



The Shopsteward

The official publication of the Congress of South African Trade Unions

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COSATU COST OF LIVING CAMPAIGN

CELEBRATING 34 YEARS

The Shop Steward Magazine

The Shopsteward Magazine was first published around June 1992, as a voice for workers presenting the unheard thoughts of the working-class communities that are typically absent from mainstream media.



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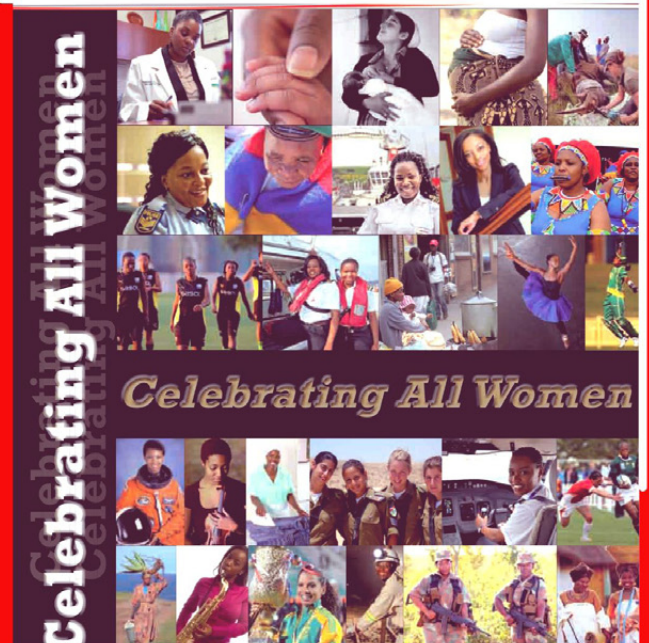
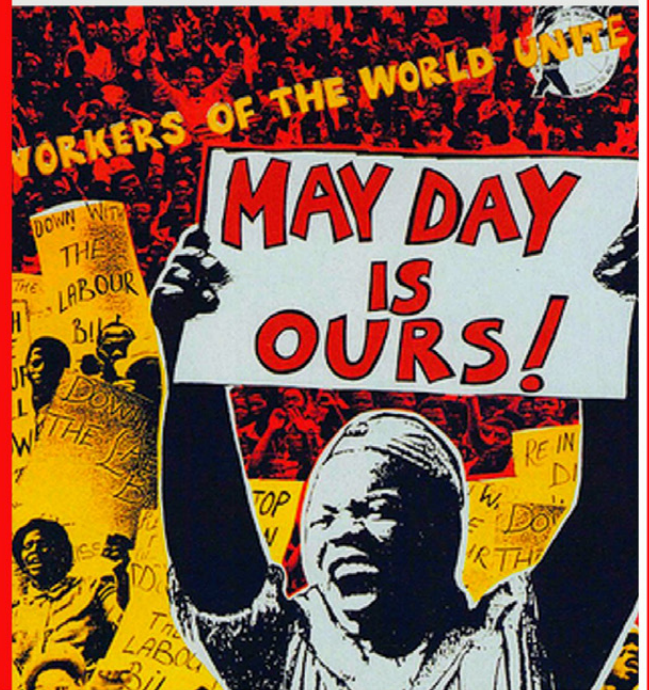
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The Shopsteward

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE CONGRESS OF SOUTH AFRICAN TRADE UNIONS

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Contents

Worker Issues

- COSATU's call to action addressing the rising cost of living in South Africa – **Page 9**
- Organised Labour on Migration and South Africa's Economic Crisis – **Page 11**

The Economy

- Driving reindustrialisation and bringing back its manufacturing strength will create the most needed jobs – **Page 16**
- South Africans deserves 'decent work' more than precarious job opportunities – **Page 18**
- Left Behind: Why the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) Risk eluding Africa? – **Page 20**
- Safety is a collective responsibility: building a safer Gauteng for all – **Page 22**
- Violent attacks on black African migrants will not resolve national employment crisis – **Page 24**
- Post Office saved as a one stop shop for citizens to access public services – **Page 26**
- Position Paper for Cost OF Living campaign 2026 – **Page 28**

Mandela Day

- Workers honour Madiba on Mandela Day – **Page 32**

Health Matters

- Lenacapavir launch, a historic breakthrough for HIV prevention – **Page 34**

Youth Day

- June 16, fifty years later: What would the 1976 generation say – **Page 36**
- The youth of 1976 stood up against injustice – **Page 40**

International

- Workers celebrate #PrideMonth2026, championing #EqualityForAll – **Page 45**

Commentary

- Courage of 1976 Generation – **Page 55**
- Turning the tide - Can Labour do it? – **Page 57**
- The decolonized curriculum must be taught in all classrooms by current educators – **Page 61**

Editor in Chief: Solly Phetoe **Editor:** Norman Mampane **Layout and Design:** Nthabiseng Moloi

Subscription and Distribution: Nthabiseng Moloi **Advertising Sales:** Nthabiseng Moloi

Tel: +27 (0)10 219 1341 **Fax:** 086 481 6163 **Email:** nthabiseng@cosatu.org.za

Address: 110 Jorissen & Simmonds Street , Braamfontein, 2001 PO Box 1019, Johannesburg 2000

Tel: +27 (0)11 339 4911 **Fax:** +27 (0)11 339 5080/6940

Online: <http://theshopsteward.org.za/> **Website:** www.cosatu.org.za

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Editor in Chief

Solly Phetoe

Workers paid a heavy price in the last few weeks for a situation they did not create, when National Treasury decided to hold back the July instalment of the grants it pays to municipalities in March, July and December.

National Treasury explained it had taken this extreme action to encourage the 69 municipalities to manage their finances better, including paying Eskom and the water boards for the electricity and water they supply to communities in their municipalities.

Treasury was also worried that the municipalities were not paying workers' pension funds, medical aid, Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) and other third-party payments. In the worst cases, municipalities were not even paying municipal workers their salaries.

The problem of employers drawing money from

workers' salaries and not transferring it to the pension funds, where it will collect interest and grow while waiting for workers go on retirement, has been a thorn on COSATU's side for several years now.

The Financial Sector Conduct Authority (FSCA), which is responsible for making sure pension funds, banks and other financial institutions do right by their customers, released a report in July, showing that the number of employers who are not paying workers pension funds have increased to 16 556 this year from 5 430 in 2023.

This is very worrying, especially since municipalities were among the top wrongdoers. According to Minister of Finance, Enoch Godongwana, municipalities deducted R1.7 billion from municipal workers' salaries by end of February 2026 but never transferred the money to the pension funds.

This is not only against the law but puts workers in a very risky position, because when pension fund payments are not made, workers' death and disability benefits lapse, and workers and their families cannot claim, putting them in a very difficult situation.

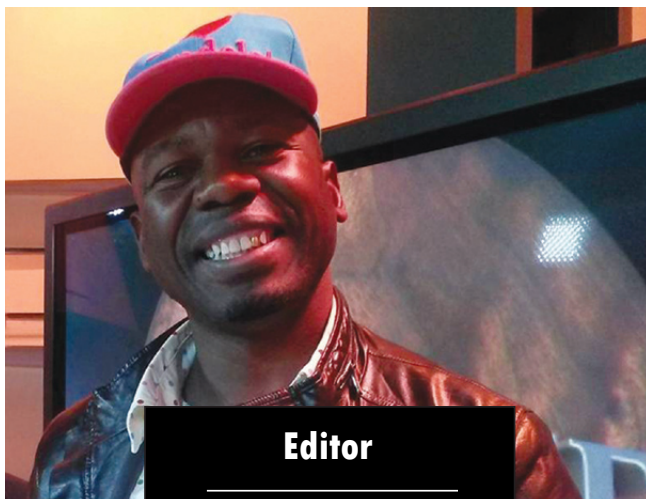
In 2024 COSATU launched a campaign to name and shame the employers who don't pay workers' pension funds. In June this year, COSATU's revolutionary affiliate, SAMWU, marched to the offices of National Treasury in Pretoria to demand the immediate payment of outstanding pension funds and other third-party payments.

And yet, SAMWU, followed immediately by COSATU, was the first to speak out against Treasury's decision to hold back the July grants to municipalities because we understood that although National Treasury had good intentions, the people that would be

punished in the end would be workers. Sadly, we were right, because when payday came, many municipal workers did not receive their salaries as we had feared. Once again, SAMWU and COSATU screamed the loudest until the municipal grants were released.

In the meantime, Treasury has made sure that the 69 municipalities submit plans on how they will fix their finances to make sure that their grants are not withheld again, and they are able to pay what is due to workers and deliver the services to communities in their municipalities.

Workers were punished twice during this time, when their salaries were not paid and when services in their municipalities were not delivered. COSATU commits to support SAMWU 100% as it continues to raise issues that affect municipal workers as well as those that stand in the way of service delivery.



Editor

Norman Mampane

The South African youth from various political affiliations joined hands to commemorate 50 years since the 1976 Soweto uprising occurred and celebrate the National Youth Day on June 16 at Orlando Stadium, Soweto, under the theme: ***"RESET@50 – The Future Calls" and the slogan "Our National Commitment to the Future, for Freedom Lives in Every Generation."***

It all started at Issac Morrison High School where students gathered to lead massive protests against imposition of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in Bantu schools during the apartheid era.

With the main government event held at FNB Stadium-Nasrec precinct where the official launch of the commemorative R2 circulation coin by the South African Reserve Bank took place. The Bantu

Education Act of 1953 was deliberately designed by Verwoerd's regime to reproduce an inferior education system that only produce cheap labourers for the labour market.

The Youth Month is geared to honour the legacy of the youth of yesterday and celebrate the changemakers of today shaping the future of tomorrow.

We must and should pay tribute to President Ephraim Mogale, Lolo Kekana, Andrew Radebe, Oupa "Kanyumba" Fokazi, Nceba "16" Mapoma, Songezo Mjongile, Bongani Molefe, Jesus Mabaso, Fijo Gapane, Thabo Morudu, Naomi Mangate, Siyabonga Nhlapho, John Malesela Makgoka and the many comrades of the various generations who have departed from the ranks.

Their sacrifices, leadership, and commitment helped

shape COSAS into the militant and revolutionary movement that continues to inspire students today.

The historic events were marked by public seminars, book launches, film screenings, exhibitions, marches and exchange of opinions as to whether were the youth ideas of radical transformation of society realised?

The cost-of-living dilemma is on the agenda again!

We have seen workers coming out to support the National campaign across all provinces. Various progressive economists, analysts and civil society symphasised with organised Labour.

For workers in the food, agriculture, retail, logistics, and hospitality sectors, the backbone of our economy, this crisis is devastating. Workers are forced to spend more just to get to work,

while their wages stagnate. Inflation is eroding incomes, and hunger is becoming a prevalent challenge in majority of households.

Food prices are skyrocketing, electricity tariffs continue to rise, fuel costs are increasing, and transport has become unaffordable. Rent and basic necessities are out of reach for many working-class families.

For example, Dr Pali Lehohla argues that 'South Africa has failed to end poverty'.

He further alludes that 'the appetite to radically transform the socio-economic status of poor working-class communities leaves much to be desired'.

Dr Lehohla links the R350 grant, black purchasing power and corporate profits as few examples of tortoise speed to improve the living standards and working conditions.

The big question is: who really benefits when poverty remains trapped in the system?

Dr Lehohla is a paper titled, 'Macroeconomic Structural Divergence and the Micro demographic Mesh: A Statistical and Mathematical Treatise on the R14. 3 Trillion Siphon', argues that '....how an economy is measured is not merely a technical exercise; it is an ideological battleground that dictates what realities are made visible and what systematic failures are swept under the carpet of aggregate accounting. The primary line of fracture lies between the orthodox, "inside-out" macroeconomic aggregation models-predicated on the System of National Accounts (SNA), input-output equilibrium, and balance - of-payments reporting-and the heterodox, "outside-in" socio-spatial mesh dynamics".

He argues further that 'South Africa has suffered multi-decadal changes characterised by structural economic distortions, inflation-adjusted measure of structural economic extraction, unrealised domestic investment surpluses, and capital misallocations'. Pali elaborates that '....any developing economy cannot survive if its domestic population undergoes labour structural decay. With the workforce suffering

from capital starvation, high skills employment collapse, driving workers from specialised professional and technical groupings into survivalist, informal, or elementary occupations'.

It's painful that most developing countries, with resource-dependent economies, are suffering from 'systemic localised collapse, widespread infrastructure degradation, and escalating unemployment'.

Globally, there are coherence in views that hate speech, racism, xenophobia and other forms of dehumanisation

growing in large numbers because of job cuts in the labour market.

The global campaign on full recognition of care work must and should be supported.

In majority of economies, care work indeed sustains households, societies and industries, yet care work is highly marginalised. We must applaud the recent 114th the International Labour Conference held in Geneva which took the resolution to adopt the first international labour standard on decent work in the platform economy.

– it is becoming a source of strategic and economic advantage and conflict.

It's quite clear in geopolitical milieu, especially after the outbreak of US/Israel and Iran war, and the closure of Strait of Hormuz transit that has harshly affected global markets.

It's common knowledge that countries that improve reliability, diversify supply chains and build resilience across fuels, grids, minerals and infrastructure will be better positioned to attract investment and strengthen competitiveness.

In the few months, delegates will prepare to grace COSATU's 15th National Congress and we wish all affiliates success as they prepare for decisive resolutions to move the Federation forward towards Socialism!

Congratulations to newly elected worker leaders across all affiliates.

In this Edition, we cover the struggle by nations to eradicate child labour, economic strides attained recently with the saving of the South African Post Office, the steel industry and Tongaat Hulett in the sugar industry, for example.



are spreading like wildlife.

Progressive trade unions have a moral responsibility to lead on such campaigns.

On the other side, the precarity community is

Convention No. 193, Decent Work in the Platform Economy Convention, 2026 is aimed to advance gender equality at work.

Energy security is no longer just about fuel supply

Class struggle continues!



COSATU

15TH

**NATIONAL
CONGRESS**

"Building a Militant, Revolutionary Labour

Movement and Strengthening Anti-Imperialist

Working - Class Unity to Defend Jobs

and Advance Socialism."

14 -17

September

2026



Government Employees Medical Scheme (GEMS): 2026 Annual General Meeting (AGM) Notice

All GEMS members have been sent the draft **2025 GEMS Annual Integrated Report and Financial Statements** containing the official notice of the **2026 GEMS Annual General Meeting (AGM)** taking place virtually via the Zoom platform on **Friday, 31 July 2026 at 15:00**.

In accordance with GEMS Rule 29.6, the GEMS Board of Trustees require members wishing to attend the AGM to **register online** by **15:00 on Friday, 31 July 2026**. Please note that online registration will close at **15:00**. No registration to attend the AGM will be allowed after 15:00. Accordingly, if you wish to attend the AGM, kindly go to www.gems.gov.za, click on the relevant link embedded in the **2026 GEMS AGM** section and:

- 🔗 Complete the online **registration form** by **15:00 on Friday, 31 July 2026**. It is important to note that only members who have registered will be admitted to the meeting;
- 📖 Acquaint yourself with the **Zoom user guide**, which details Zoom's functionality; and
- ⬇️ Download the **Zoom software** for an enhanced Zoom/AGM experience, should you prefer this to the standard Zoom/AGM web experience.

Should you be unable to attend the AGM, you may appoint a proxy to attend, speak and vote on your behalf by completing the **proxy form**. When returning your proxy form, kindly mark it for the attention of the **Principal Officer** with the reference **2026 GEMS AGM Proxy**.

It is important to note that your proxy form must reach us by **16:00 on Friday, 24 July 2026** to be considered.

Proxy forms may be sent to:

- Email: enquiries@gems.gov.za;
- Fax: 0861 004 367; or
- Post: GEMS, Private Bag X782, Cape Town, 8000.

For copies of the following AGM meeting documents, kindly go to www.gems.gov.za and click on the relevant link embedded in the **2026 GEMS AGM** section:

- 2026 **GEMS AGM Member Guide**;
- 2026 **GEMS AGM Agenda**;
- 2026 **GEMS AGM Proxy Form**;
- 2025 **GEMS AGM Minutes (draft)**;
- 2025 **GEMS Annual Integrated Report**;
- 2025 **GEMS Trustee Remuneration Report**; and
- **GEMS AGM Action List**.

We thank you for your ongoing support and look forward to seeing you at the AGM.





COSATU'S CALL TO ACTION

addressing the rising cost of living in South Africa - By Solly Phetoe

Hundreds of members of COSATU and its affiliates participated in the National Action against High Cost of Living across nine provinces.

The working class is under siege from the increasingly painful costs of living, rising unemployment and the subsequent crises of poverty, inequality, crime, corruption and overstretched public services.

The Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) held a national protest against the rising costs of living on 19 June to send a clear message to government and the private sector that workers

can no longer cope and action must be taken before it is too late.

South Africa's history of centuries of institutional discrimination and disempowerment under colonial and apartheid rule are well known and the scars of poverty and inequality they engineered remain painfully etched across the nation.

We appreciate that great strides have been made on

many fronts since 1994 under government led by the African National Congress, from investing 60% of the Budget into uplifting working-class communities to opening up the economy to the 90% once denied access to their race, gender or disability.

We must, however, be alarmed by the plight facing millions of working-class and increasingly middle-class families with most drowning in debt and borrowing simply

to pay for essentials or other debt. Workers support an average of 7 relatives.

With the doubling of fuel prices over the past few months and workers spending an average of 40% of their wages on transport, we fear we are approaching breaking point.

Just as we collectively rallied as a nation to successfully defeat Covid-19, so too must government and business work

with labour and society, to tackle our rising costs of living and the dire socio-economic crises underpinning them.

Government has done well to provide some relief for the massive fuel price hikes that have hammered commuters and the economy.

Whilst appreciating the price tag of this relief, it should be extended until fuel prices return to pre-war levels. Similarly, the long-awaited review committed to by government since 2018 on the fuel levy and taxes that consume a third of the fuel price is needed and engagements at Nedlac on how they can be reduced, resume.

This necessitates placing the Road Accident Fund under competent management and upon a path to financial sustainability; e.g., the pilferage of its overstretched resources by lawyers must end, and the necessary legislative amendments to ensure its resources are targeted at the poor must be expedited.

The substantial investments by government in Metro Rail and efforts to return it to full capacity need to be accelerated alongside greater investments in public transport from our trains to buses and taxis.

This will provide commuters cheaper and faster means of transport to get to work, boost workplace productivity, and reduce road congestion and wear and tear.

The Reserve Bank needs to reduce its over-enthusiasm for increasing the repo rate at the sight of the slightest inflationary pressures.

Yes, we must keep inflation low to protect workers' wages, but we must also avoid excessive rate hikes that bleed workers' meagre wages and suffocate economic growth.

The private banks need to reduce their shamefully high lending rates they charge low-income workers.

Eskom has done well to defeat the crisis of loadshedding that once crippled the economy.

It now needs our collective support to end its dangerous dependency upon above inflation electricity tariff hikes. This requires a decisive plan to tackle the R120 billion municipal debt owed to Eskom, increasing at an alarming rate of R20 billion annually.

All consumers, be it government, businesses or households, must be moved to prepaid electricity. That is the only way to ensure that all electricity consumed is paid for. Those involved in illegal connections must be prosecuted.

Eskom must be enabled to expand its renewable and nuclear energy generation capacity to reduce its operating costs.

Treasury and COGTA must ramp up efforts to capacitate local government to deliver

basic services, particularly to working class communities and tackle their massive financial leakages and above inflation municipal tariff hikes.

Cosatu successfully led an effective campaign to reduce GEMS massive premium hike this year. Similar campaigns and premium cuts are needed for other medical aids who exploit members' vulnerabilities.

Endless court challenges to the National Health Insurance's rolling out must end and a plan to ensure universal access to healthcare put in place.

Strategic support should be provided for agriculture sector to shield food from inflationary pressures, from ensuring Transnet is returned to full capacity to reducing the price of diesel and providing greater support for emerging farmers.

If inflation continues to rise, then adjustments must be made for social grant recipients, and in particular the 8 million SRD Grants beneficiaries that have only once received an inflationary adjustment since it started in 2020.

Food parcels should be provided for Old Age Grant recipients and other indigent households.

The income threshold for NSFAS recipients has never been increased for inflation since its introduction 8 years

ago. It too must be adjusted.

The Two Pot Pension Reforms have injected an invaluable R70 billion into the pockets of 4 million highly indebted workers whilst boosting long term savings for retirement. The next phase of these progressive reforms must be accelerated.

The South African Revenue Service must be allocated greater resources to raise the tax compliance rate from 68% to 75% by 2029. This will ensure the state has the resources needed to fund public services whilst reducing the increasingly suffocating tax burden upon working and middle-class families.

The private sector must play its part by paying a living wage, wage increases to protect workers from inflation and reducing its shameful wage gaps, in particular in the financial, mining, construction and retail sectors.

Government and the private sector must act to end retrenchments, plus revamp and expand public employment programmes to provide millions of unemployed a path to employment.

What we cannot afford to do is to normalise the abnormal. Workers are drowning. A bold and decisive Marshall Plan to rebuild public services, stimulate economic growth, create decent jobs and tackle the unaffordable costs of living is long overdue.

Solly Phetoe is the General Secretary of COSATU. 



WORKER ISSUES

ORGANISED LABOUR on Migration and South Africa's Economic Crisis

Organised Labour at the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC), comprising COSATU, FEDUSA, SAFTU and NACTU, has convened a media briefing on the 17th June 2026 at Rosebank to respond to the growing tensions around migration and illegal immigration in South Africa.

We recognise the deep frustration of millions of South Africans facing unemployment, poverty, inequality, crime and deteriorating public services.

These are real and legitimate grievances.

However, South Africa's economic crisis was not created by migrants. It is rooted in economic stagnation, deindustrialisation, mass unemployment, corruption, austerity, weak governance and the failure to build

an economy that serves the majority. Migrants must not be made scapegoats for failures they did not create.

Removing foreign nationals from workplaces, communities or public spaces will not reopen factories, repair municipalities, strengthen public healthcare or create sustainable jobs.

The frustrations of local communities must be addressed by fixing the economy, creating decent work and rebuilding the state.

We are deeply concerned that the current surge in anti-migrant sentiment and mobilisation appears increasingly coordinated and politically orchestrated.

Its purpose seems not only to divide the working class and redirect legitimate anger away from the real causes of poverty, unemployment, inequality and collapsing public services, but also to portray South Africa as a nation consumed by xenophobia and prone to barbaric acts of black-on-black violence in order to portray us in

the most negative light in eyes of the international community.

Even more dangerously, they sow the seeds of tribalism, chauvinism and conflict among African people, threatening the unity that workers need in order to confront exploitation and fight collectively for jobs, decent living conditions and social justice.

The working class must reject all attempts to divide it along national, ethnic or tribal lines and reaffirm the

principle that an injury to one is an injury to all.

Organised Labour is unequivocally opposed to vigilantism.

The enforcement of immigration, labour and criminal laws is the responsibility of the democratic state and its authorised institutions alone.

No individual, organisation or self-appointed structure has the right to stop people in the streets, demand identity documents, raid workplaces, close businesses or prevent people from accessing public services.

While citizens have every right to march, petition government and demand effective immigration control, protest cannot become a licence for intimidation, unlawful detention, forced removals, ethnic profiling or violence.

South Africans have seen where this road leads, having lived through the deadly violence of 2008 and subsequent attacks on foreign nationals. We will not allow legitimate public anger to be manipulated into hatred and lawlessness.

History has shown the devastating consequences of redirecting socioeconomic grievances against people

based on their nationality or origin.

At the same time, Organised Labour is firmly opposed to the unlawful employment of undocumented migrants. Employers who knowingly hire vulnerable workers to pay lower wages, evade labour laws, avoid collective

both South African and migrant workers and deliberately deep divisions within the working class. They must be investigated, prosecuted and subjected to meaningful penalties.

The law must focus not only on undocumented workers, but also on those who profit from their

Weak border management, inadequate labour inspection, failing Home Affairs systems, corruption and the underfunding of frontline institutions have contributed directly to public frustration.

Austerity has consequences. Government cannot weaken the Border Management Authority, the Department of Home Affairs, the Department of Employment and Labour and other critical institutions, and then express surprise when systems fail, queues grow, enforcement collapses and communities lose confidence in the state.

We call for a capable, properly resourced and accountable state. This must include stronger labour inspection, effective border management, adequate staffing, reliable information technology systems and the digitisation and integration of migration and employment processes.

Technology must be used to reduce corruption, improve the processing of applications and strengthen enforcement.

However, digital systems cannot replace the need for trained personnel and functional institutions.

Organised Labour also

**The law must
focus not only on
undocumented
workers, but also
on those who
profit from their
vulnerability.**

agreements and weaken collective bargaining are central to this crisis.

These employers exploit

vulnerability. Government must also accept responsibility for allowing the crisis to grow.

condemns all persons who solicit or accept bribes, facilitate illegal entry, issue fraudulent documentation or protect employers who violate the law.

Such conduct fuels the crisis, undermines public trust and betrays the many honest public servants who continue to perform their duties under difficult conditions.

We support lawful and coordinated migration management, including the National Labour Migration Policy and stronger measures, including criminal prosecution, against employers who knowingly hire undocumented workers.

The Employment Services legislation must provide a credible long-term framework for regulating the employment of foreign nationals and prosecuting employers who deliberately break the law.

However, legislation will mean little without effective implementation and properly capacitated institutions.

Organised labour rejects all attempts to pit worker against worker. We therefore emphasise the urgent need for a coordinated

regional and continental development programme to address the deep inequalities and uneven economic development that persist across Africa.

Unless these structural disparities are tackled, migration from less developed countries to relatively more developed economies, such as South Africa, will continue.

This pattern of migration, combined with high unemployment, poverty, inequality and inadequate public services, fuels the anti-migrant sentiments that have become increasingly prevalent in South Africa today.

The persistent failure of many African states to address unemployment, poverty and underdevelopment continues to drive large-scale migration in search of work and survival.

In countries such as South Africa, employers often exploit these migratory patterns to access vulnerable labour, suppress wages, weaken collective bargaining and divide the workforce.

The result is that workers are pitted against one another, worker solidarity is undermined, and the

principles of internationalism that have historically strengthened the labour movement are weakened.

The solution is not to blame migrant workers, who are themselves victims of economic hardship, but to address the structural conditions that force people to migrate and to build unity among workers across national borders in the common struggle against exploitation.

We therefore call on organised labour across Africa, Asia and beyond to hold their governments accountable for corruption, repression, unemployment, economic mismanagement and violations of human rights.

Organised Labour must defend working-class solidarity while demanding that every government take responsibility for creating conditions in which its citizens can live, work and prosper safely in their own countries.

Workers everywhere share an interest in decent wages, safe workplaces, functioning public institutions, democratic governance and economies that serve the majority.

We also note calls for

national action on 30 June.

This action has not been called by the recognised labour federations and does not constitute a protected strike. Workers who stay away from work will not enjoy the protections afforded to participants in a protected strike.

We urge workers to report for duty and not place their employment at risk.

Government must communicate this clearly and act decisively against intimidation, unlawful shutdowns, attacks on workers, violence and threats to critical infrastructure.

Organised Labour remains firmly committed to democracy, the rule of law, international solidarity and the unity of the working class.

Migrants are not the cause of South Africa's economic crisis. Exploitation, unemployment, corruption, economic failure and state incapacity are.

Issued by Organised Labour at NEDLAC

INJURED AT WORK or Became Sick Because of Your Job?



Many workers do not know that they can claim compensation if they are injured at work or become ill because of their working conditions. The Compensation Fund was created under the Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act (COIDA) to help workers who are injured, become disabled, contract occupational diseases, or die because of work-related incidents.

What Is an Injury on Duty (IOD) or Occupational Disease (OD)?

An Injury on Duty (IOD) happens when a worker is injured while doing their job. An Occupational Disease (OD) is an illness caused by exposure to harmful conditions at work, such as chemicals, dust, noise, radiation, or dangerous substances.

Examples include:

- Falling and getting injured while working.
- Being hurt by machinery or equipment.
- Injuries sustained while travelling for work purposes.
- Hearing loss caused by constant loud noise.
- Lung diseases caused by dust or chemicals.
- A work incident that makes an existing medical condition worse.

Who Can Claim from the Compensation Fund?

You may qualify if you are:

- A permanently employed worker.
- A farm worker, apprentice or trainee.
- A worker supplied by a labour agency.
- A domestic worker.

The injury or illness must have happened because of your work or while carrying out your work duties.

What Should You Do If You Are Injured at Work?

Step 1: Report the Injury Immediately

Tell your supervisor or employer as soon as possible.

You can:

- Report it verbally.
- Report it in writing.

The sooner you report it, the better.


**Know
Your
Rights**



Compensation Fund
WORKING FOR YOU



Step 2: Get Medical Treatment

Seek medical treatment immediately.

You may:

- Go to a public hospital or clinic.
- Go to a private doctor or hospital if necessary.

Take the W.CL.2 Part B form from your employer if possible.

Step 4: Submit Medical Reports

The doctor must complete a medical report describing your injuries or illness.

Give all medical reports to your employer, who must submit them to the Compensation Fund.

Step 6: Wait for the Compensation Fund's Decision

Once the Compensation Fund approves the claim, benefits are paid directly to you or your dependants.

Step 3: Complete the W.CL.2 Form

The W.CL.2 form is the official Notice of Accident and Claim for Compensation.

This form confirms:

- What happened.
- When it happened.
- That the injury is work-related.

Step 5: Follow Up with Your Employer

Keep in contact with your employer and ask for updates on your claim.

Make sure:

- Your contact details are correct.
- The employer has submitted all the required documents.
- You receive updates on your claim's progress.

What Benefits Can You Receive?

Medical Expenses

The Compensation Fund may pay for:

- Doctor consultations.
- Hospital treatment.
- Medication.
- X-rays and scans.
- Surgery.
- Rehabilitation and physiotherapy.

Permanent Disability Benefits

If the injury causes permanent damage or disability, you may receive:

- A lump-sum payment; or
- A monthly pension.

Temporary Disability Benefits

If your injury prevents you from working for a period of time, you may receive compensation for lost income.

Death Benefits

If a worker dies because of a workplace injury or disease, the Compensation Fund may pay:

- Funeral expenses.
- Financial support to dependants.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Can I Go to a Public Hospital?

✓ Yes. You can receive treatment at a public hospital, clinic or another reasonable medical facility. Public hospitals may not refuse emergency treatment because it is a workplace injury.

2. What If a Hospital Refuses to Treat Me?

✗ This is not allowed.
Show the hospital your W.CL.2 Part B form.

If treatment is still refused:

- Speak to hospital management.
- Contact the Department of Employment and Labour.

3. How Long Does a Claim Take?

⌚ Processing times vary.
Many claims take between 6 and 12 weeks, but delays can happen if documents are missing or the Compensation Fund has a backlog.

To avoid delays:

- Submit documents quickly.
- Keep copies of everything.
- Follow up regularly.

4. What If the Injury Was Not Reported Within 7 Days?

⚠ Do not give up. Submit the claim as soon as possible.

Include:

- A written explanation for the delay.
- Any supporting medical records. The Compensation Fund may still consider the claim, especially if the injury is serious or medical treatment was required.

Remember!

- ✓ Report workplace injuries immediately.
- ✓ Get medical treatment without delay.
- ✓ Complete all required forms.
- ✓ Keep copies of all documents.
- ✓ Follow up with your employer.
- ✓ Know your rights under COIDA.

No worker should suffer financially because they were injured or became ill while earning a living.



The Economy

DRIVING REINDUSTRIALISATION and bringing back its manufacturing strength will create the most needed jobs

Ferrometals, Highveld Steel, ArcelorMittal, Alex Murray Metal Systems (Pty) Ltd, Coega Steels, Scaw Metals, Nyezi Steel, BSi Steel and MacSteel were some of the steel companies years ago who carried production of infrastructural materials to develop the steel sector in South Africa.

The steel sector contributed a lot of jobs in the labour market.

However, most of those companies closed or retrenched workers for various reasons.

Manufacturing production decreased by 2,9% y/y in April 2026, with the iron and steel, non-ferrous metal products and machinery division the key drag on momentum.

Today, steel remains a strategic material in reindustrialisation,

building of infrastructure and playing a core role in economic growth.

The Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (the dtic) has been on a roadshow on promoting industrialisation, strengthening local manufacturing, enhancing business competitiveness, encouraging value-added production, expanding market access, supporting

Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises, and creating sustainable jobs.

Recently, the Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Trade, Industry and Competition, Mr Mzwandile Masina unpacked on how the South African government is investing in efforts to save the steel industry.

The Portfolio Committee on Trade, Industry and Competition has called

for urgent government intervention as the steel industry is facing a crisis that threatens thousands of jobs. The Portfolio Committee on Trade, Industry and Competition has cautioned government that austerity measures may adversely affect the implementation

of the newly adopted South Africa's Industrial Development Strategy.

The committee commended the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (DTIC) on championing the South Africa's Industrial

Development Strategy anchored by diversification, decarbonisation and digitalisation.

The Strategy is expected to deepen industrialisation and reimagine manufacturing to ensure competitiveness. With the manufacturing

sector experiencing a sharp decline over the last few decades, the Special Economic Zone (SEZ) Programme is one of the anchor programmes to attract new direct investment from domestic and foreign players in a commercially competitive space.

Mr Masina said, "The Department of Trade, Industry and Competition and stakeholders from the steel and metal fabrication sector engaged on an update on developments within the sector, (progress made in addressing the concerns previously raised, and any further proposals or interventions that should be considered to support industrial growth, competitiveness, transformation, and employment within the steel value chain.

Stakeholders raised concerns regarding the sector's continued decline due to global competition, policy misalignment, weak demand, poor logistics, high production costs, including electricity, as well as the weak network industries and declining investment in this specific sector.

Furthermore, this has been exacerbated by a shift in domestic demand to

imported steel products, an increased demand for low carbon steel manufacturing processes while the local industry remains carbon-intensive, and excess global steel supply, among others. This has led to a decline in the industry accompanied by significant job shedding over many years.

In addition, certain stakeholders raised concerns on the perceived distortionary impact of the Preferential Pricing System and export control on the scrap metal recycling industry and the livelihoods of waste pickers.

Stakeholders proposed the following interventions, among others:

- Binding commitments for and enforcement of local public procurement to boost demand for domestic steel products, particularly through public infrastructure spend and supplier

development programmes of State-owned Enterprises;

- Targeted interventions and support to assist sub-sectors such as the wire and the scrap metal industries;
- Resolution of electricity pricing negotiations and inefficiencies in rail and freight logistics;
- Financial support, such as development financing and tax incentives, for downstream industries;
- A rail reindustrialisation compact, led by the Presidency; and
- Stronger enforcement of policies and trade remedies to prevent circumvention thereof, illicit and underpriced imports.

The committee welcomed the progress made by the DTIC and its entities in implementing trade remedies, assisting with the negotiations of electricity prices and

support to resolving the crisis at ArcelorMittal South Africa.

However, the committee was of the view that there is a need for effective and thorough engagement with the sector in developing a clear, coordinated, state-led strategy and intervention to stabilise and revive this industry.

The committee called on the DTIC to work with its counterparts to resolve concerns such as the implementation and enforcement of localisation and local public procurement policies and tighten import enforcement to curb illicit steel product imports.

The steel sector must be saved. However, this requires holistic government support and industry investment to ensure that a modern and competitive sector can emerge. Therefore, the DTIC and its entities should prioritise the review of the Master Plan and affected interventions".



The Economy

SOUTH AFRICANS deserves 'decent work' more than precarious job opportunities

Employment Public Works Programme (EPWP) employed in municipalities in Limpopo clearing the public roads after torrential floods.

COSATU was highly concerned about the post-1994 economic growth path and argued that 'the hegemony of the working class was being eroded by forces that seek a deracialised form of capitalism, with no interest in the long term objective of building socialism'.

The Federation pointed that 'Economic growth reproduces inequality of incomes and power, poverty and unemployment. The structure of economic growth has deepened

the structural instability associated with mineral-dependent economies in a finance-led world. In almost all spheres of society, power still rests with the white minority, which co-opts the black elite, in pursuance of the interests of capital and imperialism.'

COSATU elaborated that 'In South Africa, the canon of neo-liberal thinking remains the Growth, Employment, and Redistribution (GEAR) —regarded as merely a short-term stabilisation programme by its

advocates.

GEAR's economic principles and philosophy continue to dominate the practice and articulation of policy, even post-Polokwane. The principle of GEAR was that 'growth must occur first, and then employment will follow. Once employment increases, the distribution of income will improve.'

This principle, COSATU argues that 'it was in sharp contrast to the Reconstruction Development Programme (RDP), was reflected in the

persistent setting of growth targets as the primary focus rather than targets for employment and income distribution.'

'In a GEAR framework, economic policy must first promote economic growth, this in turn will generate the demand for labour and therefore increase employment; employment will increase people's incomes and thereby lead to an improvement in the distribution of income'.

COSATU ShopSteward Magazine caught up with

Mlulami Mike Ntutela, a former national educator at DITSELA, NEHAWU, FAWU, Workers College

and a researcher at NALSU, who argued that ‘the job opportunities are not full employment as envisaged

in the COSATU Discussion Paper, “Pathways Towards Full Employment”.

He argued South Africans deserves ‘decent work’ than precarious job opportunities.

“There Shall Be Work And Security: The state must recognise the right and duty of all to work, as well as provide full employment benefits”- Freedom Charter, 1955.

Contrary to a belief that it is a responsibility of the private sector to create “full employment” rather than “job opportunities”, the public sector seems to be the only source of semi-sustainable jobs.

Employment Public Works Programme (EPWP) is providing unsustainable job opportunities and informalising the job market into a precarious and unsafe work environment.

Government should be facilitating job creation through policies on indigenisation, incentivisation, protectionism and encouragement of good and humane investments.

When we see statistics being presented by politicians during SONA, SOPA or SOCA, we should be aware that “job opportunities” are not “full employment”, and that “ucuntsu uyafana nocwaka” (loosely translated to mean that a bit is NOT better than nothing) as people cannot plan with stipends and job insecurity they get from EPWP interventions.

Incapacity on the part of both the state and government not to re-industrialise and socialise the economy is adversely creating a window of opportunity for some in big business and the Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises sector, particularly the called tenderpreneurs, to further exploit and informalise poor workers through outsourcing key functions or agencifying apex productive operations.

The inability of

government not to pay this sector expeditiously may be a snag in its integrity and intended operational methods but that should not be a problem of already impoverished workers in our country.

Afterall, the government is having a responsibility to ensure that sustainable jobs are created by a law-abiding private sector.

Hopefully, we will all be spared from seeing a desperate race by poor and desperate black young people registering at sometimes bogus and unaccredited institutions to study public or finance management courses as if there will always be a “public” or “finance” to be managed when the very public sector is being privatised and/or agencified.

South Afrikan workers deserve a better regulated job market with inclusive

and people-centred profit-making growth and development prospects despite a fast-changing, highly automated and grossly deregulated world of work.

It is relatively better to measure a national productivity index (NPI) when productive industries prioritise a labour component that is constituted by its workers who are community members and parents first before putting profits above everything in the job market.

Hopefully, there will be a reason for bosses and workers to harmonise workplaces, and that trade unions will again be attractive to employed and unemployed workers once that shift has been achieved.

Workers’ rights are human rights too!



The Economy

LEFT BEHIND:

Why the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) Risk eluding Africa? - By Sindiswa Ngcobo

Sindiswa Ngcobo argues that 'Structural breakdown and deep poverty leave Africa highly vulnerable to health emergencies'.

As the United Nations 2030 deadline for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) rapidly approaches, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) data reveals that the continent is severely off-track and lags far behind.

Launched in 2015 as a universal blueprint for human dignity, prosperity and planetary health, the 17 SDGs were intended to be a shared obligation for all nations.

Yet, an analysis of global progress reveals a deep structural fissure.

While the developed nations possess the institutional stability and financial cushion to pivot toward these targets, underdeveloped regions in Africa remain trapped by historical and systemic barriers.

For the frontline nursing workforce, this global disparity is not a theoretical debate, it is an everyday

clinical reality measured in resource scarcity, systemic strain and preventable patient mortality.

To understand why Africa is structurally off-track, one must examine the vastly unequal starting lines between the Global North and Global South.

Developed countries operate within highly formalized economies, robust social safety nets, political stability and resilient public health infrastructure.

For these nations, working toward targets like SDG-3 and SDG-8 involves optimising existing, well-funded systems.

On the contrary, underdeveloped nations are forced to chase these identical targets while burdened by a legacy of underdevelopment and immense sovereignty challenges.

The stark imbalance means that, while the developed world discusses

digital health integration and advanced climate mitigation, African healthcare systems are frequently forced to triage basic survival.

Basically, Africa compared to developed countries were never equally yoked on SDGs targets.

For Africa, the path to 2030 is not merely blocked by a lack of will, but by three deeply entrenched interconnected structural crises, which are:

1. Chronic Political Instability;
2. Structural Unemployment; and
3. Burden of both Endemic and Pandemic Diseases.

By analysing these three pillars, healthcare professionals and policymakers can move past idealistic global rhetoric and confront the actual socio-political determinants that prevent the continent from realizing its development.

Let's analyse these three specific factors, among others, that are a stumbling block from reaching SDGs.

a) Political Instability:

This is a core disruptor of development. The foundation of any country's capacity to meet 2030 SDGs

relies on state stability, consistent policymaking and protected public infrastructure.

Across various regions in Africa, chronic political instability, coups, and localized conflicts act as the primary structural disruptors to long-term developmental planning.

The results of instability ripple into public sector where there will be diversion of necessary resources, destabilization in clinics and supply chain which will give birth to the Clinical brain drain due to frontliners, especially medical professionals, facing immense physical safety risks in a volatile environment.

This security threat accelerates the flight of skilled healthcare workers out of communities towards western nations, results into a crippled local healthcare workforce.

b) Structural Unemployment:

The political instability feeds directly into economic stagnation. Without a stable government, domestic and foreign investments evaporate, chocking off job creation.

This results in severe unemployment and result

into failing the SDG 8, mostly among Africa massive youth population. From a nursing perspective that will results into a direct critical health failures and eruption of airborne and water diseases.

c) Unrelenting Burden of Endemic and Pandemic Diseases:

The compounding pressure of the above structural breakdown and deep poverty leave Africa highly vulnerable to health emergencies.

As a continent, Africa is forever facing the "triple burden" of diseases that is: Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), Tuberculosis and Malaria and defending against sudden highly infectious outbreaks.

The vulnerability of the continent is starkly visible currently as World Health Organisation (WHO) recently declared the Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda.

This crisis just underscores the specific biological barriers that continue to keep Africa from fulfilling its 2030 targets.

In conclusion, the above-mentioned structural intersection of political instability, pervasive

unemployment and unrelenting epidemic cycles makes it clear that Africa's inability to achieve the 2030 SDGs is not a failure of clinical intent, but a symptom of far deeper systematic fractures.

As long as these macro crises remain unaddressed, the African continent will remain locked in the cycle of reactive crisis management.

Realizing that the 2030 targets are out of reach should not lead to despair, however.

Instead, it must serve as the propeller of a profound paradigm shift where professional bodies, academic institutions and unions must cultivate a new generation of nurse leaders who are equipped for advocacy and structural policy design.

As the International Nurses Day theme reads: ***Our Nurses, Our Future, Empowered Nurses Save Lives!***

Sindiswa Ngcobo is a Coordinator of Bargaining, Organising and Campaigns at DENOSA Headquarters in Pretoria.

SAFETY IS A COLLECTIVE Responsibility: Building

a Safer Gauteng for All - By Dr Bandile Masuku

The National Development Plan (NDP) on safety and security aims to create an environment where people living in South Africa feel safe at home, on the street, at school, at work, and in public spaces. And law enforcement agencies must and should ensure all citizens feel safe and are safe.

For working-class communities, safety and security are not abstract concepts. They determine whether workers return home safely after a late shift, whether children can walk to school without fear, and whether communities can live with dignity.

The right to safety is

therefore inseparable from the broader struggle for social and economic justice.

Recently, Gauteng Provincial Police Commissioner Lieutenant-General Tommy Mthombeni presented the province's Fourth Quarter Crime Statistics for the 2025/26 financial year. The figures revealed a significant

decline across most major crime categories, continuing a positive trend that has been sustained over recent years. Murders, rapes, car hijackings and other serious community-reported crimes have all shown encouraging reductions.

This demonstrates that focused law-enforcement interventions, supported by

partnerships with communities and other agencies are yielding results. These improvements deserve recognition. Thousands of families have been spared the impact of violent crime because of the hard work of dedicated police officers, community structures and other law-enforcement agencies.

However, statistics alone do

not fully capture how people experience safety in their daily lives.

Many Gauteng residents continue to feel unsafe despite the decline in reported crime. Fear of crime remains widespread. Communities are exposed daily to reports of criminal activity and allegations involving some members of law enforcement.

Recent national developments, including the establishment of the Madlanga Commission of Inquiry following allegations raised by KwaZulu-Natal Police Commissioner Lieutenant-General Nhlanhla Mkhwanazi, the suspension of Police Minister Senzo Mchunu and scrutiny involving senior police officials, have undoubtedly affected public confidence in criminal justice institutions.

The challenge before us is therefore twofold: we must continue reducing crime while also rebuilding public trust and strengthening the feeling of safety in our communities.

One important way to strengthen confidence is through transparency and accountability. The regular release of crime statistics allows communities to monitor progress and hold institutions accountable.

Likewise, independent processes such as the Madlanga Commission demonstrate that no individual is above the law and that

allegations of corruption and misconduct will be investigated openly. Accountability is not a weakness; it is a strength of a democratic society.

A second priority is the strengthening of community policing. Government alone cannot win the battle against crime. Every ward must become an active participant in building safer communities. Community Policing Forums, community patrollers, neighbourhood watches and civic organisations must be consolidated, supported and strengthened. Visible patrols by trained community volunteers can improve the sense of safety while also serving as a deterrent to criminal activity.

Working-class communities have historically demonstrated the power of collective action. The same spirit must be harnessed in the fight against crime. Communities should become the eyes and ears of the criminal justice system.

Residents must be encouraged to report criminal activity, suspicious behaviour and the presence of dangerous offenders in their neighbourhoods. Information supplied by ordinary citizens often provides the breakthrough needed to disrupt criminal networks and prevent violent crimes before they occur.

Another critical intervention is the reduction of gun

violence. Research from around the world consistently shows a strong relationship between the availability of illegal firearms and violent crime. More guns in the hands of criminals inevitably mean more murders, robberies and intimidation.

It is therefore encouraging that the Gauteng Provincial Legislature's Portfolio Committee on Community Safety has launched the Gun-Free Gauteng Campaign. The campaign aims to monitor firearm-related crime, support the confiscation and destruction of illegal firearms, and encourage responsible firearm owners to surrender unwanted weapons through legal processes.

Every illegal firearm removed from our streets represents lives potentially saved and communities made safer.

At the same time, we must remember that effective policing depends on the wellbeing of police officers themselves. Police officers cannot be expected to deliver quality service while operating from dilapidated police stations, facing severe resource shortages, or lacking essential equipment.

Investment in police infrastructure, technology, mobility and working conditions must remain a priority. Supporting honest

and dedicated police officers is not only in their interest; it is in the interest of every resident who relies on their service.

Ultimately, creating a safer Gauteng requires a whole-of-society approach. Government, labour, business, community organisations, faith-based structures and ordinary residents all have a role to play.

The recent decline in crime statistics shows that progress is possible. Yet our ambition must be greater than reduced crime figures.

Our goal should be a Gauteng where people are not only safe but genuinely feel safe; where communities trust the criminal justice system; where accountability is non-negotiable; where illegal guns are removed from our streets; and where citizens work together with law-enforcement agencies to build safer neighbourhoods.

Safety is therefore not the responsibility of the police alone. It is a collective responsibility.

Together, we can build a safer Gauteng for all.

The article is written by Dr Bandile Masuku, a Member of the Provincial Legislature in Gauteng and the Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Community Safety in the Gauteng Provincial Legislature.



The Economy

VIOLENT ATTACKS ON black African migrants will not resolve national employment crisis - By Dr. Khwezi Mabasa

Retrenched workers accessing their unemployment funds as mobile service points led by the Unemployment Insurance Fund and the Department of Employment and Labour in Makapanstad recently.

South Africans commemorated two significant events in May: Africa and Workers' Days.

The societal reflective moments normally evoke political nostalgia about the importance of African unity and workers' solidarity in challenging racialised capitalism over recent decades.

Yet this year's reflections were marred by Afrophobic and tribalist attacks on black African migrants.

The leaders and supporters of the movement argue that black African migrants are primarily responsible for the country's perennial unemployment, crime and low-quality public service problems.

The claims justify the violence and discriminatory stereotypes that are loaded with colonial racist assumptions.

Furthermore, the organisations have not provided any evidence to substantiate the

claims, especially around employment and labour absorption into various economic sectors.

There is consensus that the country's socio-economic inequality continues to affect black working-class individuals, households and communities disproportionately.

Statistics South Africa's household and labour force surveys point to racialised and gendered disparities in employment as well as household expenditure figures. But it is erroneous

to attribute and reduce the structural socio-economic challenges to increased migration.

What is more concerning is the essentialist Afrophobic logic that underpins the claims, which narrows systemic economic problems to individual or group identity.

The unsubstantiated sweeping generalisations should be questioned on empirical and political grounds.

First, South Africa has a

structural unemployment problem that is not primarily caused by increased labour migration.

The research evidence on the persistent labour market inequalities and unemployment points us to different core causes.

For example, sectors that have historically employed large sections of the black working class have declined since the late 1980s.

Deindustrialisation, trade liberalisation, deregulating financial markets and decreased state intervention all contributed to the structural weaknesses experienced in high labour absorbing sectors such as manufacturing, textiles and agro-food system value chains.

The trend has a direct impact on the employment figures in the country and needs to be reversed.

Several civil society organisations, research institutes and the labour movement have posited several policy solutions to increase employment through implementing various industrial and macro-economic policies.

The second flaw in the claims about employment relates to the nature of the

labour market.

Research indicates that the country has a multilayered labour market structure because workers have differentiated wages, employment security and industrial relations rights.

The workforce is divided into two main groups: a small group of workers with standard employment status and rights while most employees occupy precarious jobs with minimal labour protections.

The context makes it easier for employers to dismiss workers or exploit them by taking advantage of labour market flexibility.

The job losses that are recorded in several sectors and communities are related to the trends and not migration.

Additionally, migrant workers constitute a small portion of overall employed workers. Most surveys conducted by both state and non-state research organisations indicate that migrant workers constitute less than 10% of the overall labour workforce.

The discussion needs to be further disaggregated into sector specific trends so that citizens and policymakers can obtain a clear evidence-

based picture.

Reports from organisations such as the African Centre for Migration and Society and the Migrating for Work Research Consortium found that non-South African migrant employees usually occupy precarious and low-paying jobs.

The facts challenge the sweeping generalisations about employment articulated in the recent violent attacks.

The third and final shortcoming in this shift towards heightened anti-migrant labour movement is state centrism.

There are minimal efforts aimed at holding private actors and businesses accountable for creating labour market super-exploitation. Most of the frustration about exclusion from labour markets is directed towards black African migrants or state authorities.

Yet there are cases where both large and small private businesses continue to hire migrant workers in exploitative labour conditions.

The state-centric emphasis in the movements overlooks this trend and redirects the core causes to marginalised

migrant workers and government. Most South Africans agree that breaking labour laws and regulations is wrong. But the policy solutions for addressing this circumvention of labour law must be based on evidence and directed towards the core institutions causing the crisis.

More importantly, the country needs labour market and macroeconomic policy reforms that increase employment figures substantially.

The alternative policy proposals are articulated in many labour movement and civil society formal policy submissions.

The main propositions include the following interventions: strengthening labour rights implementation, protecting high-labour absorbing sectors, decreasing trade liberalisation, demand-led fiscal policy frameworks and decreasing concentrated market structures across the economy.

Dr. Khwezi Mabasa is a part-time sociology lecturer at the University of Pretoria and Economic and Social Policy lead at Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung South Africa.

POST OFFICE SAVED as a one stop shop for citizens to access public services

In late May 2025, SAPO's business rescue practitioners told Members of Parliament that they had successfully stabilised SAPO and were preparing the entity to exit business rescue. This is despite coming under fire for not updating committee members and not making significant progress in turning SAPO around. The practitioners claimed that SAPO was in its best shape since 2012, and that they were preparing a court application to begin the process of terminating the business rescue proceedings.

Organised labour has welcomed the revamping of the South African Post Office as a public entity to enhance postal and communication services in poor working-class communities.

This comes after the

Gauteng High Court ruled that 'the South African Post Office (SAPO) must exit business rescue. This is encouraging news following the recent appointment of the SAPO Board.

COSATU Parliamentary

Coordinator, Matthew Parks explains that the Federation welcomed the application submitted to the High Court.

The ruling is in line with wishes of the Communications Workers'

Union (CWU) and workers at SAPO, who have long called for fresh, competent and committed leadership to be put in place and to be tasked to restore the once thriving public entity to its former glory.'

Parks said, “For far too long SAPO has been allowed to deteriorate to a state of near collapse.

The absence of dedicated and fit for purpose leadership has been at the centre of this painful decline in addition to SAPO’s failing to keep pace with structural shifts in the postal and communications sectors.

Matters have been made worse by the tenure of the Business Rescue Practitioners (BRPs) appointed through a court agreement with the creditors and the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies in 2023 with little to show beyond retrenching thousands of SAPO employees and plunging their families into absolute poverty and despair, closing hundreds of branches and thus further shrinking its customer base and potential to recover.

Workers have been left for years without seeing their meagre wages being adjusted for inflation yet the BRPs made sure to pay themselves sumptuous fees”.

“The turnaround of other embattled state-owned enterprises from Eskom to Transnet, Metro Rail and South African Airways, proves that they can be fixed and once again contribute to stimulating economic growth

and creating jobs with competent management, the removal of criminal and corrupt elements, filling frontline vacancies and recruiting critical skills, and investing in the company’s infrastructure and capacity.”

“The SAPO and Postbank Amendment Acts passed by the 6th Parliament provide a turnaround plan for both institutions, by allowing SAPO to enter the highly lucrative courier business and to become a one stop shop for citizens to access public services and enabling the Postbank to become a fully licensed state bank aimed at working class and rural residents all too often redlined by the private banking sector”.

The South African Post Office has, for a number of years, been suffering increasing financial losses due to mismanagement, corruption, and competition from the private sector.

On 12 April 2023 it was provisionally liquidated, putting the jobs of 16,400+ employees at risk and creating problems for its clients, especially in the rural areas.

However, the company appointed business rescue practitioners, setting the process aside. The business rescue practitioners assumed

the responsibility of the Post Office’s Board of Directors, as well as the Accounting Authority. The business rescue plan was adopted by the group’s creditors in December 2023, with the turnaround strategy seeking to close several branches and reduce SAPO’s workforce.

SAPO subsequently retrenched over 4,300 employees during April and May 2024. Furthermore, 366 Post Office branches permanently closed, leaving the total number of branches remaining at 650.

SAPO received a R2.4 billion bailout from the government budget in 2023/24 financial year. For its 2024 financial year, the Post Office recorded an operating loss of R2.17 billion.

In May 2025, the South African Minister of Employment and Labour formally implemented a R381 million bailout for SAPO.

The signed agreement between SAPO and the country’s Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) aims to preserve 6,000 jobs and support the revitalization of the Post Office. This is the first strategic partnership between the two entities.

The UIF will use the Temporary Employer-Employee Relief Scheme (TERS) to inject over R381

million into SAPO over a 6-month period.

The Department of Labour stated that SAPO will submit regular reports, maintain transparent accounting records, and implement a detailed turnaround strategy as a condition of the funding.

SAPO’s business rescue practitioners stated in a presentation to the Portfolio Committee that R3.8 billion in funding was still needed to implement its business rescue plan.

The Post Office’s corporate plan through to 2030 is positive and shows that the group anticipates a continued reduction of losses over the next 5 years, with a turn to profit expected in 2028.

“COSATU will be seeking urgent engagements with the Ministry and Parliament’s Portfolio Committee for Communications and Digital Technologies to provide comfort to workers that their jobs will be secured, monies paid and that a turnaround plan will be put in place.

It is critical that Treasury provide the necessary financial support to enable such a revival of SAPO to be implemented as a matter of the highest priority,” concluded Parks.



THE ECONOMY

POSITION PAPER FOR COST OF LIVING CAMPAIGN 2026

Background

Workers in South Africa face a deepening cost of living crisis.

They earn less than they did a decade ago (taking inflation into account) while prices for essential goods and services such as electricity, food, transport and water have increased steeply.

Low and middle-income households are worse affected as they pay a larger share of their income on essential goods and services.

Even though the inflation rate has lowered since a high point during the Covid-19 pandemic, the prices of goods and services have not dropped.

The facts

- 21% of Black South Africans live below the food poverty line (R855)
- 44% of Black South Africans live below the lower-bound poverty line (R1 415)
- 75% of Black South Africans live below the upper-bound poverty line (R2 846)
- Over the last 5 years (Jan 2020 – Dec 2025) inflation was 31%. Yet electricity and fuel increased by 80%, water increased by 42%, health increased by 32%, medical insurance increased by 58%, passenger transport increased by 35%, primary and secondary school education increased by 38%, and food prices increased by 45%¹
- Electricity prices are expected to increase by 18% over the next 2 years²
- The War in the Middle East has resulted in high increases for the price of petrol, diesel and LPG.

Why are we facing a rising cost of living crisis?

The working class in South Africa is already under severe strain:

- 46.6% are unemployed or make up the potential labour force (expanded definition of unemployment)³
- Half the workforce (median) earns R37.16 per

hour or less⁴

- Half the workers or less (median) in agriculture earn R26.12 per hour⁵
- Half of all domestic workers or less (median) than R21.99 per hour⁶
- Non-compliance with National Minimum Wage (NMW)

The rising cost of living crisis is a result of decisions made by government, regulators, state-owned entities as well as profiteering by private companies. Government austerity measures have resulted in insufficient investment into infrastructure such as railways, schools and hospitals and into declining spending on a per capita basis on health and education.

Protracted operational and financial crises in state-owned enterprises (SOEs) have contributed to these price hikes. The working class is unable to sustain cost-plus regulated pricing in Eskom where higher costs are transmitted to consumers.

The logistics failures at Transnet have forced migration of bulk goods

to road transport which is more expensive and highly sensitive to changes in the fuel price.

The rapid rise in administered prices (which are set by government or regulatory bodies) such as electricity and water, negatively impacts both households and businesses.

Capital's pursuit of profit at all costs has also contributed to the cost-of-living crisis. The Competition Commission's Cost of Living reports highlight a 'rocket and feather' trend where prices are quick to increase but slow to fall when input prices fall.

For COSATU, this is greedflation where corporate strategies prioritise maintaining high retail margins as the expense of food security.

The impact of Greedflation on workers

The impact of greedflation in relation to food prices is severe for workers. The average household food basket is R5 328.53 according to the Pietermaritzburg Economic Justice and Dignity

Group (PMBEJD).

They conclude that the high cost of core staple foods (food that is bought first to ensure that the family do not go hungry whilst ensuring meals can be cooked) results in a lot of proper nutritious food being removed from the family plates.

"The consequences of high costs on the core foods have a negative impact on overall household health and well-being, and child development". (PMBEJD Household Affordability Index, March 2026)

30% of boy children and 25% of girl children under the age of 5 years have stunted growth. These children are shorter than their expected height for the age due to inadequate nutrition. Stunting affects physical growth and has long term impacts on brain development, immunity levels and overall health.

When wages run out before the month does, workers borrow. 82% of South African households are in debt. Workers are not borrowing for luxuries. They are borrowing to eat, to pay

school fees, to keep the lights on – it's how they survive the gap between what they earn and what everything costs.

Household debt was 61.8% of disposable income in Q4 2025. Research by DebtBusters compared consumers who applied for debt counselling in 2016 and in Q4 2025⁷.

They found that in real terms consumers are taking home 47% less today than they did a decade ago (with nominal income decreasing by 2% and inflation being 49%). They also found that consumers need 71% of their take home pay to service debt before entering debt counselling.⁸

The impact on women

The cost-of-living crisis is a working-class women's crisis first. Rising electricity and water costs extend women's unpaid working day. Rising electricity and water costs don't just squeeze household budgets – they extend women's unpaid working day.

In sub-Saharan Africa, women spend more than three times longer on

¹ Calculated from StatsSA CPI Excel sheet from Jan 2020 to Dec 2025

² Competition Commission Report on Cost of Living March 2026

³ QLFS Q4 2025 – excel timeseries

⁴ Calculation from UCT in April 2026 for 2025

⁵ Calculation from UCT in April 2026 for 2025

⁶ Calculation from UCT in April 2026 for 2025

⁷ SARB Quarterly Bulletin March 2026

⁸ DebtBusters Q4 2025 Debt Index

unpaid care work than men: cooking, cleaning, caring for children and elderly family members, and keeping households running⁹. When the electricity bill can't be paid, it is women who cook over open fires.

When water is cut or unaffordable, it is women and girls who walk to fetch it. Every increase in water and electricity costs is a tax on women's time. In the paid economy, women face a double burden.

South African women's unemployment and potential labour force rate is higher than men's – 46.6% versus 38.1%. Working women are concentrated in the lowest-paid sectors and domestic workers, the vast majority of whom are women, are often excluded from full labour protections.

COSATU demands:

The cost-of-living crisis is not inevitable. It is the result of decisions that can be reversed. Those with the power to act must now be held accountable.

Government controls electricity and water tariffs.

Government controls the fuel levy. The Competition Commission has the power to investigate whether food

companies are profiteering. Employers have the power to pay wages that actually cover the cost of living.

COSATU is demanding action – from all of them.

DEMAND 1: Enforce the National Minimum Wage and advance a living wage

Given:

- High levels of non-compliance with the NMW.
- The National Minimum Wage for R30.24 translates into a monthly income of R5 320 which is less than the average food basket of R5 329.
- Wages must cover what living actually costs - the real monthly cost of food, transport, electricity, housing etc.
- EPWP workers are deliberately kept outside the NMW.

COSATU demands:

- Greater enforcement of the National Minimum Wage with more labour inspectors.
- EPWP wages align with the NMW.
- Above inflation increases in the NMW.
- A living wage floor be set for all workers with expanded social protection, access to basic needs and

the implementation of the National Health Insurance.

- Urgent steps be taken to increase employment and decent work.

DEMAND 2: Increase social grants and implement a Universal Basic Income Grant

Given:

- The Child Support Grant of R560 is below the food poverty line of R855 and below the average cost of R935 to secure a basic nutritious diet for a child in March 2026 .
- The Social Relief of Distress Grant (SRD) is R370 per month and the Old-age Grant is R2 320 per month. These grants may assist people, but they do not bring people out of poverty – with the upper-bound poverty line at R2 846 per month.

COSATU demands:

- An increase in the value of grants
- Government finalise the roadmap for a permanent Universal Basic Income Grant that is first indexed to the food poverty line and moves beneficiaries to a the upper-bound poverty line

DEMAND 3:

Freeze electricity and water prices/ reduce electricity

and water prices

Given:

- Electricity and water prices are set by government and municipalities.
- Working-class households are being crushed by bills they cannot afford to pay. COSATU demands:
- Government decrease electricity and water prices and provide increased support through a higher lifeline tariff.
- Government curb utilities' price increases to no more than inflation.

DEMAND 4:

Lower fuel prices

Given:

- Fuel inflation over the last 5 years was higher than inflation
- Fuel prices have risen sharply since the onset of the war with Iran
- LPG is a primary source of fuel for the poorest households

COSATU demands:

- Treasury must continue to lower the General Fuel Levy and the Road Accident Fund (RAF) while global oil prices are extremely high and volatile.
- The relief provided by Treasury must be increased.
- Government must introduce a subsidy and

⁹ Invisible jobs: Unpaid care and women's employment in rural sub-Saharan Africa

maximum retail price cap that protects indigent households from price increases in LPG.

DEMAND 5:
Lower food prices

Given:

- The Competition Commission has shown that the agricultural sector is highly concentrated and that the retail sector has increased prices of certain foods even though producer costs were stable.
- Previous work by the Competition Commission – such as tackling the wheat and bread cartels – had brought prices down. Their investigation into data pricing also brought data prices down.

COSATU demands:

- The Competition Commission must intervene to lower food prices.
- Government expand the list of food products that are exempt from VAT to cover all core staple foods as well as essential proteins.

DEMAND 6:
Break the debt cycle

Given:

- When wages don't cover

costs, workers borrow and get trapped in debt. Predatory lenders target workers. Garnishee orders strip pay before workers even see it.

- Strict regulation of lenders targeting workers.

DEMAND 7:
End austerity

Given:

as health and education – which are essential for working-class families

- Austerity budgets limit employment in the public service – such that we have shortages of nurses, teachers, doctors etc
- Austerity budgets limit sufficient increases in government grant

COSATU demands:

- An end to austerity budgeting

DEMAND 8:

Lower Government Employees Medical Scheme increase and introduce the National Health Insurance

Given:

- GEMS proposed a 9.5% increase this year
- Medical aid inflation over the past 5 years is already much higher than average inflation

COSATU demands:

- GEMS reduce the 9.5% increase
- GEMS urgently address deep failures including fraud, corruption risks, procurement weaknesses, administrative excess, claims leakages and weak financial controls.

**Treasury must
continue to lower
the General Fuel
Levy and the Road
Accident Fund
(RAF) while global
oil prices are
extremely high
and volatile**

COSATU demands:

- An end to garnishee abuse

- Austerity budgets decrease per capita spending on services such



Workers honour Madiba on Mandela Day

The Itireleng Physically Disabled Centre was renovated in partnership with Mineworkers Investment Trust, Mineworkers Development Agency, Sam Tambani Research Institute, Mineworkers Investment Company, JB Marks, Crosbi Moni Artisan Academy and Elija Barayi Memorial Training Centre.

"No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite." - Nelson Mandela.

South Africans from all walks of life, in various sectors of the

economy, honoured the revolutionary contributions and the legacy of the former South Africa's first democratically elected president, Nelson Mandela on Mandela Day on the 18th of July 2026.

COSATU affiliates led various voluntary projects to dedicate their 67-minutes to changing the lives of those who are less privileged in poor working

-class communities.

Madiba believed that each of us has the power to make a difference. Whether through service, compassion or standing alongside others, every act matters.

2026 Mandela Day activities were geared to eradicate poverty and inequalities.

In Gauteng, the National

Union of Mineworkers refurbished the Itireleng Centre for Physically Disabled Persons in Mohlakeng, West Rand and donated dignity packs, and revamped food gardens.

In Tshwane, both DENOSA and NEHAWU led Mandela Day activities by cleaning at the George Mukhari Academic Hospital.

Healthcare trade unions

MANDELA DAY



Members of NEHAWU at George Mukhari Academic hospital participated on activities for #MandelaDay2026. NEHAWU members assisted to clean the Paediatric Ward.

acknowledged the Mandela Month Surgical Marathon held across various hospitals as part of commemorating the legacy of TaTa Mandela through improving access to quality healthcare and reducing surgical waiting lists. Some of the participating surgical marathon hospitals were Chris Hani Baragwanath Academic, DR George Mukhari Academic, Rob Ferreira, Steve Biko Academic, Mokopane, George Masebe and Charlotte Maxeke.

Meanwhile, government urged citizens to participate in annual Mandela Day activities. President Cyril Ramaphosa participated in the Mandela Day Walk and Run, organised in partnership with the Nelson Mandela Foundation and other corporates in Pretoria.

President Ramaphosa said, 'The annual commemoration encourages active citizenship and collective action, inspiring South Africans to help build a more just, caring and equitable society through service to others.' Various Embassies issued statements, 'urging global citizens to continue to change the world by carrying his legacy forward, making the world a better, more equal place.'

Let's make everyday a Mandela Day.



SAMATU leadership and staff observed the International Nelson Mandela Day by rejuvenating the play area in the Paediatric Wards at Kalafong and Dr George Mukhari Hospitals with some educational charts, colouring books, and story books.



Health Matters

LENACAPAVIR LAUNCH, a historic breakthrough for HIV prevention

Gauteng Health Department is strengthening HIV prevention efforts with the rollout of Lenacapavir, a long-acting HIV prevention injection administered once every six months and now available at 133 healthcare facilities across the province.

President Cyril Ramaphosa and the Minister of Health, Dr. Aaron Motsoaledi launched the national roll-out of Lenacapavir at Secunda, Mpumalanga, accompanied by the Premier of Mpumalanga, Mandla Ndlovu, representatives

from SANAC, MECs of Health and other stakeholders.

The launch marks a significant milestone in South Africa's HIV response, positioning the country among the first in the world to introduce Lenacapavir through the public health

system and expanding prevention options for people at substantial risk of HIV infection.

The Minister of Health, Dr. Aaron Motsoaledi administered the first Lenacapavir injection to a 21-year-old patient who

had tested HIV-negative at Paulina Morapedi Clinic.

Lenacapavir is a long-acting HIV prevention medicine administered as a single injection twice a year. At initiation, it is taken together with four tablets, after which the twice-

Health Matters

yearly injections can provide powerful protection against HIV infection.

Addressing the launch, President Ramaphosa confirmed that “As we launch this programme, 360 public health facilities across six provinces and 24 districts are ready to provide Lenacapavir.

This rollout represents a major step forward in our

efforts to prevent new HIV infections and move closer to ending AIDS as a public health threat.”

The World Health Organisation has applauded South Africa for the historic launch.

Meanwhile, COSATU has noted ‘the National launch of Lenacapavir, a proven method of preventing future HIV infections as part of

the strategy to eradicate prevalence of the infection by 2030.

Workers are urged to consider participating and protecting themselves from HIV with just two injections a year. No daily pills, no missed doses’.

‘COSATU continues to support worker’s testing for Human immunodeficiency viruses (HIV) and sexually

transmitted infections (STIs), using condoms, being faithful and living positive lifestyle whilst making informed choices for a healthier future.

Already, some provinces such as Gauteng have launched Lenacapavir sites and surpassed the Provincial targets. If you have HIV, kindly start treatment. Protect yourself. Protect your partner’.

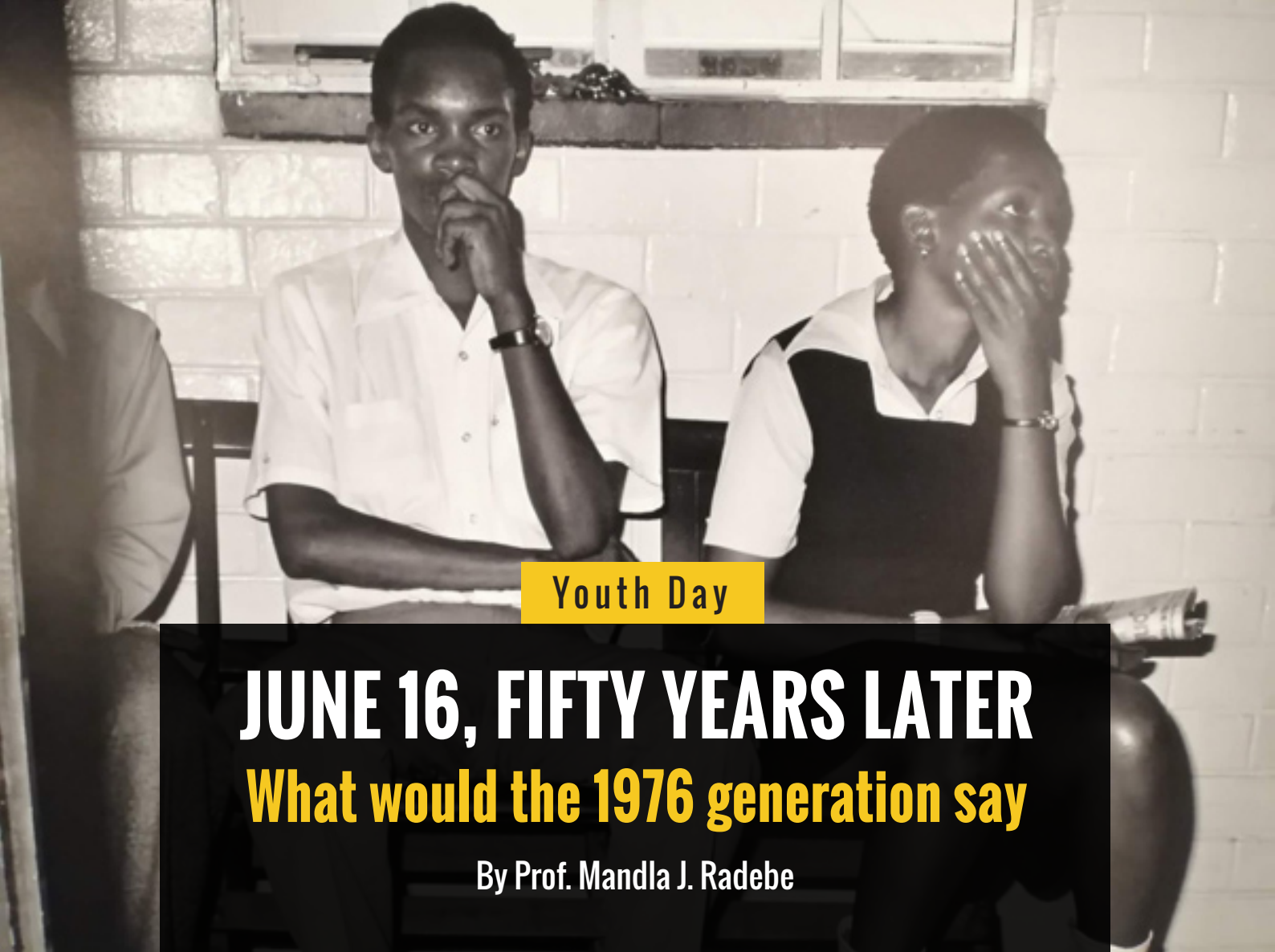


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Youth Day

JUNE 16, FIFTY YEARS LATER

What would the 1976 generation say

By Prof. Mandla J. Radebe

Students in Soweto waiting to enter the office of a principal in 1976.

There have been many June 16 commemorations since the 1994 democratic breakthrough, and many of them have been accorded a special status depending on the political mood of the country, the agenda of the moment and the dominant ideological currents seeking to interpret the meaning of that historic day.

This includes the renaming of June 16 as Youth Day, partly as an expression of the post-1994 reconciliation agenda and the attempt to construct Archbishop Desmond Tutu's beautiful but ultimately fleeting rainbow nation, a nation that was imagined with much hope but built on unresolved material contradictions.

So, let us also accord the 2026 anniversary a special significance, not because 50 is in itself more profound than 49 or 39, but because anniversaries, especially those that mark important moments in our history, force us to pause and reflect on how far we have come and the distance we still need to cover, particularly from the perspective of

the majority.

As the world commemorates the 50th anniversary of the June 16 Soweto uprising, it is perhaps an opportune moment for those who still care about the pursuit of a more just society not merely to remember this defining moment in our history with nostalgia, but also to reflect

honestly on the aspirations of that generation, what they sought to achieve and what remains unfinished in South Africa's democratic project.

In case some have forgotten, they can perhaps be forgiven for 50 years is a long time, on 16 June 1976 thousands of black schoolchildren marched peacefully through the streets of Soweto in protest against the apartheid government's decision to impose Afrikaans as a medium of instruction.

What began as a student demonstration against an unjust education policy soon became one of the most significant points in South Africa's liberation struggle. The students understood that language was not simply a neutral tool of communication but rather it is an instrument of domination, class power and ideological control.

They were young, disciplined and determined.

Mobilised largely through the South African Students' Movement and inspired by the ideas of the Black Consciousness Movement, they understood that the

attempt to force Afrikaans upon African learners was not isolated.

This was part of a broader system designed to deny African people dignity, knowledge, opportunity and historical agency.

The apartheid regime responded with the characteristic brutality for which it had become notorious.

Armed police confronted unarmed children, firing teargas and unleashing police dogs on the young protestors. Soon thereafter, live ammunition was used against schoolchildren, many of whom were barely in their teens.

Among the first victims was 12-year-old Hector Pieterse, whose dying body carried by Mbuyisa Makhubu became one of the most powerful symbols of resistance against apartheid.

The uprising soon spread across the country. Schools became sites of political mobilisation and townships were transformed into battlegrounds.

Hundreds were killed

and thousands injured, and yet the students refused to retreat. Through their courage and determination, they fundamentally altered the trajectory of South African history.

But 32 years since democracy, the energy and hype that used to accompany this day have largely petered out and dissipated. June 16, like many other commemorative days, has increasingly become just another holiday, a day off from work for people to run errands.

For those who can still afford it, it is a day to have a braai and enjoy a beer or two.

Apart from the predictable speeches from politicians, some of whom do not share the principles, discipline and radical commitment of the June 16 generation, much of what is said on this day rings as hollow as the political conscience of those who say it.

Many posture with nice-sounding rhetoric about what the June 16 heroes would say today, as if they possess some psychic power to speak on behalf of the dead. Rhetoric aside,

their declarations often show very little connection with historical demands and even less about the thoroughgoing nature of struggle for social and economic emancipation.

The poor, the marginalised and the working class are fatigued by speeches, rhetoric and empty ceremonial nationalism. Without sounding psychic myself, I suspect that the many departed heroes of 1976 would also be fatigued by speeches that do not translate into material transformation.

Perhaps the most important lesson of the 50th anniversary that must be confronted and embraced with honesty is the selfless and giving nature of the 1976 generation.

The generation of 1976 gave everything.

Too often, contemporary discussions about youth are framed almost exclusively around what society owes the young people. We are inundated with demands for free education, free housing, and demands for jobs.

While many of these demands emerge from genuine social and economic

hardship and cannot simply be dismissed.

However, there is danger when citizenship becomes defined solely by entitlement rather than responsibility and when the revolutionary ethics of sacrifice is replaced by a consumerist expectation that freedom must only deliver benefits without demanding discipline, service and collective commitment.

The youth of 1976 approached politics differently. They did not ask what the struggle could give them, instead they asked what they could give to the struggle.

Many sacrificed their education while others suffered detention, torture and exile. Many others abandoned promising careers to join the liberation movement and hundreds lost their lives. Thousands lost their youth.

Countless activists of this generation, the likes of Tsietsi Mashinini, Nokuthula Simelane and Barney Molokwane, never lived long enough to enjoy the fruits of the freedom

for which they fought.

They gave their lives so that future generations could have opportunities that were denied to them.

But there can be no doubt that those who died did not lay down their lives so that the majority of our people would wallow in poverty, trapped in an unending cycle of chronic unemployment and underdevelopment, while a small elite lives behind high walls in gated communities, protected by private security, treated in private hospitals and educating their children in private schools or abroad.

They did not sacrifice their youth so that the poor would continue to die in overcrowded and neglected hospitals, where desperation has become normalised.

Their sacrifice was not so that public schools would remain burdened by overcrowding and continue to be sites of poverty, hunger and the lasting legacy of apartheid spatial planning.

They did not confront the apartheid state so that

corruption could become so normal that every newspaper headline and radio bulletin sounds like another reminder that some of those entrusted with safeguarding the interests of the people have instead turned public office into a site of accumulation.

This is not what the class of 1976 gave their lives and youth for.

The tragedy of our contemporary moment is that while we celebrate their heroism every June, we too seldom embrace the ethic of sacrifice that defined them.

As the current generation, the beneficiaries of the sacrifices made by the generation of 1976, if we are to take a leaf from their example, we must ask ourselves a simple question: what exactly are we prepared to give.

The challenges facing South Africa today are different from those of 1976, but they are not less serious.

We are confronted by an escalating polycrisis characterised by

mass unemployment, entrenched inequality, persistent poverty, systemic corruption, growing social fragmentation and a worsening crisis of public trust.

Each challenge reinforces and amplifies the other and will not be solved by entitlement alone. They require active citizenship, ethical leadership, community organisations, class consciousness and collective action.

This lesson is perhaps best illustrated by the life of Elijah Barayi.

The article was written by Prof. Mandla J. Radebe, an Author, a Political Intellectual and a Media Strategist.

D - DAY!

The uprising that sparked unrest
throughout South Africa,
The spark that became the flares of fire
in all schools,
Soweto became volume of fire.
The young lions roared from corner to
corner, from street to street,
Tsietsi, the son of Mashinini commanded
his school soldiers,
D-Day that South African students rejected the
Afrikaans as the medium of instruction
for all school subjects.
Aluta continua!
Roar Young Lions Roar!

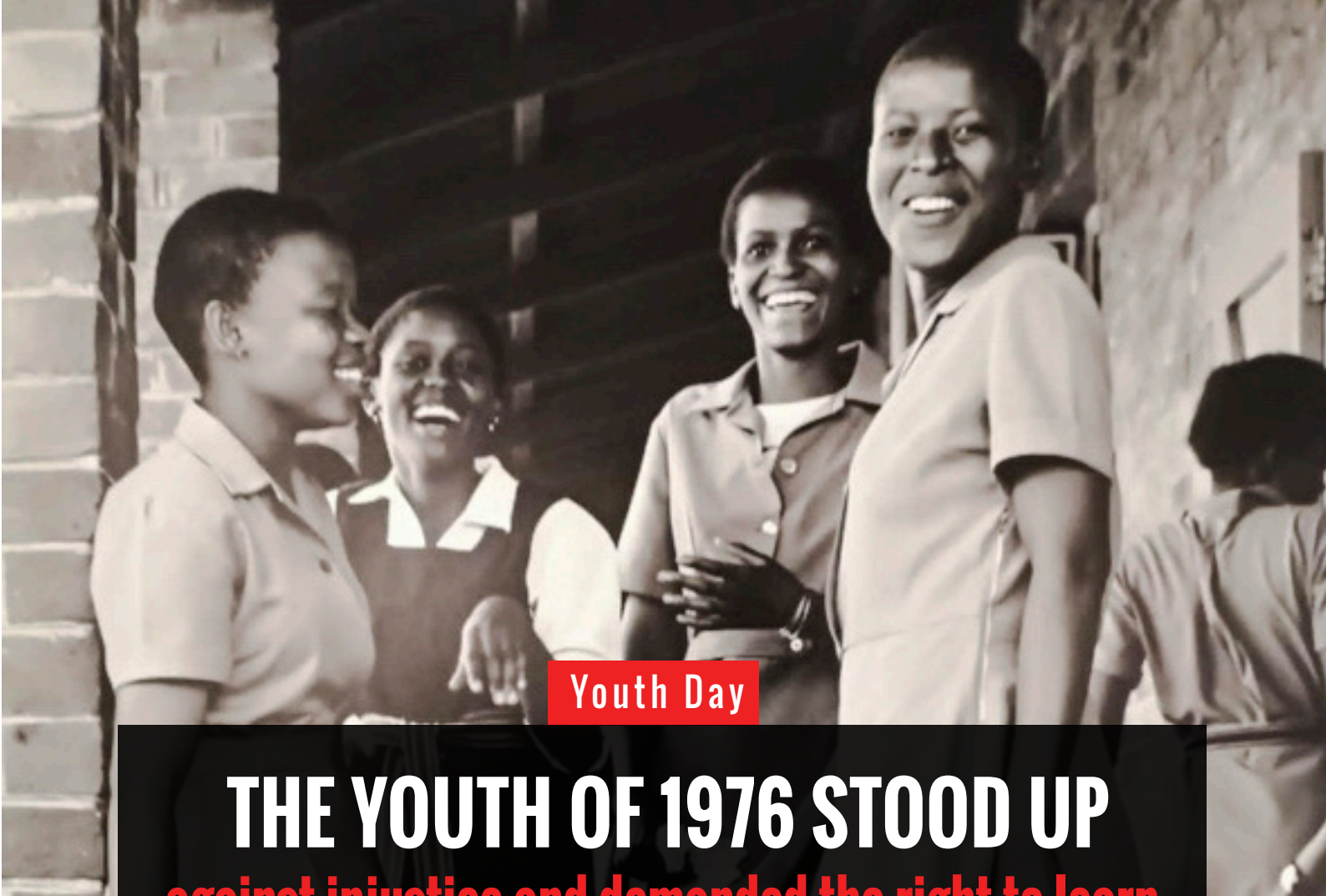
Let us remember those courageous students,
Let us remember and commemorate D-Day.
The day the African child was ambushed and
massacred by the wicked beast,
Challenging the Bantu Education,
Challenging the whole political and
cultural system.
Aluta continua!
Roar Young Lions Roar!

They were met with merciless apartheid
police brutality,
Students protest in the streets of the
South West Townships,
They faced the bullets with stones and
petrol bombs,

Kwaqhum' iMbokodo, kwa khal' isibham,
kwafu Muntu,
The street of Soweto became the guerrilla
warfare and the whole world was shocked.
Zolile Hector Pieterse was shot and killed
at the age of 12.
Let us pay tribute to the children of Soweto,
who lost their lives,
Pick up the spear of the those who fell
on the way side.
Aluta continua!
Roar Young Lions Roar!

Let us commemorate 50th anniversary
of the massacre of 1976
When the police opened fire on black students
protesting against enforcement of teaching
in Afrikaans,
The language of the oppressors.
Aluta continua!
Roar Young Lions Roar!

Not all is lost and we have no choice,
We have to prepare the material that we
have right now,
It is up to you and me to sharpen and
shape the youth of today.
Let us all equip them with revolutionary
weapons for tomorrow endeavours.
Aluta continua!
Roar Young Lions Roar!



THE YOUTH OF 1976 STOOD UP

against injustice and demanded the right to learn,
to dream and to determine their own future.

Students in Soweto at the Bantu schools in the township in 1976.

The 2026 Youth Day commemoration marks the 50th golden jubilee of the historic 1976 Soweto Uprising, under the theme: **“RESET@50 – The Future Calls”**.

Workers joined the commemorative Youth Day events to honour the courage

and sacrifice of the youth of 1976 and reminds us of the transformative power of education.

1976 Soweto Uprising produced meticulous youth leaders whose political consciousness was epitome of the democratic breakthrough in 1994.

The South Western Townships’ 1976 uprising mark an era in the political epoch of the liberation struggle which heightened class struggle and political struggle with militancy expressed by leaders such Tsietsi Mashinini.

COSATU The Shopsteward

Magazine caught up with **Oupa Mabuza**, one of the youth leaders to share his insights on what happened and how the moment changed the national politics and raised the political profile of the struggle against apartheid in the international arena. [Read more](#)

Youth Day

June 16 marks 50 years since the Soweto uprising and the anniversary presents an important opportunity to reflect on the events of that time and their impact on our lives today.

Black Soweto students marched in Soweto in protest against the apartheid government's decision to impose Afrikaans as a language of instruction in Bantu schools

Bantu Education Act was in place since 1953 to oppress blacks and entrench inferior education for blacks in order to reproduce cheap labourers in the mines, farms and factories in the labour market.

The enforcement of the mandatory language policy provided the trigger for the uprising.

The South African Police (SAP) action at Soweto sparked a widespread national protest in relation to the brutality meted against black students and repression.

Many fled to exile, and later joined the liberation movement's military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe as part of the pillars of the political struggle to render the government ungovernable and the state unworkable.

The student's protest led to the accelerated process of intensifying solidarity actions across the globe with the Anti-Apartheid Movement increasing in many countries.

which was Mathematics, and Aardryskunde which was Geography in Afrikaans.

Geskiedenis, which was History.

All students across the country were literally

Mboweni Primary school. There was a huge reception from all students, and many did not want to be left alone. All students were instructed to march to the Department of Bantu Education in Pretoria. Students demanded the abolition of corporal punishment and a single education system.

COSATU: There is a view that students were not primarily opposed to learning in Afrikaans but were politically influenced to oppose apartheid regime and its symbols. What's your take on that?

Masuku: Students took the banning of Afrikaans issue collectively across all political formations then. There were formations promoting the Freedom Charter and Black Consciousness ideology. Many students had their hair plaited as another form of youth resistance.

Thabo Sehume was a Black Consciousness activist, and all students worked together. A popular slogan during those days was: 'Black You are on own'.

COSATU: How did 1976 Soweto uprising affected other townships or Bantu settlements in various Bantustans? And which political parties were prominent then?

Masuku: The ANC and PAC were banned. Any association with the political parties was a risk as a student activist. AZAPO was more visible



WITS Art Museum (WAM) in partnership with IFAS held the 1976 Soweto Uprising Exhibition to remind South Africans about the political significance of the event which painted an ugly picture in the international community about the brutality and repression of the apartheid regime.

Cde Oupa, thank you for providing a moment to contemplate the Soweto uprisings of 1976. Recount the events that took place on June 1976.

COSATU: What were the key demands of students?

Oupa Masuku: Firstly, the scrapping of Afrikaans was a huge demand. Teachers were too involved in rejecting teaching learners Wiskunde

opposed to the imposition of the medium of instruction.

Strike Morwane, Johnny Mohlala and others were mandated to meet Soweto students before the June 16.

We met Profom Sono and many others elaborating on leading 'sympathy strikes'.

I recall Demond Kganyago was also a youth leader.

In Atteridgeville, students discussed in the evening about at Mbolekwa Sports ground and Thabalejepy behind

Youth Day

to spread the Pan Africanism ideology.

Students were engaged in gumboots dance, choirs, school debate to conscientise everyone in the working-class communities about freedom, liberation or democracy.

To a large extent, political training or education, included infusing socialist ideology to the youth.

I vividly recall people like

Tau Motau, a former university student, and I also remember Johnny Maleka, who introduced drama as a weapon to keep students mobilised politically or organisationally.

1976 Soweto uprising opened parent's eyes to oppose the apartheid regime and direct the anger to the former Atteridgeville Mayor Sibiya.

Beer halls were regarded as targets by students.

Schools were never burned. Instead, they petrol-bombed Superintendent's offices or municipal offices as targets.

Parents were encouraged to join black trade unions.

The Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union of South Africa founded in 1975 was one of the oldest trade unions we knew. Many students' activists became organisers in trade unions

because they mastered the skill of resistance tactics, boycotts, strikes and underground work.

Youth formations worked closely with community-based organisation or Mass Democratic Movement and trade unions.

COSATU: Kindly share the names of prominent youth leaders you still remember who led from the front?



Township students in 1976 who participated in the uprisings in Soweto

Masuku: Khomotso Mokoka was a mastermind of pamphleting and those flyers were shared amongst the students during the night, spreading the gospel of 'Black Power'.

Radio Freedom was

instrumental, being listened to on a Tempest or Omega radio, with a PM10 battery.

Radio Freedom was always spreading the message of hope that 'Freedom' is coming in Azania.

COSATU: What was the aftermath of the 1976 Soweto uprisings?

Masuku: Many students skipped the country into exile, many were tortured, jailed and some went missing until

to date. How did parents and families handle the grief?

Many students were brutally beaten from Pretoria station at Saulsville station, Kalafong station, for example.

The South African Police (SAP) unleashed their might on innocent and unarmed students.

The Special Branch was notoriously known to 'skit-en-donner', or as 'One-Step-One-Bullet unit'.

Irene Phalatsi was the first victim of the uprising at WS Nkomo Secondary school. During her funeral, many students were attacked with dogs, and students agreed to march along the Komane street to burn down the Superintendent's Office.

Khomotso Ditshego was the second victim who perished at the scene.

Vincent 'Papa' Maleka, Lobo Mathibe were incarcerated as instigators of the uprisings. The magistrates passed judgment for us to be canned on the bums. Many



The Congress of South African Students (COSAS) First Executive Committee - June 1979.
From left: Ephraim Mogale (President); Brian Vungashi Mabasa (Deputy President);
Modise Metsing (Secretary); Vusumzi Gqoba (Organiser) and Oupa Masuku (Publicity Secretary)

Founding leaders of COSAS elected in 1979 to lead the youth in schools.

were sent to jail in solitary confinement. Some youth's graves are unmarked, unknown by their families. Some of the atrocities were exposed during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) processes. But justice was never served to their families.

Many students skipped the country. Ronny Mamoepa, who was a former Robben Island prisoner was very influential at that time.

Priscila Jana and Jan Cheppy were well known legal representatives from Khotso House who were known were representing students.

Moseneke, Maluleke and Seriti attorneys was a black owned legal firm also representing students.

COSATU: Do you think distraught families who today do not know the burial site of their kids or all those who dropped out of school will forget the historic event and what more can be done to close the sad chapter?

Masuku: Parents were highly disturbed. And the arrest of one student spread like wildfire, especially from the Special Branch. Most parents shifted their kids to Bantustans such as Lebowa to attend boarding schools. Activists started study groups because there was no schooling at all in Atteridgeville.

Most students finished their schooling at Mamelodi.

Because there was no school in Pelindaba, also

known as Atteridgeville, the via Mazambane train from Mamelodi was always packed with students. There's a dialectical connection between Mamelodi and Pelindaba from long time ago!

COSATU: Do you think South Africa has changed the education system?

Masuku: What we manage to change in 1994 was the legislation regulating the education system. What we only attained after 1994 was that we changed the colour of the education system, allowing both blacks and whites to attend same schools. Former Model C schools opened their doors for township learners.

But the curriculum still pushes majority of black to become labourers. Access to schooling or higher education is a huge stumbling block because most parents cannot afford to pay tuition fees.

Yes, today, majority of township schools are non-paying institutions. But we must debate if the quality of education is what we fought for.

We need in practice to have a single education system with equal education opportunities for both the rich and the poor.

Extramural activities must be vigorously re-introduced to keep students active, move away from drugs. And we need a Pan African ideology to be deepened and discard

the Western ideology of capitalism, consumerism. We must create our own jobs as engineers, entrepreneurs, etc. Atteridgeville will be celebrating 85 years this year, and Hofmeyer High school will be marking 87 years since their existence.

WF Nkomo was an activist who led the students struggle. Hope Papo's father was a teacher at Hofmeyer High.

COSATU: What can the current cohort of youth activists learn from the 1976 Soweto uprisings?

Masuku: The cohort of 1976 students were under one umbrella, united on their course of struggle. The Congress of South African Students (COSAS) was founded in June 1979 as a national organization to advocate the interests of Black school students in South Africa.

I guess, the banning of the South African Student Movement (SASM) by the apartheid government led to the formation of COSAS.

COSAS initially supported the Black Consciousness movement before becoming the first organization to support the Freedom Charter.

Today's students are too divided along party lines. Everyone wants to be a leader.

We formed COSAS in 1979 influenced by people such as Joe Qhambi and people like Billy Masetle to set up the

student movement.

The first COSAS Ephraim Mogale was the first president. Vungashi Mabasa was the deputy president.

Myself, Oupa Masuku, I was the first National Publicity Secretary. Modise Meetsing was the first Secretary General.

We served with Vuzi Gqoba. Mpho Masetle and Oupa Monareng who were from Soweto.

We must re-introduce programmes to enhance morality disposition.

We must reintroduce extra-mural activities in township schools. Students must participate in debates to unlock their world outlook. Christian influence was very, especially with holding of school assemblies to nurture a good character amongst the students and discipline.

Eish, old music such as 'I Remember Home' by Lee Oskar, 'Sweet Love' by Commodores is some of the sounds I listen to today to remember our times.

Jazz clubs remind us of yesteryears. Today, I do participate in Alma mater grouping and social clubs in the township to reconnect with my old classmates.

COSATU: Thanks for affording us quality time to reflect on the history of June 16!

Masuku: Each One, Teach One. Aluta Continua!



International

WORKERS CELEBRATE #PrideMonth2026, championing #EqualityForAll

**COSATU KwaZulu-Natal demands an end to stigma and violence against
#LGBTQIA+ workers in the world of work at eThekwin.**

Hundreds of members of COSATU in KwaZulu-Natal participated in the Pride Month March to highlight the importance of embracing promotion of the human rights of LGBTQ+ community and ensuring inclusivity in society.

The event took place in Durban at the South Beach on the 6th of June 2026.

Pride Month has since become a global observance, celebrated across the globe. South Africa is one of the countries which has adopted a firm position of inclusivity.

Pride Month emphasizes visibility, acceptance, and

advocacy. It highlights the contributions of LGBTQ+ individuals to society, fosters solidarity, and encourages allyship.

Deputy Minister Steve Letsike leading the march with organised labour and civil society at the From the Joint (South Beach) reaffirmed 'the values of equality, dignity, inclusion and freedom enshrined in South Africa's Constitution.'

The Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities used the occasion to 'celebrate diversity and continue building a South Africa where everyone can

live freely, safely and with dignity'.

SACCAWU 1st Deputy President, Mbali Blose participating in the march said, 'June marks Pride Month and as SACCAWU were here to support COSATU KwaZulu-Natal Gender Structure's programme to reaffirm our commitment to eliminating workplace discrimination, harassment and advancing equality for LGBTQIA+ workers.

Pride Month is not only a celebration of diversity but also a call to action to highlight the plight of LGBTQIA+ workers, challenge systemic stigma, and promote human

rights in our workplaces and communities'.

eThekwin Pride said, 'LGBTQIA+ rights are workers' rights. We salute COSATU KwaZulu-Natal for standing with our community as we take to the streets of eThekwin. The fight for dignity is one fight'.

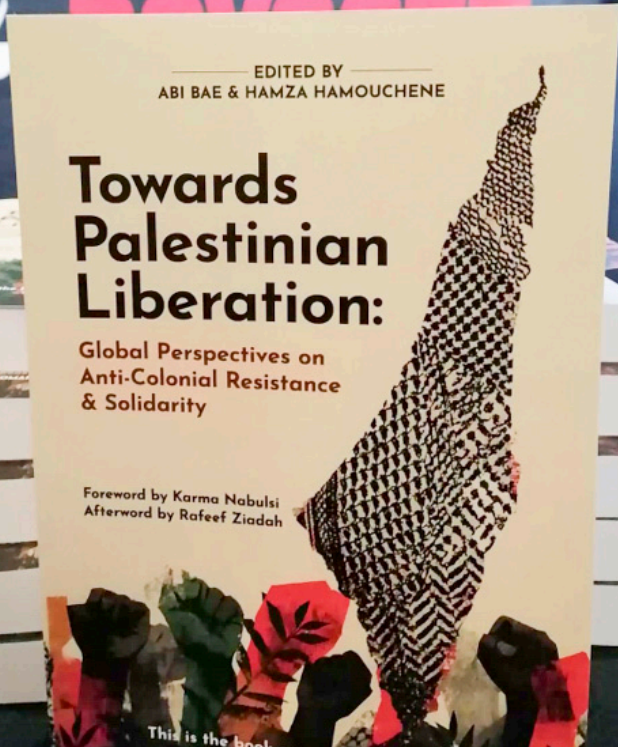
Other stakeholders who participated in the march were the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development.

All participants declared: 'All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.'

#NoToHarassment

Book Review

Justice for the Palestine is possible



UN Secretary-General, António Guterres has recently declared that “the two-State solution possible – Countries must comply with all their obligations under international law. No exceptions”.

Continuing reports of settler violence coming from the occupied West Bank: the demolition of homes, relentless expansion of illegal Israeli settlements, ongoing displacement of Palestinians, the threat of an attempted annexation that would – like the decades-long occupation – have no legal validity, have not dampened class solidarity across the globe.

Palestine Solidarity Movement has grown in

leaps and bounds across the globe.

There’s a huge hope for a two-State solution. However, impunity and injustices are frowned at by global citizens meted against Palestinians by apartheid Israeli regime.

Comrades, authors, academia, civil society and progressive activists gathered in Braamfontein on the evening of the 3rd of July 2026 to witness the launch of a book.

The launch took place at The Forge, about a book titled, ‘Towards Palestine Liberation’, a Global Perspective on Anti-Colonial Resistance and Solidarity, edited by Abi Bae and Hamza Hamouchene, zooming on connecting the dots between Palestine and Imperialism.

The foreword argues that ‘organising for Palestine has been taking place for more than a century around the world. Generation from generation have passed on

the torch after lifting it, in order to liberate the land, while taking in the struggle for its people to return to it’.

‘#FreePalestine slogans or chants’ hold an intimate meaning for the peoples of the world.

The book centres ‘the need to pledge class solidarity everywhere to people who struggle for freedom in myriad ways, and for myriad ends’. It exposes the ugliness, cruelty and impunity driven madness of the enemy of the

Book Review

Palestinians, Israel regime and also highlights the limitations of the Palestinians to finally overcome the war which has been waged for years.

The authors exposes the scale of violence in Gaza, Lebanon on the TV screens, watching parents pick up the remains of their children, observing their homes demolished and being left vulnerable deliberately by apartheid Israel regime.

The book tracks years of atrocities since the Nakba of 1948 until today.

The authors argued why is it necessary to participate in the Palestinian solidarity actions.

'The right of Palestinians to their land is supreme'.

It captures a powerful poem on page 1, 'If I must die, you must live to tell my story... If I must die, let it bring hope, let it be a tale...' (Refaat Alareer, 1979-2023)

The book expand on 'optimism of the will', quoting Gramsci phrase, elaborating on the 'constant tension with feelings of powerlessness and pessimism of the intellect'.

They argue that 'to nurture hope and optimism, we must convey the complexity of liberation struggles and the need to view everything from a longue durée perspective, as protracted fights against systems of domination, oppression and exploitation'.

They exposes that 'the Palestinian liberation is

no exception with other struggles in Sudan, Lebanon and elsewhere'.

The book explain why solidarity and Palestinian freedom is a gateway to everyone's liberation across the globe.

The book has four sections, with almost 13 chapters, unpacking the Palestinian Liberation, an Ant-Imperial, Eco-Just and Transnational Struggle, framing Palestine in a world of struggle, Palestine against an Eco-Apartheid world, African attitudes to and solidarity with Palestinians, from Palestine to Africa and intersections with Sudan, Egypt, Algeria and New similarities of struggles and how the Palestinians are resisting settler colonialism and genocide.

The book serves as a fresh source of hope amidst devastating developments in Gaza and no ceasefire regime still intact, undermining international law by apartheid Israeli regime.

It's a revolutionary hope book, packaged with sharpened arguments by the Palestinians deserve their freedom.

The authors argue for deeper rethink of Netanyahu continues to undermine the United Nations, the United Nations Security Council and the International Court of Justice at the Hague, Netherlands.

The book offers alternatives of push back against US imperialists policy imposed by Donald Trump and his cronies. Global capitalism must and should be blamed.

They emphasized neocolonialism as a huge global threat. The authors urge global citizens to offer class solidarity for the Palestinian liberation.

Calls for massive campaigns against the colonial practices imposed by Netanyahu and his cronies.

The authors argue that the book is not a blueprint but reopens questions that have been foreclosed, re connects histories that have been fragmented and gestures towards forms of politics that exceed the limits of the present Palestinian liberation struggle. It helps deepen analysis to organise better, build solidarity relationships, develop class solidarity networks, create new but different spaces of public campaigns towards Palestinian liberation.

Impunity by Israel regime cannot be normalized and urging global citizens to build solidarity campaigns structures beyond moments of crisis. Imperialism must be exposed as a barbaric system; a system which is not simply war but works through supply chains, financial circuits, cloud architecture, extractive energy projects,

weapons transfer and the digital terrain through which populations are monitored, governed and rendered profitable'.

Gaza and the West Bank are not simply two territories under occupation in the abstract; they have been differently but intimately reshaped through siege, enclosure, aid dependency, labour control, donor governance and very importantly, security coordination between the Palestinian Authority and apartheid Israel. Rethinking Palestine beyond exceptionalism calls on global citizens to reject isolation of Palestinian by apartheid Israel regime.

The authors urge global citizens to reject racism, exceptionalism and dominance by one race against another. They urge global citizens to continue fighting for a better world through ideas, words and actions.

Palestinian's sumud, steadfastness and ongoing resistance is a huge source of hope.

Let's cultivate hope for Palestinian liberation Now!

Please grab the book now to peruse it further.

#FreeFreePalestine



SADTU members descend to the east of Johannesburg FOR THE **UNION'S** ELECTIVE Provincial Conference

Members of SADTU in Gauteng pledges solidarity with workers in the line of duty.

Mid-year of 2026, the South African Democratic Teachers Union hosted its 3rd Quadrennial Provincial Conferences.

Hundreds of members of the union convened at their respective provinces with an overarching mission to fulfill the mandate of *“Mobilising the consciousness and unity of revolutionary professionals to strengthen foundational learning and functional skills, in order to advance inclusive and sustainable economic growth in pursuit of a socialist society.”*

The theme was the fuel that provided the road map in the planning stages, execution and the delivery of successful conferences.

In May, it was Gauteng’s turn. From the 7th to the 9th, delegates were visibly unfazed by the nippy weather of Johannesburg, at Birchwood Hotel in Boksburg.

On the first day, the vicinity bloomed with the bright, striking colours of the union. Dressed in beautifully knitted white cardigans, educators embraced the proceedings, raving with excitement, in

unison, through song and high discipline.

The conference was officially opened by the provincial chairperson, Eddie Kekana.

He encouraged members to continue to maintain the formidable spirit of the union through unity.

The three-day event was attended by multiple advocates, including the province’s Education, Sports, Arts, Culture and Recreation MEC, Lebogang Maile, various provincial leaders from COSATU’s affiliates and the Federation’s Gauteng

Provincial Secretary Louisah Moepeng Modikwe. National Office Bearers of the union, President Magope Maphila and General Secretary Dr. Mugwena Maluleke were also spotted in the room, occasionally interacting with other participants.

The national education system is grappling with numerous challenges. Educators devote themselves to the profession despite overcrowded classrooms and limited resources caused by austerity measures instituted on

the sector.

Although it's not all doom and gloom, navigating these shortcomings and working under such conditions puts unimaginable pressure on teachers.

MEC Lebogang Maile agreed that teachers bear the brunt of systematic flaws in the sector, especially by

managing large classrooms in a department that has massive infrastructure backlogs. He delivered the keynote address alluding that 'We all carry a responsibility in building a transformed and future-oriented education system for the people of Gauteng. We reaffirm the role of teachers and education stakeholders in shaping

the future of our learners and society.'

He also interacted with delegates to open transparency and form channels of communication that seek to break down barriers between the department and the union.

Congratulations are in order to the newly

elected leadership: Eddie Kekana-Chairperson, Patric Skhumbana-Deputy Chairperson, Tseliso Ledimo-Provincial Secretary, Mosedi Matekane-Deputy Secretary and Motsamai Mabuya-Treasurer.

Ahead of them lies the responsibility to drive provincial goals for the next four years.



Municipal workers still pursue decent **WAGES AT THE CITY OF JOBURG**

Municipal workers leading a massive march on the streets of Johannesburg demanding decent wages.

Municipal employees were elated after the Labour Court ruled that the employer, the City of Tshwane must honour the collective agreement agreed upon by their union, SAMWU, backdating the payments.

Those monies were 'incorporated' in the budget allocation presented in council and adopted.

However, according to

the Standing Committee on Public Accounts (SCOPA) Chairperson, Songezo Zibi together with the Portfolio Committee on the Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) held session to play their oversight role.

The City management were expected to account for audit outcomes that reflect serious financial management and

council meetings, budget speeches and at lunch pickets, demanding the implementation of the 'politically facilitated agreement', amounting to R10.3 billion.

Cllr Dada Morero has pledged a 'targeted turnaround program prioritising service delivery, infrastructure renewal, and financial recovery, focusing on the Smart metering and leak detection to stop utility losses, enhanced billing corrections and revenue collection and strict consequence management for control failures'.

SAMWU rejected both the substance and political posture underpinning the recent intervention by National Treasury regarding the implementation of the Politically Facilitated Agreement (PFA) concluded between the City of Johannesburg and SAMWU, which amounts to a dangerous encroachment into collective bargaining and municipal labour relations.

COSATU in Gauteng has come out strong to support worker's demands, 'demanding respect for collective agreements, pay municipal employees what they are worth and grading municipalities with others on similar level'.

Some opposition parties like the Democratic Alliance (DA) rejected the 'politically facilitated agreement', by taking the matter to the Gauteng South High Court

which declared that the matter was 'not urgent' to be enrolled.

COSATU Gauteng acknowledged the importance of a functional and stable municipal government in Joburg to address the pressing needs of its residents. The citizens deserve a council that prioritizes their well-being and works cohesively towards sustainable development and improved service delivery.

The Federation in Gauteng has commended the Executive Mayor of the City of Johannesburg, Dada Morero, for firmly defending the municipal wage agreement before Parliament's Standing Committee on Public Accounts (SCOPA).

COSATU Gauteng argued that 'municipal workers did not preside over years of political infighting, instability, poor governance, financial mismanagement and the destruction of basic systems of administration. Municipal workers did not create the crisis that has rendered the municipality unable to meet its obligations to communities and workers'.

SAMWU 13th National Congress in Mbombela resolved that workers must and should resist all attempts to undermine collective bargaining and that unresolved issues affecting workers would increasingly be confronted through mass mobilisation and struggle

The struggle continues...



Executive Mayor, Councilor Dada Morero declared that the 'Council is making steady progress in reducing unauthorised, irregular, fruitless, and wasteful expenditure. During the 2024/25 financial year, accumulated unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure declined from R23.7 billion to R13.3 billion — a reduction of 44%. This is an encouraging sign that the measures we have put in place to improve governance and financial discipline are beginning to deliver results'.

SAMWU Gauteng, it was a different case at the City of Johannesburg.

All the shenanigans took place during the term of office of the former Tshwane Mayor and DA Mayoral Candidate, Cilliers Brink. The union is still struggling to reinstate workers who were unlawfully dismissed under the DA-led administration in the City of Tshwane.

National Treasury led by Enoch Godongwana and

governance issues in the metro.

The Portfolio Committee raised concerns about the City of Joburg's low achievement against infrastructure development targets. Notes that performance was below 50% and had direct consequences for service delivery and residents' daily experiences.

Municipal workers led massive marches during



Alliance partners addressed NEHAWU 13TH NATIONAL CONGRESS

Delegates enjoying the moments in plenary at NEHAWU
13th National Congress at Boksburg

The African National Congress, the South African Communist Party and the Congress of South African Trade Unions addressed delegates at the ordinary 13th National Congress convened at Birchwood Hotel in Boksburg under the Union's Constitution at as part of advancing the proletariat revolution in South Africa.

The 13th National Congress is held under the theme: **“Advance Workplace Organization to Defend Collective Bargaining, Heighten Class Consciousness and Advance Internationalism”.**

The worker's parliament was expected to review organisational resolutions taken in the period under review, engage on strengthening the public service, advancing workers' rights, and shaping the organisation's Programme of Action.

Gauteng Premier. Mr. Panyaza Lesufi acknowledged all delegates in the Gauteng province.

Lesufi appealed to workers in participate in the coming local government elections pencilled for November 4.

The Alliance leaders reaffirmed the commitment to reconfigure the historic

Alliance, the advancement of workers' rights, and building a capable developmental state that delivers for all.

NEHAWU declared that 'the National Democratic Revolution remains the principled strategic programme for the national liberation and the only viable path towards socialism under the leadership of the working class'.

COSATU President Zingiswa Losi, SACP General Secretary, Solly Mapaila, and ANC Deputy Secretary-General Nomvula Mokonyane delivered the messages of support in plenary.

Losi congratulated NEHAWU as the union celebrates its 39th anniversary.

Losi emphasised the importance of sustaining genuine worker's unity to defend labour rights, improve working conditions of workers and contribute towards building a better future for all'.

“We must congratulate the union of Yure Mdyogolo and Bhekokwakhe Mkhize for reaching this milestone of 39 years. It is a path of revolutionary struggle that has shielded cleaners and nurses from some of the worst forms of exploitation, defended Community

Health Workers and uplifted ordinary public servants from the shackles of apartheid to being recognised for the public service they provide to the nation. We salute you on behalf of the entire Federation of Elijah Barayi and Ray Alexander. It is no accident that COSATU will soon be celebrating 41 years of continuous struggle. We are humbled that throughout this

This necessitates that we respond collectively and decisively as the Alliance. We cannot continue naively, upon a path of neo-liberalism and reckless austerity budget cuts. To repeat the mistakes of the past is to continue to reap the very same socio-economic crises. COVID-19 proved beyond doubt, the critical role of a capacitated developmental state. The working class and the poor



COSATU President Zingiswa Losi addressed NEHAWU 13th National Congress convened at Birchwood Hotel in Boksburg, Gauteng.

journey of toil and sacrifice, COSATU and NEHAWU have stood as one.”

On the recent launch of COSATU’s National Action against High Costs of Living, Losi said ‘The challenges facing the working class and the rural poor are immense, they are dire. It is no exaggeration to state that the working class is under siege.’

“Workers, in particular the youth, battle to find work in an economy barely growing at 1% per annum, with a 43.7% unemployment rate. We remain the world’s most unequal society, faced with entrenched levels of poverty and inequality.

do not have the luxury of medical aid, private schools and security. They depend upon a well-oiled state to uplift them from the bondages of poverty”.

Mokonyane reaffirmed the strength of the Alliance and the ANC’s unwavering commitment to the rights and dignity of workers.

Mapaila warned that ‘the Tripartite Alliance has been weakened by policy decisions that favoured privatisation, budget cuts and coalitions formed without consultation with alliance partners’.

Newly elected NEHAWU National Office Bearers

were:

- **President:** Nyameka Macanda
- **1st Deputy President:** Patrick Makhafane
- **2nd Deputy President:** Linda Nthulane
- **General Secretary:** Zola Saphetha
- **1st Deputy General Secretary:** Welcome Mnisi
- **2nd Deputy General Secretary:** Baxolise Mali
- **National Treasurer:** Kgomo Makhupola

Key resolutions taken by delegates are the following:

- Reaffirmed the Union’s membership service consolidation and heighten consolidation of mandates from all the sectors the union is represented,
- Unleash membership capacity building programmes through the Yure Mdyogolo Institute, including leadership programmes for worker leaders, shopstewards and organisers across all structures,
- Strengthen working-class unity, defend collective bargaining and fight for a living wage for all, and accelerate re-building of ideological renewal of the primary motive forces and advance the material interest of the working class,
- Defend the National Health Insurance, engage COSATU and its affiliates to explore and pursue public

interest litigation seeking a declaratory order affirming the measures for citizen’s rights to access healthcare

- fight against budget cuts and support the scrapping of medical tax credits,
- Establish a central bargaining council for PSET sector, and
- Work together with the Progressive Youth Alliance, SADTU and other progressive organisations to convene a National Post-Schooling Education Summit to lead a campaign on radical transformation of the post-education schooling.

The 13th National Congress was graced by National and International guests from Bargaining Councils, government departments, Allies from the African continent and global Federations such as the World Federations of Trade Unions.

Meanwhile, the WFTU President, Mzwandile Makwayiba accepted the Special Award and former WFTU Honorary President, Cde George Mavrikos accepting the Bheki Mkhize Award for Leadership Excellence at the Gala Dinner.

Other union’s structures such as the Department of Health Head Office Branch in Ehlanzeni Region, Mpumalanga Province received an accolade of being the Strong and Vibrant Branch.



‘Devastating systemic failures of THE PUBLIC HEALTHCARE,’ ARGUES SAMATU

South Africa’s public health system is rampantly affected by severe staff shortages, mounting workloads, poor infrastructure and inadequate support for frontline healthcare workers.

The Health Ombudsman, Professor Taole Mokoena has tabled its report on the deaths of six healthcare workers in KwaZulu-Natal by indicating that ‘there’s no evidence directly linking the deaths

to workplace bullying. Health ombudsmen serve as impartial intermediaries between patients and healthcare providers. They handle complaints about the quality of care, professional conduct, or administrative issues in healthcare settings. Their responsibilities typically include:

Receiving and investigating complaints about health services or practitioners. Providing guidance on how to

resolve issues directly with providers.

Advocating for patients when necessary, including arranging meetings or negotiations.

Recommending remedies such as apologies, service improvements, or corrective actions, though they usually cannot enforce legal penalties or financial compensation beyond guidance.

The South African Medical Association Trade Union (SAMATU), General

Secretary **Dr Cedric Sihlangu** has responded on the contents of the Health Ombud report that ‘the findings have validated the devastating systemic failures of the public healthcare system that have been consistently raised by labour yet ignored by those in power.’

The medical doctor’s trade union has demanded that government must stop treating the Ombud’s findings as a routine report to be tabled and forgotten.

C“We demand immediate and binding action to unfreeze all vacant clinical posts across the country, and inject the necessary capital into resolving resource,” elaborated Dr Sihlangu.

Dr Sihlangu said, “The Health Ombud’s report does not reveal new information, it merely archives a catastrophic reality that public healthcare servants have to endure daily.

The severe systemic challenges that have been highlighted in the report; crippling staff shortages, frozen vacant posts, excessive workloads, extreme resource constraints, shortages of medical supplies, compromised safety and security measures, are the direct results of the ongoing government’s neglect towards public healthcare services.

While ordinary South

Africans and frontline workers suffer the fallout of a collapsing system, the political elite are comfortably cushioned by luxury access to the best private medical care.

“Each year more than 1000 fully qualified doctors who have completed their community service and are ready to treat patients independently, are left in unemployment for months, sometimes even years.

Meanwhile, the doctor-to-patient ratio continues to skyrocket, critical posts are left frozen for years, and the skeleton staff in employment is subjected to dangerously excessive working hours.”

SAMATU strongly agrees with the Ombud’s findings that significant, inexcusable gaps exist within the employee wellness programmes in public

healthcare institutions. For too long, employee wellness in public hospitals has been treated as a performative box-ticking exercise. Offering a helpline or a brochure to a medical intern who is collapsing from a 30-hour shift in an understaffed, unsafe ward is a mockery of their plight.

The well-being of healthcare workers must be treated as a primary structural pillar of our healthcare resource, not a secondary afterthought. The state cannot care for patients if it persistently fails to look after the very people delivering that care.”

“We demand immediate, transparent, and binding action to unfreeze all vacant clinical posts across the country, inject the necessary capital into resolving resource and equipment shortages in public healthcare facilities,

implement properly structured employee wellness programmes that are capable of offering genuine and proactive mental health support to healthcare professionals, and enhance security measures at public healthcare institutions to ensure that healthcare professionals are safe while on duty,” concluded Dr Sihlangu.

Meanwhile, The Portfolio Committee on Health chairperson, Hon Faith Muthambi noted the deeply concerning challenges that affect healthcare and the quality of healthcare services.

The Committee noted ‘the staff shortages, concerns related to freezing of vacant posts, overworked medical personnel, mental health pressures, resource limitations, unprofessional conduct and bullying.’

The 2026 Youth Day commemoration marks the 50th golden jubilee of the historic 1976 Soweto Uprising under the theme: “Reset@50-The Future Calls”.

COURAGE OF 1976 GENERATION

a Rallying Cry in the Fight for Economic Justice

Soweto Uprising 50th Anniversary

by Dr. Reneva Fourie

Half a century has passed since the 1976 student uprisings against compulsory Afrikaans and inferior education in schools.

State security forces killed hundreds of young people, the most well-known of whom was twelve-year-old Hector Pieterse. That generation of youth, together with the youth of the 1980s, played a significant role in the broader struggle that contributed to the end of apartheid.

Today, a different form of subjugation endures. The earlier systems of pass laws and race-based job reservations have been replaced by an economy that

systematically excludes young people from productive life.

The commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the June 16 massacre must therefore serve as a moment of critical reflection and analysis. It calls on young South Africans to remember the past and actively reshape the present.

The International Labour Organisation has rated South Africa among the countries with the highest youth unemployment in the world. More than half of young people who are available for work cannot find employment. The scale and persistence of youth unemployment point to long-standing structural weaknesses in the economy.

Long-term joblessness corrodes mental health. Young people are increasingly vulnerable to poverty, crime, depression and substance abuse. Many turn to survival strategies that have nothing to do with career aspirations. They wash car windows at intersections, work as informal car guards, or perform acrobatics and dances at traffic lights for spare change. Some enter exploitative labour, including sex work, because the formal economy offers little alternative.

The government has responded with a range of funding mechanisms. These include the National Youth Development Agency, the Presidential Youth

Employment Fund, skills development enablers such as Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), and the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NASFAS). Millions of rands flow through these institutions each year.

However, the impact on youth unemployment remains negligible. Thousands of university graduates, including many with honours and master's degrees, cannot find work that matches their qualifications.

The reasons are institutional. These entities are run like private corporations rather than developmental agencies. Executive pay packages, tender-driven service delivery and short-term performance

targets have replaced long-term planning for youth absorption into the economy.

Another structural weakness lies in the education system. South African schools continue to emphasise academic subjects that do not always align with practical survival needs or the needs of the economy.

Disciplines such as needlework, woodwork, arts and crafts and home economics were largely removed from the curriculum in past decades, often because they were associated with outdated gender or class socialisation.

However, these subjects have intrinsic value. Their reintegration would serve a different purpose. It would equip children with basic life skills. A young person who can sew, repair wooden furniture, cook nutritious meals from cheap ingredients or make simple handicrafts for sale is less vulnerable to exploitation. These capabilities are not substitutes for formal employment. They are essential buffers against absolute destitution.

Vocational training also requires elevation. The economy needs gardeners, plumbers, electricians, carpenters and communications technicians. These occupations constitute a critical foundation for economic productivity, infrastructure development and social wellbeing. Yet the public sector, including

municipalities and state-owned enterprises, cannot absorb such workers at scale. The reason is a sustained policy of outsourcing and privatisation. When a municipality contracts a private company to maintain its water pipes, that company hires labour at the lowest possible cost.

It does not train or retain young South Africans on decent wages. The same pattern repeats across energy, transport and sanitation services. Public assets remain publicly owned in name only because their operational functions are handed to private contractors.

This outsourcing model also produces endemic corruption. A private company that wins a tender has a direct financial interest in inflating costs and reducing labour expenses. The result is a cycle of kickbacks, overpriced contracts and precarious work.

Ending outsourcing is therefore a necessary condition for ending corruption. If municipalities and state-owned enterprises directly employed their own plumbers, electricians and technicians, the money saved from private profit margins could be used to pay proper wages and absorb more young people.

Young South Africans must therefore reject several policy frameworks that have dominated economic governance over the past few decades. Austerity measures that reduce public spending

on youth programmes should be opposed. Neoliberal assumptions that private markets will automatically generate sufficient employment have been disproven by thirty years of evidence.

Instead, young people should demand industrialisation, which means expanding local manufacturing capacity. They should demand beneficiation, meaning that South Africa processes its own minerals and agricultural goods rather than exporting raw materials for others to refine.

They should demand public control over the commanding heights of the economy, including energy, transport, telecommunications and mining. These priorities are essential requirements for large-scale job creation, economic expansion and national development.

The values of the anti-apartheid youth movements from the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s and 1980s remain relevant. Those activists rejected ethnicity and tribalism. They opposed discrimination based on nationality and gender. They understood that division among the oppressed serves only the oppressor.

A contemporary youth movement must similarly refuse xenophobia. A young person from Zimbabwe, Mozambique or Lesotho is not a threat to South African employment. The same system benefiting from outsourcing

public services in South Africa also extracts wealth and stirs conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan and Somalia. The threat is an economic system that pits workers against each other for a shrinking number of jobs. Gender-based discrimination must also be rejected. The struggle for economic justice includes transgender and non-binary people, as well as women who face higher unemployment rates than men.

Building social cohesion and national unity requires sustained commitment, practical initiatives and active participation from all sectors of society. It requires shared organisation across lines of ethnicity, nationality and gender. Furthermore, South African youth should embrace the unity of the continent and international solidarity against imperialism.

The generation of 1976 did not have the luxury of gradual reform. The youth of today do not enjoy that luxury either. Having the second-highest youth unemployment rate in the world demands the restructuring of the economy from the ground up.

Young South Africans must lead that effort as active architects of a new system, embodying the true legacy of June 16 and its call for courage and agency.

Dr Reneva Fourie is a policy analyst specialising in governance, development and security.



Dr Frank Hoffer presented how labour standards can be promoted through workers education at the Global Labour University at WITS, South Africa in 2016.

TURNING THE TIDE – CAN LABOUR DO IT?

By Dr Frank Hoffer

Today, pessimism prevails as the old global order is fading and something worse is taking shape.

However, the worries about the future should not lead to glorification of the past. The famous rules-based order was always

shaped by power, hierarchy, structural inequality, and, when needed, external interference.

The enormous power of the United States of America enabled a soft hegemony. Global rules were set and enforced with

comparatively little direct military interference, but it never was a world of equal sovereign states. Frequently, double standards were applied.

The old order facilitated global deregulation, financialization, and tax evasion. It eroded the

space for welfare states and national governance. It enabled personal enrichment of the very few on an unprecedented scale and accelerated the environmental degradation of the planet.

Instead of democratic governance of markets,

we experience global markets severely restricting democratic decision-making.

The global order favoured transnational cooperations and the rich industrialised countries.

However, during the last decades, the power balance of the Post-World War II era changed fundamentally. French and British colonial power is something of the past.

Soviet Russia ultimately collapsed despite its military power, as it proved economically uncompetitive.

China – while taking a political low profile – achieved the most successful economic development in human history and became a global power.

International law and international institutions are collapsing

The cathedrals of international law and international institutions, resting on the power structure of 1945, are now collapsing before our eyes.

Trump, like an elephant in a china shop, is doing this with the brutality of a New York real estate tycoon, but the declining ability to find consensual solutions within nations and among nations is visible everywhere.

The current poly-crisis and the rise of authoritarian populism are stemming

from the dysfunctions of the old order.

Decision-makers as well as established institutions are overwhelmed by exploding inequality, military conflicts, unbalanced trade, power-hungry oligarchs, environmental degradation, ever-growing public and private debt, mass migration, and demographic crisis.

Democratically elected leaders appear incapable of addressing the problems. The systems seem to be blocked by the veto power of competing interests. The willingness of the electorate to go for wildcard options and strongman rhetoric is a consequence of our paralysed democracies.

Ironically, the authoritarian nationalist backlash today is combined with the desire for global omnipotence of tech oligarchs, who seek to replace democracy with their freedom to govern the world by algorithm: We are heading for authoritarian neoliberalism on steroids.

Not at least because the left failed to take advantage of the crisis and the apparent failures of capitalism. The communist left largely collapsed with the Soviet Union, and the moderate left discredited itself by promising, but not delivering, neoliberalism with a human face. Not because they were stupid, but because squaring the circle proved to

be impossible.

The Power of Great Powers is limited

At the same time, the great neo-imperial powers are apparently less powerful than they think. Russia fails to beat Ukraine, the US can't even open the Strait of Hormuz, Israel bombed Gaza into the Stone Age, but can't declare victory. China is facing demographic catastrophe, and even all-powerful Xi Jinping can't force Chinese women to deliver more children.

Aggressive foreign policy and domestic authoritarianism often reinforce each other. External victories strengthen internal authority, while internal control projects strength abroad. In this context, appeasing Trump, Putin, or Xi Jinping risks becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy. Accepting their dominance only increases it.

Of course, resisting the mighty carries risks, but so does subordination. Crucially, nothing weakens dictators and wannabe dictators more than their failure to force others into subordination.

Resistance based on allying with the enemy of my enemy is a dangerous fallacy in this situation. The deep-rooted and by no means baseless criticism of US dominance leads sometimes to sympathy

for Putin, Xi Jinping, or even Iran as countervailing forces.

Yet, progressives should not expect to win anything from multipolar competition among autocrats. Indeed, even with its drift toward plutocratic authoritarianism, the United States today remains preferable to these systems, as there is still space and freedom to resist.

Given the anti-democratic and anti-labour tendencies of all major powers, the question arises whether a "middle power strategy" can offer a viable alternative. Is it possible to establish a global multilateral order without or against the US, China, and Russia? The simple answer is no. The first and perhaps more realistic task is to resist subordination.

Today, many countries rely on US-based infrastructure, including digital platforms, financial systems, and satellite networks. Dependencies built over decades of globalization—particularly in supply chains, technology, and finance—are far deeper than Europe's former energy dependence on Russia.

The export portfolio of most middle powers provides far less leverage than the industries and resources controlled by the big powers. In other words, the world can easily do without Porsche, Mercedes, Louis Vuitton, Haute Couture, and

Parmigiano, but Europe is lost without rare earths, Patriots, and AI.

Leading by example - middle-income democracies are the better place to live

Yet most middle-income democracies retain a critical advantage: they are better places to live. Despite imperfections, they maintain a relative balance between market economies, democratic governance, and social inclusion.

Reckless exploitation of humans and nature is the DNA of capitalism. Civilizing capitalism, maintaining its wealth-creating power, and ensuring a bearable level of inequality has been an outstanding achievement of the labour movement, in particular in western Europe. Any viable middle power strategy must start from here.

Political freedom, fair elections, universal health care, adequate pensions, labour rights, quality public services, liveable cities, religious and cultural tolerance make these societies attractive and strong. In the same spirit, Lula da Silva in Brazil or Claudia Sheinbaum in Mexico are aiming to make their extremely unequal societies more inclusive, safer, and more democratic.

In foreign policy,

defending democracy means prioritizing diplomatic conflict management, rejecting military intervention, and replacing a post-colonial order by a commitment to genuinely fair international principles, rules, and regulations. Who subscribes to and adheres to these principles must be able to count on the full support and solidarity of other free and democratic states.

Governments, however, oppressing their own people cannot expect support or solidarity in defending their sovereignty. Ambitious, more far-reaching doctrines such as the “right to protect” imply regime change and carry risks of overreach, selectivity, and escalation.

Hard sanctions against rogue states and simultaneously supporting people forced to flee from oppression is a more realistic, less destructive, and in the long run more effective response than military intervention.

While violations of international law—whether by Western or non-Western actors—should not be supported, there is no obligation to politically defend authoritarian regimes as a matter of principle.

In other words, Israel’s and the US’s attack on Iran or the capture of Maduro

are blatant violations of international law; it should not be supported or silently accepted but must be criticised, but there is also no reason to invest political capital to defend oppressive regimes.

Trying to copy the bullies is a dead-end strategy

There is the risk that, in their desperate desire to build up hard power coalitions, the middle powers try to copy on a minor scale the morally and politically failing great powers. Middle power countries do need certain defensive military strength, but trying to reach parity with the big nuclear powers is illusory.

Any policy that aims only at increasing military spending at the expense of social inclusion is bound to fail. It will just lead to the erosion of democracy and foster the unholy alliance between big money and right-wing authoritarian populism.

Strength has to stem from their reputation as inclusive democracies, from their quality of life, their willingness for fair international political, economic, cultural, and academic cooperation. It would be fatal to try to compete with international bullies on the field where they are strong.

However, current political conditions—marked by fear, nationalism, and weak leadership—make the emergence of a coherent middle-power alignment unlikely. Creating meaningful and resilient cooperation in the absence of a hegemonic power is very difficult and inherently fragile, as the EU experiences again and again.

The temptation to kowtow to a great power for short-term benefits is frequent, as well as becoming Mini-Trumps themselves.

The much-applauded strategy outlined by Nick Carney at Davos was a brilliant description of the new reality; however, it had little to offer for progressives, as it boils down to diversified neo-liberalism.

He seems largely advocating for a globalisation of the EU trade model. Middle power countries intensify and liberalise their trade cooperation and try to develop a joint approach in negotiating with the great powers.

It is a survival strategy for national liberal elites and business. But it will not stop the corrosive effect of corporate globalisation and does offer little for ordinary people. A potential alliance of democratic middle powers internationally will only get

the buy-in of their people if it is based on social cohesion and democratic credentials within these societies.

It depends on the left

Such a fairer and more inclusive response will not happen without an international progressive movement.

The biggest challenge for the progressive left is that today, even the right words and the right proposals do not resonate with the people, because the so-called leaders have largely lost the trust of the people.

Keir Starmer, Olaf Scholz are tragic examples of hard-working but failing social-democratic technocrats. Risk-averse, uninspiring, vision-free, they proved unable to generate the political momentum to overcome vested (business) interests that block any meaningful reform.

Rebuilding trust, reconnecting with the people, and being a movement of the people, for the people, and by the people is the most urgent task. Without this basic credibility, nothing can be changed.

This is easily said but difficult to do.

The backbone of any successful social democratic or socialist government has been a solid alliance with the

trade union movement. Left-wing candidates – running sophisticated campaigns – can win elections without trade unions, but governing from the left just doesn't happen without trade unions.

Trade unions are by and large focusing on social and economic policies within the national context. Their members expect them to deliver on broader social and economic issues, but do not see them as authoritative voices on defence policies, international diplomacy, or global financial markets.

Nevertheless, they are indispensable as a power base for progressive policies and crucially important for generating the spirit of solidarity locally, nationally, and internationally.

Turning the tide starts with changing ourselves

Trade unions cannot take it for granted that they are a force on the ground and that the members share progressive views. This is not happening without constant engagement and debate. For a progressive movement, there is no alternative to the daily workplace and door-to-door conversation.

The daily engagement with people outside the bubble of the converted is indispensable for creating grassroots structures that can withstand the whirlwind of social media

demagogy and the power of vested interests.

The answer against right-wing populism is not the technocratic management of market imperatives but popular policies that address the daily needs of people, limit the economic and political power of the very rich, and invest in the future of human life on this planet.

Some practical steps include closing tax havens, introducing a global wealth tax on the very rich, inheritance taxes that ensure not individuals but the entire next generation benefits from the accumulated wealth of their fathers and mothers.

Strengthening public services is key for equality and social inclusion.

Democratic governance of the internet—like public broadcasting—is needed to stop the concentration of digital power. Strict limits on private political donations are necessary to protect democratic processes. Labour markets must be rebalanced through minimum wages, expanded welfare provisions, and stronger collective bargaining frameworks. Justice starts but does not end with equal opportunity.

The aim of a fair society is not that everybody is merely better equipped to compete individually. The successful tend to justify inequality as

the meritocratic outcome of their hard work. Instead, a progressive vision must maintain the vision of a life in dignity and inclusion for everybody, not just the winners.

To turn the tide, organized labour needs to change itself. It needs to become once again an inspiring force of hope and progress. A lot has been written about revitalising the labour movement; we all recognise the need for it, many things have been tried.

The right organizing tactic, the charismatic leader, or the intelligent programme are of course needed, but in my view the movement must first and foremost be a place where our own values can be felt and tried, where friendship and solidarity and a common vision of justice give the energy and the optimism to make the world a better place.

It seems to me that the big changes are impossible without the inspiring and empowering experience of solidarity as lived reality.

Article written by Dr Frank Hoffer, former staff member of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and a research fellow of the Global Labour University. He studied in Bremen, London and Moscow. He holds a PhD in Economics.



Students in Alexander joined the 1976 Uprisings, denouncing the imposition of Afrikaans.

‘THE DECOLONIZED CURRICULUM must be taught in all classrooms by current educators’, argues Nkosana Dolopi

The National teacher’s union in South Africa, SADTU has pushed the decolonised curriculum in the national discourse by agitating for the rewriting of authentic African history and promote African culture, history, and spirituality

through generations. The union advocated for a narrative outlining the historical epoch that fosters a more equal and inclusive educational environment.

Unlike during the apartheid era where African history only told

stories about Afrikaners and the British settlers. SADTU has been pivotal in encouraging the use of indigenous knowledge and incorporating African literature and local history into the curriculum.

The South African Democratic Teachers

Union (SADTU) Deputy General Secretary, **Nkosana Dolopi** unpacks more about decolonised curriculum a dedicated focus also on retraining of teachers on required history topics in schools and on culturally responsive pedagogy and anti-racist education.

The Imperative for a Decolonized, Compulsory History Curriculum

Workers in South Africa we must recognize that the democratic breakthrough of 1994 created unprecedented opportunities for South Africa to pursue an educational trajectory that truly “Opens the Doors of Learning and Culture”.

In doing so, we aim to create a society that firmly believes in and realizes the call for a better life for all.

However, while we speak passionately about transformation, others limit the conversation to mere “diversity”. When we refer to the decolonization of our curriculum and our education system, some seek only to effect small, surface-level reforms. They avoid tinkering with the fundamental outlook of our society—whether politically or economically—in order to maintain the status quo.

The current reality makes it difficult for children to think of themselves outside of this status quo, leaving many marginalized within this mode of thinking. When striving for a better life for all, we must choose a radical path of deconstruction and reconstruction.

This means breaking down and destroying the current structures based on race, gender, and class inequality, leading to a total overhaul of society, its education system,

and its institutions.

The campaign to make History a compulsory subject was promoted SADTU and intensified following the outbreak of xenophobic attacks in 2008.

The absolute necessity of making history compulsory is perfectly couched in the famous words of the iconic African author, Chinua Achebe:

“Until the lions have their own historians, the history of the hunt will always glorify the hunter.”

Too many of our learners do not understand their own history or the deep struggles that were required to bring them to this moment in time.

As a union, we actively seek progress in this area, recognizing that History is an indispensable component for addressing systemic problems related to self-worth and national division.

What history we teach, will ultimately determine whether this society enables true progress.

The Dialectics of Educational Transformation

According to SADTU, History must be taught to advance nation-building, heal historical wounds, bridge the gap between the South African rich and poor, realize a developmental state, and empower our youth to compete in a globalized world.

In its 2030 Vision, SADTU

explicitly detailed the nature of this challenge:

“Apartheid education and management contained contradictions that required a sophisticated transformation paradigm. The paradigm needed an understanding that the disintegration of apartheid’s hold on social co-existence is an ideological matter. Whilst apartheid education was not a living organism it possessed biotic properties of being organic, reproductive, mutative and adaptive to changing environments.”

Because apartheid education possessed this adaptive, biotic nature, it must be deliberately and systematically disabled.

SADTU must continuously seek to be a force that contributes to creating an education system capable of eliminating the core features of the apartheid structure. Such elimination must be organic and highly sensitive to the originatively historical environment that templates South African education provision.

To guide us, the scholar David Maimela unpacks the transformation of education as a double process:

- First, it is a process of the dissolution of an existing set of social relations, along with its economic ideology, political-ideological and cultural institutions, policies, and practices.
- Second, it is a process

of the recreation and consolidation of an alternate set of social relations and social, economic, political, ideological, and cultural institutions, policies, and practices.

- Through the teaching of history, we seek to deconstruct and reconstruct society by establishing new, progressive social relationships, precisely because existing social relations continue to perpetuate the past. Therefore, as affirmed by the SADTU 8th Congress Resolution on Racism (reiterated in the National Executive Committee Statement of 28 June 2025): “The teaching of South African history should be made compulsory in schools. Attention must be given to former Model C schools and their School Governing Bodies.”

Reclaiming the African Mind and Narrative

The Freedom Charter inspires our Union to advocate for decolonized, inclusive curricula that do not merely teach our children what to think, but how to think.

To achieve this, the Union is actively working with the Kara Heritage Institute toward creating a decolonized and people-centered education system. Recognizing SADTU as a beacon of hope in this cultural revolution, the Institute has proposed a collaborative relationship to assist us in establishing

a Heritage and History Commission.

This commission will help rewrite true African history and serve as a partner in promoting African culture, history, and spirituality across generations.

The wholesale transformation of the post-apartheid education system requires us to rebuild the fibre of the nation while taking full cognizance of the past. We recall Amílcar Cabral's apt phrase: "Decolonize the African mind." We must free our people from self-doubt, limiting beliefs, and psychological, emotional, or societal bondage.

History helps us understand our present and actively shape our future. Any viable future is fundamentally based on our collective understanding of where we come from, where we are, and what future we want for ourselves and our children. We must give proper recognition to the past, where, despite enormous difficulties, society was held together to bring us to where we are today.

Having made these profound points, we dare say that our starting point on this journey is to confidently answer:

Where are we coming from?
Who are we?
Who do we want to be?

We answer these questions not as victims or charity cases, but as revolutionaries actively taking charge of our own narrative and destiny.

Knowledge of how past societies coped with harsh conditions serves as a vital stepping stone toward

your people; it all lies in your understanding of who you are and what worth you believe you possess.

Institutionalizing Memory Against Eurocentrism

The history of Africa has historically been passed from one generation to the next largely through oral

is precisely why the formal schooling system is the correct institution for the preservation, transmission, nurturing, and development of our history.

History must be compulsory because it provides a nation and its people with legitimate, unbreakable ties to the past. National cohesion, pride, and patriotism can only result from a collective grasp of where "we" together come from and where we want to go. If we continue to reproduce a "two nations" reality, we shall remain physically together but socially far from each other—occupying one location, but living two completely separate realities.

One reality remains largely African, while the other is semi-European, with others caught in-between these two worlds.

We are all products of our concrete circumstances and conditions. In Marxist terminology, we refer to this as historical materialism—the scientific study of history and human development.

Crucially, working-class history itself is not without contradictions. It is unacceptable for revolutionary or working-class history to remain entirely Eurocentric, treating Europe as the principal theatre of human existence and struggle. We must

**History must be
taught to advance
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and poor**

establishing national pride for all. History has the power to either build or destroy the confidence of a nation, race, class, or group. Your confidence and inspiration can make or break you or

tradition. This reliance makes historical memory loss a real danger when generations are unable to preserve and pass on that valuable treasure before departing from physical being. This

deliberately shift the stage to Afrocentrism and understand other global influences.

That is what true decolonization is about.

History must serve the people, not conquer them; it must liberate them, not subjugate them. It must be wielded as a weapon of empowerment, transformation, inclusivity, and development.

Arguments in Favour of Decolonizing the History Curriculum

We must pursue a radical departure from the narrow, limited Eurocentric history curriculum that previously dominated secondary schools across the country. The systematic denial and distortion of African history was part and parcel of the objectives of Bantu Education. A decolonized curriculum opens an entirely new world for learners.

For generations, many oppressed people in South Africa were kept unaware of the rich and varied history of the African continent. They paid little attention to it, and many thousands of teachers were themselves complicit—often unwittingly—in purveying falsities and canards about Africa.

They, too, looked exclusively to Europe for models of political systems, science, and development.

In A People's History of the

United States, Howard Zinn observed the manipulation of historical presentation:

"There are several paths available to the historian. One can lie outright about the past or one can omit facts which might lead to unacceptable conclusions, or one can take what has become a 'safe' way: i.e. mention the truth quickly, then proceed to bury it a mass of other information".

During the era of the British Empire—which was weak and strong at the same time—colonial powers declared that Africa had produced nothing. They claimed African knowledge systems were irrelevant and unsuited for the modern world.

Yet, our ancestors applied their minds to survive and flourish in environments that cannot be compared to the comforts of the modern world; they lived off the land and sustainably preserved their environment.

Over the last 300 years, a continuous stream of books, reports, letters, and articles has been written about Sub-Saharan Africa by European traders, soldiers, scholars, and missionaries.

Most of these writings must be approached with deep caution. The reason is simple: the majority of these European writers operated under the assumption that Africans were "backward", "inferior", "underdeveloped", or "unable to develop".

Because African societies

differed from what they were accustomed to in Europe, they automatically categorized them as inferior.

Yet, within Africa, robust cultures held society together and achieved great progress.

Only since the end of World War II have African, European, and American scholars begun to collaborate to rewrite the history of Africa as Africans see it. Only now are modern scholars accepting that European models are not automatically the best standard for the rest of the world to follow.

More and more people are realizing that Africa has made monumental contributions to the collective wisdom and culture of the world.

Shattering the Colonial Myths: African Civilizations and True Settlers

Let us state clearly: AFRICA is the "cradle of humanity." In no other part of the world have the archaeological signs of humanity's earliest beginnings been traced back so far.

Consider the historical evidence of advanced African civilizations:

- The Kingdom of Kush: Contributed immensely to world architecture through the construction of temples, pyramids, and enduring stone monuments. The people of Kush mastered the smelting and forging of iron. Even today, at the ancient site of Meroë, one can see massive slag heaps

left behind by historical iron mining. For centuries, Kush operated as a global power, trading with nations as far away as India.

- The Axumite Empire: Located in modern-day Ethiopia, the Axumites left magnificent stone monuments and written records, utilizing an advanced script derived from their Arabian ancestors.

In Africa, domestic and international trade brought vast wealth, and that wealth gave rise to powerful, centralized kingdoms. Pre-colonial Africa was the centre of a massive international trading network, with trade links stretching from West Africa to Europe, and from East Africa to Asia and China.

The colonial "Scramble for Africa" began in 1875, fracturing the continent not for the benefit of its inhabitants, but to enrich the wealthy and powerful elites of Europe.

To justify the new narrative promoted by our proposed curriculum, we must present clear historical anecdotes regarding South Africa's true settlers. Long before Piet Retief, long before the 1820 Settlers, and long before Jan van Riebeeck, Africa produced its own pioneers and unsung heroes.

Historically, the human population south of the equator was unique; the primary groups living in this

region were the Khoisan people, alongside the Pygmies of Central Africa and the San and Khoikhoi peoples of South Africa.

Through their cultures, these communities innovated, coexisted, and supported one another under well-organized social systems highly relevant to their historical context.

For decades, apartheid textbooks sought to delegitimize African land ownership. In the early 1970s, a farmer named Menno Klapwijk made a monumental archaeological discovery while digging in his spare time on his farm, “Silver Leaves”.

The fragments of pottery and bone he unearthed proved to be the relics of ancient, established settlements of Black people.

This discovery made it scientifically clear that Black people have lived in South Africa for at least 1,600 years. Yet, colonial and apartheid textbooks insisted that Black populations arrived much later.

Early textbooks routinely fabricated the myth that Black and White populations arrived in South Africa simultaneously, claiming:

“It is still very uncertain from where the Bantu-speaking tribes of Africa came, but it is only about 300 to 400 years ago since they commenced to migrate to South Africa.”

While later textbooks adjusted these dates slightly,

they remained centuries behind the scientific reality, stating:

“It is not possible to say exactly when the great movement to Southern Africa began, but we know that the first of the Bantu crossed the Zambezi River round about 1100.”

Extensive archaeological evidence—far beyond the Silver Leaves site—conclusively proves that Black people arrived here at least 1,600 years ago and continued a gradual southward movement from other parts of the continent over the subsequent millennium.

These early South Africans were skilled hunters, herders, and farmers who possessed advanced technological knowledge of metallurgy, mining, and ironworking. The Highveld remains dotted with the physical remains of these early iron mines and processing sites.

Southern Africa was never an uninhabited void prior to the arrival of Bantu-speaking peoples. When these groups migrated into the region, they met large populations of San and Khoikhoi peoples who had already occupied the land for thousands of years.

Furthermore, historical records show that the Khoikhoi people were fully aware of what they were defending during their resistance against Dutch encroachment: they were fighting to remain the rightful owners of their ancestral

land. Jan van Riebeeck’s own diary entry from the peace negotiations of April 1660 confirms that the Khoikhoi directly accused the Dutch of being foreign invaders:

“AT THE FORT TODAY, peace was renewed with the chiefs and overlord of the Kaapmans (Gogoso), with Harry and with all the principal men and elders. They strongly insisted that we had been appropriating more and more of their land, which had been theirs all these centuries, and on which they had been accustomed to let their cattle graze.

They asked if they would be allowed to do such a thing supposing they went to Holland, and they added: ‘It would be of little consequence if your people stayed here at the fort, but you come right into the interior and select the best land for yourselves without even asking whether we mind or whether it will cause us any inconvenience.’”

The Power Dynamics of Edited History

I want to draw on the powerful articulations of the Zimbabwean-born philosopher, Joshua Marara Maponga, who reminds us of the profound dangers of an edited history:

“History is a dangerous thing not because it is hidden but because it is edited – you’re told about Egypt but you’re not told about who built Egypt – you’re told about

Palestine but you’re not told about who lived there before, but suddenly a new narrative appears – people arrived carrying a scriptures in one hand and politics in the other – and now identity is no longer truth, rather interpretation.

When scripture is misread, it does not stay in church; it walks straight into power. Because once you can claim a divine legitimacy, you no longer need permission from History. You can redraw maps, rename lands, reassign identities—and then something even more interesting happens: power begins to concentrate. Banks, insurance, finance, and politics all begin to speak the same language—not the language of faith, but the language of influence.

And influence does not shout; it positions.

So, decisions are made long before the public debates begin; leaders are chosen long before elections are announced. And then History is presented as if it was always meant to be the truth.

But here is the uncomfortable question: if identity can be rewritten, if land can be reassigned, if History can be edited—then what you’re calling a truth today, who wrote it and who’s benefiting from it?”

Comrades, let us rewrite our own history, speak our own truth, and reclaim the destiny of our people.

DIGITAL CONNECT

Another Cosatu Initiation

WHY JOIN A LABOUR UNION

A labour union is an organized group of workers who come together to collectively bargain with employers in order to protect and advance their rights, interests, and working conditions. Unions represent workers across various industries and sectors and work to ensure fair treatment for employees. Here are some key reasons why joining a union can be important:

- Improved Wages and Benefits
- Job Security
- Workplace Safety
- Stronger Voice in the Workplace

Just to name a few...



Img:Application form by Cosatu Media

Labor unions can also engage in political and legislative activities to advocate for policies that benefit workers, such as fair wages, improved labor laws, and protections against discrimination or exploitation.

COSATU DOCUMENTS



COSATU NATIONAL CONGRESS RESOLUTIONS



UNIONS CONTACT DETAILS

