaration

■ By **Veronica Motloutsi**

During the significant women's Month, August 2023, the Chairpersons of the BRICS Business Women Alliance, led by its 2023 Global Chair, Ms Lebogang Zulu, convened in eThekweni (Durban), at the inaugural BRICS WBA Africa Trade Conference and adopted the Declaration designed to promote economic advancement in global value chains across BRICS nations. An annual report was developed and handed over to the Heads of States at the BRICS Summit in Sandton.

The Inaugural BRICS WBA Declaration recognizes the significant role of women as architects of society, creators of prosperity, and custodians of culture. It recognizes the imperative of integrating female perspectives, experiences, acumen, and considerations into the policy formulation mechanisms of the BRICS framework of cooperation. Furthermore, the declaration highlights the critical importance of fostering collaborative endeav-

ors among governmental bodies, private sector institutions, and other key stakeholders. This concerted approach is aimed at propelling the advancement of gender parity and the augmentation of women's empowerment. "Our journey is more than the mere pursuit of economic parity; it is a movement to transform societies, economies, and mindsets. It is about harnessing our collective strength to redefine what is achievable, and to inspire the generations that follow us," emphasized the 2023 Global Chairperson of BRICS Women's Business Alliance, Ms. Lebogang Zulu.

"The South African Chapter takes pride in presenting for the very first time in the history of the BRICS Summit declarations the inclusion and recognition of the BRICS Women Development eThekweni Declaration. Our shared vision of driving meaningful impact has materialised through a series of visionary initiatives that have effectively facilitated connectivity, synergistic collabora-

tion, and substantial transformation among the dynamic cohort of enterprising women across our BRICS nations." states Lebogang Zulu

A set of nine goals were set to be achieved which are:-

1. Recognizing equality between men and women needs
2. Harnessing the Economic Gains of equality between men and women
3. BRICS in a Changing Political Economy and a Multipolar World
4. Revolutionary Decisions and Investments for Inclusive and Thriving Economies
5. Promoting Equality and Women's Empowerment
6. Enhancing Economic Opportunities for Women
7. Strengthening the Health and Well-being of Women
8. Advancing Digital Inclusion and Connectivity for Women
9. Strengthening Cooperation and Knowledge Exchange



Read the full declaration.

The BRICS-Africa Women Business Alliance Trade Conference 2023 received support from the Premier of KwaZulu Natal, Ms. Nomusa Dube Ncube, Her Royalty Majesty Queen kaMayisela Zulu, Minister of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, Minister of Small Business Development. Ms. Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams and many senior leaders from government and private sector.

Significant accomplishments emerged over the two-day summit including the launch of the Agrowex e-commerce platform, an agriculture value chain integrator that will unite women, smallholder, and subsistence farmers with buyers, funders, investors,

technologies, and equipment.

The BRICS Global Television Network (BGTN) was launched particularly the MPower TV series geared towards showcasing women in trade, corporate, politics, arts, culture, news, etc. Telling our BRICS stories to the

world, with our narrative.

Unveiling of the KZN Intellibiz platform project, pulsating business intelligence for progress. The platform will offer a cutting-edge business intelligence cloud platform that empowers informed decision-making for economic advancement. This unified solution collects, analyses, and visualizes data spanning from micro to large enterprises in KwaZulu-Natal, by enabling

evidence-based policies, attracting investments, and fostering sustainability. The signing of strategic partnerships between women-led enterprises and corporate entities across BRICS countries valued at 48 billion Rands, with the potential to create around 120,000 new jobs ■


ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Veronica Motloutsi is the Founder and CEO of SmartDigital Solutions. She is a seasoned Digital Transformation Executive and Business Woman. She has extensive ICT experience and served at a senior level at different public and private companies for the last 23 years. She is the Chairperson of the BRICS Business Women Alliance – Innovative Development

Towards a two-alliance system: Umlungu versus iKhongolose

A conservative group will be overshadowed by a consolidated political centre, new surveys suggest

“The only poll that counts is the poll on election day” is a phrase used by political parties across the spectrum — be they ahead in the polls or not.

ne of SA's leading pollsters, Dawie Scholtz, has traditionally preferred analysing the actual voting choices people have made, especially in by-elections and local government elections, to indicate directions the electorate may be going in.

Polling agency Ipsos released its latest results on Tuesday, and over the next few months SA will be subjected to several such opinion polls.

The future configuration of SA politics will undoubtedly be consolidated at the 2024 elections. We will have on one hand a conservative alliance containing elements that favour the death penalty, are xenophobic and homophobic. Cloaked in healthy doses of an undefined liberalism, it will argue against affirmative action and BEE in favour of an unfettered free market in which



merit should be the only measure of a person, without due consideration of circumstance — current or historical.

That this alliance would have at its core the majority of the umlungu — in the broadest sense of that word — should come as no surprise. Writ-



ing in *The Conversation*, academic Andiswa Mvanyashe explained that the word doesn't refer to whites only; it is also an indication of privileged socioeconomic positions, which includes those who have become disaffected by the affairs and missteps of the governing party.

While this lurch to the right wing, umlungu alliance consolidates, there will also be a consolidation of the political centre that includes parties and organisations that have ensured the inscription of the most enlightened elements of the constitution, defended the independence of the judiciary and generally the democratic ethos of the new SA. The black majority is the base of this configuration, having seen their lives and life opportunities improve fundamentally since 1994.

Pernicious variation

When this *ikhongolose* (a colloquial term for the ANC) alliance does bet-

ter than expected at the polls, it will be attributed to an unthinking bedrock of poor, black people. "Voting fodder" of an "immature democracy" in which the majority doesn't appreciate pluralism, are the terms that have been used in the past to describe such behaviour.

A particularly pernicious variation of this tale is that life was better under apartheid. All parties should distance themselves from such a narrative because it is dangerous. It speaks to a return to a period of repression and control, not just of black people but also white women, LGBTQIA+ communities and individuals.

It speaks of brutal assassinations by the state or so-called third forces, the death penalty and international sporting and cultural isolation. It is the kind of narrative that coups are based on, and that tyrants use to justify the suspension of hard-

fought constitutional rights and degrade the quality of democratic systems.

On the other side of the coin, the same argument has been made by the populist radical economic transformation faction of the ANC, which claims democracy has failed black South Africans. Some of them continue trying to erode the foundations of the covenant South Africans have committed to, as captured in our democratic constitution, through actions such as attacking the judiciary for being "anti-transformation".

Undoubtedly, there are elements further to the right and to the left of these two configurations. I trust the SA majority to marginalise them to the dustbins of history.


Sometimes a view from afar is helpful for us getting a perspective on things. In his recently published 'Until We Have Won Our Liberty: SA After Apartheid', MIT political scientist Evan Lieberman has described the country as a case of "dignified development", arguing that the "the biggest misconception is that black-run government has been a failure ... I find much more success than is routinely acknowledged".

The 2024 elections are already being touted as the most historic for our still young democracy. No eligible voter can afford not to vote, otherwise you will be stuck with a relatively permanent political arrangement that is not to your liking

Abba Omar is director of operations at the Mapungubwe Institute.

Untying ourselves from ethical entanglements

■ By **Busani Ngcaweni**

 ur daily existence on the perilous streets of Jozi, the so-called City of Gold, is a near-encounter with moral temptations and ethical dilemmas of unimaginable proportions.

Beguiling and implacable women aka slay queens; sports cars; Diamond Walk shopping; crème brûlée; French bubbly; single malts; bundles of Madibas; eWallets and withdrawals; 5-star restaurants; private rooms; dingy bars; chauffeurs and bodyguards; bouncers; private chefs; butlers; blue lights; debauchery; social-media likes and trends; penthouses; brothels; botox; liposuction; thugs (tsotsis); fake pastors and sangomas; VVIP entrances, ... you name them, they are copious.

Our bodies have been turned into mannequins and billboards of grotesque French and Italian brands, which have come to symbolise our false sense of economic progress and success. The relentless pursuit of power, fame and fortune in all its manifestations is propelled by the ubiquitous spirit of our time; of binge-buying and inordinate gluttony that is not attuned to our financial reality ('Thixo ndicela undincede ungangithathi ndisase mcinci. Yho! kumnandi ukuphila' - Thebe). For the poor, though, survival means to embrace Hobson's choice, and pray for manna to debouch from the sky ('Kulungile baba').



Mama, life is something else here in Jozi. A friend has a fiancé today, tomorrow he's in fight with his boyfriend who participated in some orgie with the guys from a fringe Piano group. Apparently they all have paid lobola for their girlfriends. It's one of entanglements of Jozi.

How then do we build an ethical bureaucracy in this unscrupulous ecosystem where coexistence with moral temptations and ethical dilemmas define our existence? How do we untangle ourselves from the

suffocating web of coloniality that grossly undermines service delivery in favour of a life of opulence?

Will training a million public servants on ethics and Batho Pele principles reduce fraud and corruption when the scourges are deeply embedded in a society that is increasingly upholding rampant neo-liberal capitalism? I could almost hear someone remonstrating that 'ethics training' did not save some of the proponents of State Capture. Why?

It is easier said than done, someone retorts. Of course, we are all humans, yet our outlook on life is shaped by the society from which we draw our values and aspirations. We have eyes, feelings and dreams. While some public servants render a satisfactory service in line with the expectations of their responsibilities, the avaricious ones have lost their sense of official duty by being entangled in the national culture of indifference and greed. The state is a side hustle, convenient conveyor belt of access to resources.

Just as most monogamists remain so out of fear of divorce, perhaps our salvation is the fear of ethical entanglement that could unleash disciplinary processes that inevitably result in a dismissal, or worse, we fear appearing in the front pages of Sunday Newspapers. What will our mothers say? Imagine the embarrassment our children will face on Monday at the school's



playground!

If it wasn't for that, hundreds more will be inside the confectionery,

drinking down the icing with vanilla.

History may not absolve us after all, for we are keeping to the speed limit sorely out of fear and not necessarily as a moral obligation to uphold the law as law-abiding citizens. No!

As the Inanda Proverb goes: the world was peaceful until humans discovered the monetary value of beauty. And the reach for beauty is not always within our means. This is the era of flesh for cash, where the body consumes and is consumed. It is almost like a dog-eat-dog world, where capitalism and its excesses run deep in society's DNA. We're all just puppets in it, where choreographers of corrupt enjoy the views from their Sandton offices. As soon as trouble brews, they get into their private jets and jets away into their villas in Europe. Back home the semi-urbanites in the newsroom gives colour to malfeasance: it is black■



History written in Blood Sweat and Sacrifice

■ By **Thulani Kunene**

This past Sunday the ANC went to the people, in a sense of reflection.

Coincidentally on the historical day of the 3rd September 1984,

This is a valiant account of the day. And how it changed the course of history.

The people of the Vaal, across various sectors of society, will be remembering and commemorating 38th anniversary of the Vaal Uprisings which took place on the 3rd of September 1984.

This day was not a flash in the pan or spontaneous action by agitated communities, but it was a day deeply rooted in the call made by the ANC in its 8 January 1983 NEC statement.

In the ongoing and sustained political pressure against the racist Pretoria regime, the ANC called for the strengthening of the People's offensive power.

In the statement, President OR Tambo said... "in the face of this determined enemy counter-offensive, we must hit back with all our strength, ensuring that the millions of our people are engaged in struggle.

To increase our offensive power:

- We must organise the people



into strong mass democratic organisation

- We must organise all revolutionaries into underground units of the ANC
- We must organise all combatants into units of Umkhonto we Sizwe
- We must organise all democratic forces into one front for national liberation.

Large sections of our people remain unorganised. We should not allow this situation to continue any longer. For us to achieve victory, it is essential that the masses of our

people engage in struggle as a conscious and united force.

That requires that these masses must have their own democratic organisations to mobilise and guide them and through which they can themselves make their own point of view heard".

The White minority regime, in an effort to try to patronize and divide Black people consistent with apartheid doctrine, wrote a new constitution in 1983.

They did this in an attempt to al-

lay criticism against apartheid and to set a new course by reforming apartheid through a creation of Tricameral Parliament.

This system of government allowed Coloured and Indian South Africans some puppet and powerless representation while Black people were still not allowed to participate in the government.

In response to this call, a popular front called the United Democratic Front (UDF) was launched on the 20th of August 1983 as a broad non-racial front.

It comprised of more than 400 public organizations including trade unions, students, women's and church organizations.

In October of 1983, Vaal Civic Association, an affiliate of the UDF, was formed to provide an organized voice and active resistance to these reforms which included Black Local Authorities which were "elected" in November 1983.

In late July 1984, The Lekoa and Evaton Town Councils announced a new rent increase which the Vaal Civic Association (VCA) and Congress of South African Students (COSAS), Evaton Ratepayers Association and churches opposed.

The VCA, COSAS and other local community structures, organised an anti-rent increase campaign. VCA issued press statements against that increase, distributed pamphlets, and held meetings in all the affected areas: Boipatong, Sebokeng, Evaton Small Farms, Sharpeville, and Bophelong.

The Vaal Civic Association was led by Rev Lord McCamel, Esau Ralitsela, Mike Kgaka, Thabiso Ratsoemo, Dan Matlole, David Mphuthi, Naphtali Nkopane, Lekgwakgwa Tebello Ramakgula, Sello Hlanyane, Bavumile Vilakazi, Sekwati Mokoe-

na, Smash Mokoena from Ratepayers Association and Evaton/Small Farms freehold stand owners.

There were community activists and the youth of the time Lazarus More, Simon Vilakazi, Gcina Malindi, Simon Nkoli as well as COSAS leaders Mkhambi Malindi, Jerry Thlopane, Jacob Masangane, Frans Masinga, Thabo Bokwa and Bheki Mbongo and the church was involved with Rev Tebogo Moselane, Rev Koao, Father Patrick Noonan, and Vaal Organization of Women with Dorcas Ralitsela, Isabella Connie Lethlake and Elizabeth Letanta.

The Sebokeng gathering decided to meet on Monday September 3 at the Roman Catholic Church in Small Farms. From there, people would march to the administration offices to express their dissatisfaction.

The Anti-Rent Committee held meetings at the Sharpeville Anglican Church every Sunday between August 12 and September 2.

On August 29, hundreds of Bophelong residents met with the community councillors. Angry residents of Bophelong demanded that the mayor answer their questions about the rent increase and a new deposit for electricity.

But the police switched off the hall lights where the meeting was held, escorted the councillors out of the building, and then fired teargas at the residents in the hall. Later that night police shot at youths in Bophelong. Violence between residents and police continued over the next few days in the township and by 2nd of September, three youths were killed.

Popular mobilisation in the Vaal had reached its peak and resistance to apartheid broadly and

rent increase as a proxy of a broader struggle, by community came to a head.

The simmering tensions were escalating in all the townships of the Vaal but still the authorities refused to listen and would not stop the rent increase.

Instead, they warned the church leaders in the Vaal that the black local authority would take away their churches' "site permit" if they continued to hold political meetings in church buildings (the town council issued permits to allow a church to meet on a township plot).

On that fateful day of September 3, 1984, police stopped marchers from Sharpeville and Boipatong from leaving for Sebokeng and they opened fire. The people fought back and violence spread across the Witwatersrand up to national level.

Violence escalated and spread throughout the whole of Vaal Triangle as vestiges and symbols of Black Authorities Administration were attacked including beerhalls, homes and businesses belonging to councillors and police.

There was mass arrest of many residents and leaders of VCA, Rates payers Association, church leaders and COSAS leaders.

During the same period, hundreds of people went to hospitals for treatment of bullet wounds and other injuries linked to events of 3rd of September 1984, while others who were shot or injured did not go for treatment.

In the following five (5) to nine (9) days, scores of people were dead, and the estimated count was around 48 people killed and 90% of them, died directly through the

hands of the police action.

After September 3, almost all those leaders of VCA, Ratespayers Association, church and COSAS leaders associated with organising the rent protest were arrested or went into hiding away from the Vaal.

By the end of the year, almost 150 people had been killed in political violence, which increased to 600 by September 1985 as the revolts spread across the country and the government declared a State of Emergency.

The government was later to charge several UDF and community activists for this violence in the longest political trial in the history of South Africa, in the now infamous Delmas Treason Trial.

Vaal Triangle and indeed, South Africa was never the same since that fateful day of September 3 of 1984. Apartheid regime knew no peace nor stability but experienced daily acceleration of struggle to sustain crisis of apartheid by a united people and forces of change in South Africa.

The ANC from exile, continued to provide political and organizational direction to the masses in South Africa on the next steps to deepen contradictions which effectively rendered South Africa ungovernable and apartheid system unworkable.

In the 8 January 1985 NEC Statement, President OR Tambo said

“For we are addressing a fighting people, who, during a particularly ferocious offensive by the enemy, have accumulated a record of resistance and struggle worthy of our great heroes and martyrs, a people who not only have the resilience that defies defeat, but also the ca-



capacity to rise to the challenge of the hour and move on to the offensive, a people with a glorious future to fight for, a tough and brutal enemy to face, an assured and epoch-making victory to win.

1984 saw us take bold steps forward on the road to freedom. The path we have traversed was fraught with numerous dangers and hazards. But, despite these, it is clear at the end of 1984 – the Year of the Women – that we have succeeded in shifting the balance of power within our country in favour of the forces fighting for national liberation, social justice and genuine peace in Southern Africa”

In the aftermath of September 3rd of 1984 and the resultant upsurge of violent and non-violent resistance to the racially exclusive system of apartheid – the government, under PW Botha, declared a partial State of Emergency.

The regime declared State of Emergency on 20 July of 1985, which was last declared in the aftermath of 1960 Sharpeville massacre and banning of the ANC, PAC and allied organizations. This time around, on August 20 of 1985 it banned COSAS which had the most visibility including a role in the destabilization of the Apartheid regime.

The 1985 State of Emergency basically built on the 1960 repression but also signaled the beginning of the end of apartheid society and governance in South Africa.

This moment of draconian law enforcement against the majority Black, Coloured and Indian population of South Africa proved a focal moment in the struggle against apartheid. International condemnation of the apartheid regime and other internal factors contributed to the rejuvenation of the grassroots resistance inside and outside the country.

The apartheid government’s use of extreme force as a means of governance was justified in ways that ranged from the belief of an imminent external Communist (Die Rooi Gevaar) attack; to ‘maintaining peace and order’ which was threatened by the increasingly ‘ungovernable’ nature of the Black townships and radical organisations which were gaining traction on the ground.

The partial State of Emergency initially applied to 36 magisterial districts in the Eastern Cape and the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging area.

However, with continued resistance throughout the country, the Botha regime, in an effort to try to quell burning fires all over the country and resistance to apartheid, upgraded the State of Emergency on 12 June of 1986.

The apartheid government’s resorting to emergency measures was read, by many, as an act of desperation as the political and social climate of South Africa revealed that White-minority rule was not in a secure or popular long-term position.

In attempting to regain absolute control, the apartheid regime enforced the State of Emergency in order to mediate and micromanage the following: media coverage, curfew times and movement for citizens, individual and group organisational capacity.

The apartheid government's complete clamp-down of citizens' rights resulted in the numerous house arrests of influential anti-apartheid leaders, and the detaining of 2346 people under the Internal Security Act, in attempts of ending internal resistance to the state's power.

It was under the State of Emergency, the unmitigated violence by the regime worsened and apartheid government militarised as well as heavily policed all aspects of South African society - which heightened feelings of mutual tension, paranoia and distrust between South Africans.

Though effective in disrupting several anti-apartheid organisations by arresting a number of their leaders, the State of Emergency was not effective in 'governing the ungovernable' townships, as violent protests and fierce resistance continued against the state.

The Botha regime could only prolong its stay and fight back through State of Emergencies of 1985, 1986 to 1987 and full one in 1988 which effectively banned UDF and COSATU.

The grassroots mass mobilisation and escalation of armed conflict inflicted by uMkhonto We Sizwe manifested by the defeat in Angola at the battle of Cuito Cuanavale by 1988, could not be contained and even White young men refused to honour calls for military conscription.

The only option that became available to the Botha regime was to open up negotiations with the liberation movement and the clearest signal was the release of the Rivonia Trialists starting with Cde Dennis Goldberg in 1985, followed by Cde Govan Mbeki in 1987 and Sisulu, Kathrada, Mkwazi, Mlangeni, Mhlaba, Motswaledi, and Mpetsha released in 1989.

September 3 of 1984 should be honoured, remembered and celebrated as the final impetus as well as onslaught that rendered South Africa ungovernable and apartheid system unworkable as called upon by President OR Tambo.

Political trials of sons and daughters of the Vaal attracted international attention and interest to the situation of apartheid. This included the death sentence passed on Cde David "Speech" Moisi and his co-accused which in 1983 was commuted to life imprisonment.

The Sharpeville 6 death sentence in December 1985 was yet another price paid by heroes and heroines of the Vaal which focused spotlight on the monstrosity of apartheid regime. So was the Boipatong massacre which equally received international condemnation.

The municipalities, in partnership with Vaal Heritage Activists Foundation and Khulumani Support Group, Provincial Government and National Department of Sports, Arts and Culture and their entities must document and package these series of events from the Vaal, which profoundly delivered Freedom in South Africa. The ANC REC has started a project to tell the stories of many activities and heroines of the Vaal because we believe that our history ought to be properly captured so that we

inspire many more people to serve and sacrifice for the benefit of our country.

It is often said the beginning of wisdom is by calling things with their right names. A good starting point is that, as the people of the Vaal, we must begin to call Delmas Treason Trial, Vaal Treason Trial held in Delmas town.

This we must do to appropriate the honour, sacrifice and recognition September 3 of 1984 and role of Vaal Civic Association and COSAS played, not only in the Vaal, but in the national and international politics which resulted in the downfall of the apartheid regime.

As we honour and remember heroes and heroines of the Vaal, both those alive and those who passed on, we must do so in the context of our adopted clarion call and theme of the ANC in Sedibeng which is Unity for Renewal and Development.

The levels of service delivery by municipalities must improve, Provincial and National Governments must work with private sector to stimulate investment and economic revitalization of the Vaal to create jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities.

We want Vaal to be a home of integrated development and service delivery as imagined by the heroes and heroines when they rejected Black Local Authorities Act and the Tricameral system.

Renewal and Development of Vaal will be the best gift that we can give to the people who sacrificed and died for our freedom ■

***Thulani Kunene: Sedibeng ANC Regional Chairperson**

Obituary of Ambassador Sophonia (Zeph) Makgetla

Ambassador Zeph Makgetla, fondly known as Zeph, was born in Thaba Nchu in 1945. He got politically conscious very early in his life such that he was keen to join MK after its formation in December 1961. He left South Africa in December 1963 to join the ANC and spent the next 27 years in exile.

Between 1964 and 1975, Zeph worked in a variety of political, diplomatic and military positions for the ANC, mostly in Tanzania, Zambia and the then-Soviet Union. He spent many years training in MK camps in Africa, Odesa and Crimea. He qualified and specialised as a military engineer and upon returning to Tanzania in late 1964, they were housed at the first MK camp in Kongwa, in the region of Dodoma. MK shared that space with comrades from SWAPO, FRELIMO, MPLA and ZAPU.

Zeph was in the group that was recommended to leave for Zambia where he used his training as a military engineer to help demine roads in Zambia that had been mined by the then Rhodesian regime.



Zeph met his wife, Neva Makgetla, while working at the Liberation Centre in Lusaka in 1973. They married in 1977 and have two children,

Anita and Tumi.

Between 1975 and 1982, Zeph obtained a Master's degree in cinematography at the Film and Television



Academy (now known as the Konrad Wolf Film University of Babelsberg) in the then-GDR. When he returned to Zambia, he worked as deputy head of the ANC's film unit while Neva lectured at the University of Zambia.

Zeph had actually joined other Luthuli Detachment members who studied cinematography in the United Kingdom, like Wilson Msweleli (General Zolile Nqose) Rtd and Mackay Mgudlwa. They formed the original ANC Film Unit.

Later they were joined by younger cadres belonging to the June 16 generation, like videographers, Barto la Guma, Page Boikanyo, Stan Modise and Karel Maseko. At this stage, the Film Unit was expanded and renamed Film & Video Unit, under the auspices of the Department of Information and Publicity (DIP). The DIP was one of the largest departments of the ANC in exile, with offices in several African countries

and Europe. It consisted of the following components: research film and video unit, photographic unit, radio freedom, publications, printers and dispatch. Zeph, with his experience, was crucial for this expansion.

During this period, his flat was also used as a safe house by the movement. In 1986, because the flat had been compromised and after consultation with the ANC leadership, Zeph left for the United States. He worked as assistant cameraman in Hollywood, amongst others on *Fabulous Baker Boys* (starring Michelle Pfeiffer and Jeff Bridges) and *White Palace* with Susan Sarandon. Between films, he worked as deputy representative for the ANC in Washington, D.C., at the request of the then Chief Representative, Lindiwe Mabuza.

In February 1991, Zeph returned to South Africa. For the next three years, he worked for the ANC as

Head of the Video Unit in the President's Special Media Unit. In 1994, with the transition to democracy in South Africa, he joined the government communications services (GCIS). From 1999, he worked as a director with responsibility for managing all broadcast productions, photography and exhibits, and liaison with the SABC.

From 2007 to 2011, Zeph was the South African Ambassador to Sweden. When he completed his term, the King of Sweden awarded him the Order of the Polar Star, Commander First Class for his support for South African-Swedish friendship and economic collaboration.

From 2011 to 2015, Zeph was Ambassador to Greece, which also entailed representing South Africa in Cyprus, Serbia, Montenegro and Bosnia-Herzegovina. In this position, he was given a variety of honours and awards, including from the University of Athens and the Deputy Minister of Defence.

Zeph has the Umkhonto we Sizwe service medals in bronze, silver and gold, for 30 years of service.

Since retiring in 2015, Zeph has been working on various community projects and drafting his memoirs. He spent much of his retired years in Jo'burg walking in the park with Neva, lavishing love on his 2 grandchildren and reading voraciously.

He is survived by his wife Neva, daughters Anita and Tumi, and granddaughters, Lerato and Tenda, all of whom will long remember his warmth sense of humour and courage ■

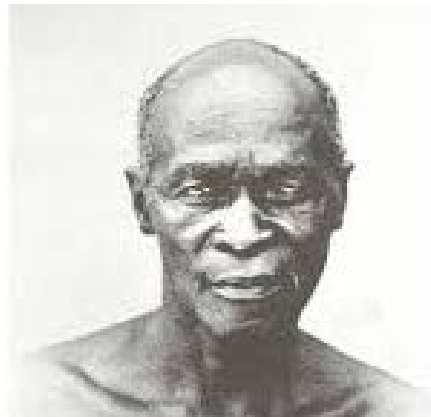
THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

9 - 15 September 2023

Source: SA History Online, O'Malley Archives and The Africa Factbook

■ 9 September 1913 Artist Gerald Sekoto born

Jan Gerard Sekoto was born on 9 September 1913 in Botshabelo, in the Middelburg district. Sekoto became one of South Africa's most renowned and celebrated artists, especially known for his evocative paintings. On 13 December 1989 he received an honorary doctorate from the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits). In 2004 Sophiatown unveiled the Sekoto mural that depicts Archbishop Trevor Huddleston walking the dusty streets of Sophiatown. Sekoto passed away on 20 March 1993 at the age of 79, six months before his 80th birthday.



captured during the ensuing famine and convicted of having been a party to the murder of a chief who had refused to destroy his cattle. Maqoma and his wife Katyi were banished to Robben Island for twenty-one years. In 1869 they were released but he was sent back to Robben Island in 1871 after being found guilty of incitement, this time without his wife. According to historical sources, he was a brave warrior and "a formidable tactician, a masterly politician and a brilliant orator."

■ 9 September 1919 Artist Tahia Halim born

Egyptian Painter Tahia Mohamed Halim (1919-2003) is born in Sudan. A pioneer of the Modern Expressive Movement in Egyptian Art in the 1960s, her art features Nubian culture, the Nile and boats.

■ 9 September 1973 Regent Maqomo dies on Robben Island

Xhosa war hero, Maqomo and regent of the AmaNgqika Xhosa clan died on Robben Island. He was captured in 1858 after the Cattle Killings of 1856-57, incited by Nongqawuse's vision on the banks of the Gxarha River. Maqoma was

when she joined the South African Labour Party League of Youth, a member until 1940, when she left to join the Communist Party of South Africa. She made a historic entry into the Johannesburg City Council when she became the first communist to be elected as councilor to public office in South Africa on a "Whites only" vote. Bernstein participated actively in the major struggle campaigns such as the 1946 African Mine Workers' Strike, the 1952 Defiance Campaign, the 1954 FEDSAW launch, the 1955 Freedom Charter Campaign, the 1956 Women's March and 1960 Sharpeville Campaign. Bernstein was arrested and banned on several occasions. After the 1964 Rivonia Trial, Bernstein and her husband fled the country on foot to Botswana and exile. Her contribution to the liberation struggle was acknowledged and she was bestowed with the National Order of Luthuli.

■ 9 September 2006 Hilda Bernstein passed away

Veteran political activist, artist and writer Hilda Bernstein passed away on 9 September 2006 in Cape Town, at 91. In 1932 Bernstein and her mother immigrated to South Africa from England. She worked in the advertising and later publishing and journalism sectors. Bernstein got involved in politics

■ 10 September 1921 Editor JT Jabavu passed on

John Tengo Jabavu, the founder of the first Black-language newspaper, *Imvo Zabantsundu* (Native/Bantu Opinion) and political leader died in Cape Town. He was the father to Davidson Don Jabavu, the first Black professor at the University of Fort Hare.

■ **10 September 1944** **Treaty of Tangier**

In August 1844 French forces under General Thomas Bugeaud defeated the Moroccan army in the battle of Isly. The battle was a result of the French government's pursuit of Algerian resistance leader, Abd al-Qadir who had taken refuge in the country. Following the defeat Sultan Abd ar-Rahman of Morocco was forced to accept French presence in Morocco. He also had to agree to remain neutral and not assist any enemy of France in any way. A peace treaty was signed in Tangier on 10 September 1844 and came to be known as the Treaty of Tangier.

■ **10 September 1936** **Musician Allen Kwela** **born**



Allen Kwela was born in KwaZulu Natal, having been exposed to music, both African and Western from an early age. After moving to Johannesburg during the 1950's, he met musician Spokes Mashiyane. They collaborated musically and Allen composed most of the kwela music, while Mashiyane performed. However, he remained in the shadow of his collaborator, who was later credited with the breakthrough of kwela during the

1950's. After his partnership with Mashiyane ended, he became interested in jazz, playing with well-known South African jazz artists such as Kippie Moeketsi and Barney Rachabane. He subsequently became one of South Africa's legendary jazz guitarists. His only album, Broken Strings, was released in 1998. Kwela passed on in 2003.

■ **10 September 1960** **Abebe Bikila wins** **Olympic Gold Medal**



Ethiopian Abebe Bikila, running barefoot, became the first Black African to win gold in the history of the Olympic Games. In the process Bikila set a new world record at 2:16:2. Explaining later why he ran barefoot, Bikila said, "I wanted the world to know that my country, Ethiopia, has always won with determination and heroism." Four years later during the Tokyo Olympics, Abebe's fame has already reached all corners of the globe. Six weeks before the big race that awaited him, Abebe was taken ill with appendicitis. He underwent surgery amid a public outcry for proper medical counsel to decide on the procedure. The day he arrived in Tokyo, Abebe hadn't fully recovered from the surgery and limped his way down the stairs. However, the reception Abebe re-

ceived from the Japanese people helped him to become the first athlete ever to win two Olympic marathons. Bikila died in October 1973.

■ **10 September 1990** **Cote d'Ivoire Our Lady** **of Peace Basilica** **consecrated**

The world's largest basilica built by 1200 workers in administrative capital of Yamoussoukro, working day and night, is consecrated by Pope John Paul II, who also gives blessing to the adjacent hospital.

■ **10 September 2009** **4 de Abril Bridge** **inaugurated**

The bridge which connects the Angolan cities of Benguela and Lobita, is opened by former President Jose Eduardo Dos Santos and named for the date of the 2002 peace agreement that ended the civil war in Angola. It is a 483 m suspension bridge, construction started in 2007. The bridge provides for connection between the provinces of north, central and south of the country.

■ **11 September 1896** **Johannesburg name** **explained**

In reaction to an inquiry, officials in Pretoria replied that Johannesburg was named after Johann Friedrich Bernhard Rissik and Christiaan Johannes Joubert - the only document dealing directly with the origin of the city's name. Some controversy exists concerning the origin of the name Johannesburg, as several men bearing the name Johann(es) occupied positions of authority in the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek (ZAR or Transvaal Re-



public) or were involved in events leading to the founding of the town. Rissik was a principal clerk attached to the office of the surveyor-general of the ZAR, while Joubert was a member of the Volksraad and head of the government's office of mines. It was on the recommendation of these two men that the land involved was declared a public gold-field, while they also suggested the town to be laid out either on the farm Randjeslaagte (Randjeslaagte) or a section of the farm Doornfontein. Government authorities decided on the former place. Other evidence, notably a letter from the deputy secretary of foreign affairs to the Swiss consul, dated 18 February 1896, substantiates the claim that the town was named after these two men.

■ **11 September 1980** **Court commutes James** **Mange's sentence**

Following an international campaign led by international bodies such as the United Nations, Organisation of African Unity (now AU), Non-Aligned Movement, and non-governmental organisations in South Africa, the Bloemfontein Appeal Court commuted James Mange's death sentence on a charge of high treason to 20 years' imprisonment. The African Nation-

al Congress (ANC) applauded the achievements of this international campaign. In a statement issued by its Secretary General, Alfred Nzo, the ANC called for the same solidarity to demand the release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners.

■ **12 September 1977** **Steve Bantu Biko dies in** **police detention**



Steven Bantu Biko, leader of the South African Student Organisation (SASO) and pioneer of the Black Consciousness philosophy, died in police custody at the age of thirty (30). Biko was arrested in Grahamstown on 18 August 1977. During his detention in a Port Elizabeth police cell, he was chained to a grill at night, left to lie naked in urine-soaked blankets, and kept in leg-irons for 48 hours in his cell. A blow in a scuffle with security police led to him suffering brain damage. The police transferred him, chained and untreated, at the back of a police van to a prison hospital in Pretoria, 1,133 km away. Biko died shortly after his arrival there. Peter Gabriel's song Biko commemorates

this act of brutality. When asked for a comment, the then Minister of Justice and Police Jimmy Kruger lied about the cause death, saying about Biko's death: "Dit laat my koud/I don't care."

■ **12 September 1989** **SWAPO Secretary** **General assassinated**

Advocate Anton Lubowski (37), secretary-general of the South West African People's Organisation (Swapo), was shot dead at close range with an AK47 rifle outside his home in Windhoek, Namibia. The Civil Co-Operation Bureau (CCB) of South Africa was held responsible for the assassination of Lubowski. Judge Harold Levy of the Namibian Supreme Court, concluded that the CCB conspired to murder Lubowski, with responsible CCB members Joe Verster, Staal Burger, Abraham 'Slang' van Zyl, Calla Botha, Leon 'Chappie' Maree, Johan Niemoller junior, Captain Wouter Basson (aka Christo Britz), Ferdi Barnard and Charles Wildschudt (formerly Neelse) named. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) confirmed Judge Levy's report.

■ **12 September 2004** **Ray Alexander passed on**

Rachel Alexander (Ray) Simons, legendary communist and trade unionist born in Latvia in 1914, died in Cape Town at the age of 91. Simons was instrumental in the formation of the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW) and the drafting of the Women's Charter. A unionist throughout her life, she helped form and lead the Food and Canning Workers Union and was named honorary life President of the Food and Allied Workers Union (FAWU).

■ 13 September 1984 UDF and NIC leaders seek refuge in British Consulate

Six activists - Archie Gumede, Mewa Ramgobin, MJ Naidoo, Billy Nair, George Sewpersad and Paul David - hunted by police in a security clampdown on this day entered the British Consulate in Durban. Police had been trying to rearrest the six, leaders of the United Democratic Front and the Natal Indian Congress, following their release from detention last Friday on the orders of a judge.

■ 13 September 1985 WHO declares AIDS a global pandemic

It is unknown when AIDS emerged. However, the first reported cases were in the early eighties and its now believed that the disease first emerged as far back as the 1960's. On 13 September 1985, the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared the disease a worldwide epidemic. South Africa has amongst the highest infection rate in the continent, and has the largest ARV treatment programme for people living with HIV/AIDS.

■ 13 September 1995 Bev Palesa Ditsie, first Lesbian woman to address UN

Beverley Palesa Ditsie made a statement at the historic Beijing Women's Conference in 1995 about including lesbian rights in discussions about the empowerment of women. She was the first openly lesbian woman to do so and it was the first time that the United Nations was addressed about LGBT people in the protection of human rights. In her address, Ditsie



argued that a focus on women's rights should include the struggles of lesbian women, saying that "if the world conference on women is to address the concerns of all women, it must similarly recognise that discrimination based on sexual orientation is a violation of basic human rights". Born in Soweto in 1971, Ditsie was an anti-Apartheid and LGBT rights activist. She was one of the founding members of Gay and Lesbian Organisation of the Witwatersrand (GLOW), South Africa's first multiracial and political lesbian and gay rights group. During the drafting of South Africa's constitution, Ditsie was at the forefront of arguing for protecting people from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation - the first constitution in the world to do so. Her participation at the conference was a first for the United Nations and was an opportunity for Ditsie to represent and speak to the intersectionality of race, gender and sexual orientation. Despite GLOW's mandate of non-sexism, Ditsie's participation at the conference was not welcomed by GLOW, who felt that spotlighting women was a 'distraction' from GLOW's focus on LGBT issues. Ditsie went to the conference despite this, saying that "lesbians are women. Lesbian rights are women's rights".

■ 13 September 1988 Three UDF leaders escaped from prison, seek refuge in US Consulate



Three leading anti-apartheid activists, Mohammed Valhi Moosa, Murphy Morobe, and Vusi Khanyile, escaped from detention and sought refuge in the American Consulate in Johannesburg.

■ 14 September 1918 Spanish Flu hits South Africa

The first cases of an unusually severe and deadly strain of influenza, popularly called Spanish Flu or 'Great Flu', were diagnosed on this date in Durban. This started the worst pandemic ever in South Africa. Of a total population of just over 6 million at the time, nearly half contracted the disease, while close to 140,000 died within a few weeks. The disease spread throughout the entire country and often whole families were ill or dying, with nobody left to care for them. Doctors and nurses did their best, but were too few to treat the pandemic. The Black and Coloured sections of the population were

most severely affected, especially the mineworkers, who suffered dreadfully. The epidemic peaked in October. The virus caused the death of 25 to 40 million people throughout the world.

■ **15 September 1901**
Educationist George
Molefe born



Mbanga James George Benjamin Molefe, clergyman and headmaster, was born in Mbulwana, Ladysmith, Natal. Molefe was one of the first black Presbyterian ministers to graduate at Fort Hare College in 1932. He was ordained in the same year in the Bantu Presbyterian Church and inducted to the Spookmill Church, Newcastle. After obtaining an MA degree at Columbia University in New York, Molefe accepted an appointment as minister of religion in New Brighton, Port Elizabeth in 1939. As result of his tireless efforts to improve the quality of schooling and general living conditions, he received the 'Freedom of Port Elizabeth's African Townships' in 1973 in recognition of his efforts to better the position of its residents. Molefe received many accolades during his lifetime that were firsts for Black South Africans. He died in 1986 and was survived by his wife and two children.

■ **15 September 1972**

DJ Fresh born



Thato Sikwane (aka DJ Fresh) disc jockey and producer was born in Maseru, Botswana on this day. Working in South Africa, most notably on Y-fm, he became a popular radio personality and released a series of house music compilations.

■ **15 September 1977**
Chimamanda Ngozi
Adichie born



The renowned African writer and feminist was born in Enugu state, Nigeria. Her second book, *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) telling the story of the Biafra War, catapulted her to fame. Adichie has become one of the voices of a new generation of African authors, a feminist and known for her TED talk on The Danger of the Single Story.

■ **15 September 1985**
Machel hosts Frontline
states against apartheid



As resistance to apartheid became more militant in South Africa, Mozambique President Samora Machel hosted a summit of Frontline state leaders in Maputo, to discuss the situation in South Africa. Present at the summit were Presidents Masire (Botswana), Kaunda (Zambia), Dos Santos (Angola), Nyerere (Tanzania) and Mugabe (Zimbabwe). Also present was Sam Nujoma, President of the exiled SWAPO.

■ **15 September 1992**
3400 people died since
signing of National Peace
Accord

The National Peace Accord was signed in 1991, after third force violence in parts of Gauteng and KZN, as the negotiations process unfolded. The NPA was assigned to bring an end to the violence. However, on this day a year later, human rights organisations reported that at least 3400 people died since its signing ■

INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL DAYS

9 - 15 September 2023

Source: www.un.org, www.au.int, *The Africa Fact Book (2020)*, www.daysoftheyear.com

■ 9 September. African Union Day.



The day commemorates the decision by African Heads of State and Government, to transition from the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to the African Union, as issued in the Sirte Declaration on 9 September 1999, which called for the establishment of an African Union, with the aim of accelerating the process of continental integration to enable Africa to play its rightful role in the global economy while addressing multifaceted social, economic and political problems compounded as they were by certain negative aspects of globalisation. AU Day also reflects on the Union's transformation and achievements in the African conti-

nent. The African Union was formally launched in 2002 at a Summit in Durban, South Africa.

■ 9 September. World Foetal Alcohol Syndrome day.

World Foetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) Day is celebrated each year at nine minutes past nine on the ninth day of the ninth month to draw attention to the fact that women should not drink alcohol for nine months whilst pregnant. The alcohol the mother drinks enters the unborn baby's bloodstream causing damage to the foetus. Such damage is permanent and irreversible. FAS children will have physical and intellectual problems. It is the leading cause of preventable birth defects and developmental disabilities in children. It is more common than Down Syndrome, Spina Bifida and Autism combined.

■ 9 September. International Sudoku Day.

The goal of the Sudoku game is to fill a 9x9 grid so that each column, row, and 3x3 sub-grid contains all the digits from 1 to 9. It is a very popular game in Japan, first appearing in 1984 where it was given the name "Sudoku," which is short for a longer Japanese expression - "Sūji wa dokushin ni kagiru" – which means, "the dig-

its are limited to one occurrence." Today, Sudoku is readily available on smartphone apps and widely printed in papers and magazines. It is a game of a game of intelligence which requires skill and patience.

9 September. International Day to Protect Education from Attack.

Around the world, attacks on children continue unabated, as warring parties flout one of the most basic rules of war: the protection of children. Without access to education, a generation of children living in conflict will grow up without the skills to contribute to their countries and economies, exacerbating the already desperate situation for millions of children and their families. Education can be a life-saver. Out of school, children are easy targets of abuse, exploitation and recruitment by armed forces and groups. School should provide a safe space where children can be protected from threats and crises. It is also a critical step to breaking the cycle of crisis and reduces the likelihood of future conflicts.

■ 10 September. World Suicide Prevention Day

There are rising numbers of suicides in South Africa and the world, a problem that affects all

age groups, genders, and social strata. a problem that affects all age groups, genders, and social strata. World Suicide Prevention Day raises awareness about this tragic issue and works to prevent it through education and support of those who struggle with suicidal ideation every day.

■ 11 September.

No news is good news day.

A break from all the bad news about catastrophes, disasters, crisis and sorrow that happen every day somewhere in this world. It is good occasion to turn off the news for a while, and enjoy the silence.

■ 12 September.

Grandparents Day,

takes place on the second Sunday of September each year, to honour the relationship between grandchildren and grandparents. It's a day to share stories, have fun, and give thanks to our grandparents for everything that they bring to our lives. It is about spending quality time with grandparents, and learning from one another.

■ 12 September.

South-South Cooperation Day

We refer to developing countries, many of whom have been colonized at some point, as countries of the global South (also formerly known as the so-called Third World). As a result of colonialism and the Cold War that spurred global inequality, economic development, power and trade are highly unequal; and tended to take the form of raw materials from the "periphery" (global South) to the "centre" (global North). South-South Cooperation

was and is about solidarity and common action amongst development, to work with each other to develop their countries and peoples, and to fight for a more just global world order. Today, the global dominance of the North is not as absolute as before, with 'emerging' economies, especially China, but also India and Brazil accounting for a greater share of global economic activity. South-South Cooperation takes place through various international forums, such as the Non-Aligned Movement, BRICS, the G77 and a range of other forums.

■ 11-15 September.

National Wills Week.

If you die without leaving a valid will, your assets will be distributed according to the provisions of the Intestate Succession Act. The provisions are generally fair and ensure that your possessions are transferred to your spouse and children, and where applicable, to siblings, parents. If required, then to the extended family in terms of degrees of relationships and those that were dependent on you for financial support. BUT, the problems may arise if you die without leaving a will: your assets may not be left to the person of your choice; it can take a long time to have an executor appointed and may not be somebody you may not have chosen yourself, there can be extra and unnecessary costs; and there can be unhappiness and conflict among members of your family because there are no clear instructions on how to distribute your assets.

■ 15 September.

World Afro Day.

The is a day dedicated to celebrat-

ing and learning about Afro hair, a hair type that grows out in coily shapes, with various types of curls and twists. The day was started by Michelle De Leon, to ensure that all children learn about and feel positively about their hair types. World Afro Day was started in 2017 as a way of celebrating the variety of natural Afro hair and hairstyles that are unique to Black culture and recognising its significance as part of peoples' heritage and identity.

■ 15 September.

International Day of Democracy.

In its resolution A/RES/62/7 establishing the day, the United Nations noted that "while democracies share common features, there is no single model of democracy" and that "democracy does not belong to any country or region". The International Day of Democracy is meant both to celebrate democracy and to serve as a reminder that the need to promote and protect democracy is as urgent now as ever. The lead organisation for this day is the International Parliamentary Union, with its national parliament members celebrating the day and reviewing the state of democracy.

■ 15 September.

Greenpeace Day.

Greenpeace Day is observed on September 15th commemorates the movement that began on this day. This day highlights activism in the name of the environment. The day recognizes peaceful protest for change to improve air quality, reduce reliance on fossil fuels, use of plastics, and water quality.

ANC Manifesto Review Rally Dobsonville Stadium, Soweto, Johannesburg 3 September 2023

