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NEW AGENDA

SOUTH AFRICAN JOURNAL OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC POLICY

Corozania

Also inside:

The Covid-19 crisis: an assault on human rights

Tribute to ANC stalwarts: their legacy must not be lost

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More democracy, less market, more environmental recovery

By Guest Editor Dr Martin Nicol

In May 2020, as the COVID-19 pandemic passed its first peak in Europe, over 5,000 researchers at more than 700 universities worldwide put their name to the opinion-piece printed below. It was written by three scholars: Isabelle Ferreras, Dominique Méda, and Julie Battilana and published on 16 May in 41 newspapers in 36 countries. The focus is on "what we are learning from this pandemic around the specific issue of work".[1] Read again what they had to say. It is more relevant than ever, but can it be universally applied?

The Institute for African Alternative (IFAA) looks at the African context and raises some questions. However, although translated into 27 languages, the opinion piece is not attuned to the circumstances of every country. Characteristics of European countries and the USA are mentioned in a way that invites one to imagine perspectives from other market economies. This editorial is aimed to stimulate debate to take this opinion piece further. Also read the article by Ari Sitas in this issue of New Agenda in which he tackles similar issues.

WORK: DEMOCRATIZE, DECOMMODIFY, REMEDIATE

"Working humans are so much more than "resources." This is one of the central lessons of the current crisis. Caring for the sick; delivering food, medication, and other essentials; clearing away our waste; stocking the shelves and running the registers in our grocery stores – the people who have kept life going through the Covid-19 pandemic are living proof that work cannot be reduced to a mere commodity. Human health and the care of the most vulnerable cannot be governed by market forces alone. If we leave these things solely to the market, we run the risk of exacerbating inequalities to the point of forfeiting the very lives of the least advantaged. How to avoid this unacceptable situation? By involving employees in decisions relating to their lives and futures in the workplace – by democratizing firms. By decommodifying work – by collectively guaranteeing useful employment to all. As we face the monstrous risk of pandemic and environmental collapse, making these strategic changes would allow us to ensure the dignity of all citizens while marshalling the collective strength and effort we need to preserve our life together on this planet.

"Why democratize? Every morning, men and women, especially members of racialised communities, migrants and informal economy workers, rise to serve those among us who are able to remain under quarantine. They keep watch through the night. The dignity of their jobs needs no other explanation than that eloquently simple term, 'essential worker.' That term also reveals a key fact that capitalism has always sought to render invisible with another term, 'human resource'. Human beings are *not* one resource among many. Without labour investors, there would be no production, no services, no businesses at all.

"Every morning, quarantined men and women rise in their homes to fulfil from afar the missions of the organizations for which they work. ➤➤

They work into the night. To those who believe that employees cannot be trusted to do their jobs without supervision, that workers require surveillance and external discipline, these men and women are proving the contrary. They are demonstrating, day and night, that workers are not one type of stakeholder among many: they hold the keys to their employers' success. They are the core constituency of the firm, but are, nonetheless, mostly excluded from participating in the government of their workplaces – a right monopolized by capital investors.

"To the question of how firms and how society as a whole might recognize the contributions of their employees in times of crisis, democracy is the answer. Certainly, we must close the yawning chasm of income inequality and raise the income floor – but that alone is not enough. After the two World Wars, women's undeniable contribution to society helped win them the right to vote. By the same token, it is time to enfranchise workers.

"Representation of labour investors in the workplace has existed in Europe since the close of WWII, through institutions known as Work Councils. Yet, these representative bodies have a weak voice at best in the government of firms, and are subordinate to the choices of the executive management teams appointed by shareholders. They have been unable to stop or even slow the relentless momentum of self-serving capital accumulation, ever more powerful in its destruction of our environment. These bodies should now be granted similar rights to those exercised by boards. To do so, firm governments (that is, top management) could be required to obtain double majority approval, from chambers representing workers as well as shareholders. In Germany, the Netherlands, and Scandinavia, different forms of codetermination (*mitbestimmung*) put in place progressively after WWII were a crucial step toward giving a voice to workers – but they are still insufficient to create actual citizenship in firms. Even in the United States, where worker organizing and union rights have been considerably suppressed, there is now a growing call to give labour investors the right to elect representatives with a supermajority within boards. Issues such as the choice of a CEO, setting major strategies, and profit distribution are too important to be left to shareholders alone. A personal investment of labour; that is, of one's mind and body, one's health – one's very life – ought to come with the collective right to validate or veto these decisions.

"Why decommodify? This crisis also shows that work must not be treated as a commodity, that market mechanisms alone cannot be left in charge of the choices that affect our communities most deeply. For years now, jobs and supplies in the health sector have been subject to the guiding principle of profitability; today, the pandemic is revealing the extent to which this principle has led us astray. Certain strategic and collective needs must simply be made immune to such considerations. The rising body count across the globe is a terrible reminder that some things must never be treated as commodities. Those who continue arguing to the contrary are imperiling us with their dangerous ideology. Profitability is an intolerable yardstick when it comes to our health and our life on this planet.

"Decommodifying work means preserving certain sectors from the laws of the so-called "free market;" it also means ensuring that all people have access to work and the dignity it brings. One way to do this is with the creation of a Job Guarantee. Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights reminds us that everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment. A Job Guarantee would not only offer each person access to work that allows them to live with dignity, it would also provide a crucial boost to our collective capability to meet the many pressing social and environmental challenges we currently face. Guaranteed employment would allow governments, working through local communities, to provide dignified work while contributing to the immense effort of fighting environmental collapse. Across the globe, as unemployment skyrockets, job guarantee programs can play a crucial role in assuring the social, economic, and environmental stability of our democratic societies.

"Environmental remediation. We should not react now with the same innocence as in 2008, when we responded to the economic crisis with an unconditional bailout [of businesses] that swelled public debt while demanding nothing in return. If our governments step in to save businesses in the current crisis, then businesses must step in as well, and meet the general basic conditions of democracy. In the name of the democratic societies they serve, and which constitute them, in the name of their responsibility to ensure our survival on this planet, our governments must make their aid to firms conditional on certain changes to their behaviours. In addition to hewing to strict environmental standards, firms must be required to fulfil certain conditions of democratic internal government. A successful transition from environmental destruction to environmental recovery and regeneration will be best led by democratically governed firms, in which the voices of those who invest their labour carry the same weight as those who invest their capital when it comes to strategic decisions. We have had more than enough time to see what happens when labour, the planet, and capital gains are placed in the balance under the current system: labour and the planet always lose.

"Thanks to research from the University of Cambridge Department of Engineering[2] we know that "achievable design changes" could reduce global

energy consumption by 73%. But … those changes are labour intensive, and require choices that are often costlier over the short term. So long as firms are run in ways that seek to maximize profit for their capital investors alone, and in a world where energy is cheap, why make these changes? Despite the challenges of this transition, certain socially-minded or cooperatively run businesses – pursuing hybrid goals that take financial, social, and environmental considerations into account, and developing democratic internal governments – have already shown the potential of such positive impact.

"Let us fool ourselves no longer: left to their own devices, most capital investors will not care for the dignity of labour investors; nor will they lead the fight against environmental catastrophe. Another option is available. **Democratize firms; decommodify work; stop treating human beings as resources so that we can focus together on sustaining life on this planet.**[3]

The opinion piece bore the signatures of intellectual icon Naom Chomsky and academic rock-stars such as Thomas Piketty, Nancy Fraser, Susan Neiman, Chantal Mouffe, Saskia Sassen, Guy Standing, Gabriel Zucman, Ha-Joon Chang, and Dani Rodrik (a member of President Ramaphosa's Economic Advisory Council. [4]) South African signatories (you can see them all on the website) include Jeremy Cronin, Elaine Unterhalter and Melanie Walker.

COMMENT FROM THE NEW AGENDA GUEST EDITOR, DR MARTIN NICOL

In South Africa, democratising workplaces was a missed opportunity when the Labour Relations Act was negotiated at Nedlac in 1994/5. The Act tried to introduce 'Workplace Forums', but these threatened to undermine existing shop steward councils, and the provision was rejected by unions. The Workplace Forum/codetermination aspects of the LRA fell into disuse from the outset.[5]

The right to work is not part of the Bill of Rights in the SA Constitution. The Freedom Charter – ANC policy – states "The state shall recognise the right and duty of all to work, and to draw full unemployment benefits". Free choice of employment is guaranteed.[6]

Just and favourable conditions of work are not guaranteed in the Constitution, but are open to negotiation through collective bargaining – in principle.[7] Protection against unemployment is limited.[8] The labour market in South Africa reflects and re-inforces inequality.

AFRICA

In a post-COVID-19 economy, people are not all going back to the jobs they had before. The shape of this economy has been up for speculation since the severity of the disease – and the lack of effective treatment – became apparent.

In mid-April 2020, 50 African intellectuals co-signed a call "to mobilize the intelligence, resources and creativity of Africans to defeat the COVID-19 pandemic". While focused on immediate health priorities, the call also looked to the future. In the medium term, Africa will continue to be vulnerable to external shocks if it does not find a structural response to its development challenges.

"The urgent tasks for Africa are the local production of quality health services, the local processing of raw materials to create value and employment, and productive base diversification."

"We must set an optimistic course…. Another Africa is possible as is another humanity in which compassion, empathy, equity and solidarity would define societies. What might have seemed like a utopia has now entered the realm of the possible. … "Let us dare to remain confident in the future or in ourselves. Let us dare to fight together against the spread of COVID-19, let us dare to defeat together the global precariat[9] created by the pandemic.

"Yes, Africa will defeat the coronavirus and will not collapse.

The opinion piece could be a springboard for imagining a re-calibrated South Africa, that really builds a resilient public health system, invests in relieving poverty, ensures a just transition to a low-carbon, wage-led, sustainable and equitable economy that tackles inequality, racism and xenophobia.

New Agenda welcomes comments from readers on the opinion piece and the issues it raises.

ENDNOTES

1. Ferreras, I.; Battilana, J.; and Méda, D. (2020) Work: Democratize, Decommodify, Remediate. 16 May. https://democratizingwork.org (accessed 17 May 2020). "The three [authors] share an abiding interest in democratic and sustainable ways of working and organizing that diverge from the model of shareholder value maximization." Dutch title translation: "Arbeid: Meer Democratie, Minder Markt, Meer Milieuherstel"
2. Cullen, Allwood, and Borgstein, Envir. Sci. & Tech. 2011 45, 1711–1718.
3. Translated by Miranda Richmond Mouillot Source: https://democratizingwork.org/
4. The Presidential Economic Advisory Council (PEAC) was appointed in September 2019. <http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/press-statements/president-appoints-economic-advisory-council>
5. Researchers into the Nedlac Workplace Challenge project reported examples of general union policy opposition to workplace cooperation. Dickinson, D. (2005) Beyond Marshmallow Mountain page 191in Webster, E. and Von Holdt, K. (2005) Beyond the Apartheid Workplace. UKZN Press. See Workplace Forums: Can they tame management? Karl von Holdt SA Labour Bulletin 19(1) 1995. 31-34.
6. Section 22 of the Constitution 1996 (Bill of Rights)
7. Section 13 of the Constitution 1996 (Bill of Rights), says "No one may be subject to slavery, servitude of forced labour." Legislation and legal precedent regulate basic conditions of work and health and safety at work.
8. Legislation provides insurance for employed contributors to the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF), but unemployed people – except those eligible for social grants (mainly the aged and people with disabilities) – are not protected against unemployment to any meaningful degree. [Indigent households do not have to pay property rates and have rights under the Constitution to minimal amounts of water and electricity and to housing where this is within the capacity of the state.]
9. Precariat (the precariat) people whose employment and income are insecure, especially when considered as a class (OED) NA

Between decisiveness and compassion

By Ari Sitas

Decisive leadership is needed to balance the tension between 'living rights' –the right to 'stay safe'– and 'livelihoods' – the right to earn the money– and to steer us towards a more just and equal society. Such leadership must take us beyond the dispensation created by conditions early on in our democracy that resulted in GEAR and foreign investment and redistribution upwards, leaving structural conditions untouched. We can't go back to that normal and expect to progress. What we need is a new paradigm that involves the transformation of our enduring structural limitations, one that is based on compassion, the concept of 'humanitude' and above all on multilateral cooperation.

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought into focus a serious tension between living rights and livelihoods. It need not be a contradictory tension, if managed properly: preferably self-managed by people in the community and the workplace with the support of the state.

What I mean by 'living rights' is the right, for example, to be protected from infection, the right not to be bombed, the right not to be violated, the right to live. In (primarily) black working class communities, the material compulsion is to try and achieve a balance between living rights and livelihoods, but under severe strains.

Most black working-class people understand lockdown and the need for protection but they need to earn money. They also understand the tension between living rights and livelihoods much better than any politician or funded person who speaks for them or uses them as an alibi.

Even if the compulsion to restore the livelihoods of the past is pressing, it would be a major setback if the post-Covid world returns to the conditions that made our macro-economic choices between 1994 and 1996 plausible.

Remember, we chose what we could call an 'accumulation path' because we believed that the structural conditions demanded an export-led growth and therefore GATT, and therefore WTO, and therefore GEAR.

What were those structural conditions? That our emergence as a mass-producing industrial society rode on the back of racial domination and the low consumption norms of a predominantly black working class. It made the cars it could not purchase and drive, it made the casspirs that chased it in the township. Mass production was achieved not only through the Iscors but also through local content programmes and tariffs. Right? Are we still in the same country? Yes. It was asserted that the structural constraint was that we were in perennial crises of overproduction.

The other school of thought said no, it was underconsumption. The debate will continue in seminar rooms for a while. The dominant answer though was: get lean and mean and join the world economy. I said we chose the path, although there were other options. The balance between living rights and livelihoods needs a decisive state to steer it towards another dispensation. I say 'we' for rhetorical purposes just to speed up the argument.

Well it was not only that.

There was a second reason punted, if my memory serves me well, that even if we stuck to growth *through* redistribution, the argument went – and here I am calling on all those who pushed hard for that insight to come clean that there was not enough money-capital around and we would need foreign investment.

So, we chose an accumulation path that made sure that redistribution happened upwards. Yes, lots of people were moved out of dire poverty through grants. We did not address the structural conditions; we modulated them.

We did everything by the dominant

> **… we chose an accumulation path that made sure that redistribution happened upwards. We did not address the structural conditions; we modulated them.**

neo-classical book, didn't we? The 'unproductive' state sector of State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) were zero budgeted and were made accountable to the market. They had to be lean and mean and keep to state mandates: so many taps, so many plug points. (Here I am getting rather cautious: did they fail as market entities because failure is logical as long as they have a development mandate or did they fail as corrupt piratical points of capture? Or both?).

We went even further to please neo-liberal protocols: all knowledge, material goods and services in the government/ public sector had to be outsourced and handled by market-linked entities. And we democratised such forms of procurement down to the last school desk in Musina or the Cape of Storms. We democratised the possibility of corruption and through the Public Finance Management Act and the various King Reports accountants and lawyers have inherited the earth whilst singing hallelujah to the heavens. This when criticism was mounting through calls for Black Economic Empowerment.

But there were some departures from the protocol: there was serious social spending, the wage/salary bill of all government and government debt was increasing which flouted orthodoxy. And, after some time, we dared put in place a minimum wage. And we do still recognise trade unions as an important social institution. And we are about to do some big social spending and we haven't sold all bits of state when enter Moody's to tell us to move from being a member of Donald Trump's "shithole" countries to a junk status.

Let us put the brakes on please for a second. Global state expenditure has been increasing everywhere, despite the rhetoric in the USA and the EU of austerity and shrinkage. What has been cut are a bundle of serious social and public services the volume of money went elsewhere, to augment capital and key strategic sectors.

Yes, we need to re-awaken the economy and help it back onto its feet after quite a few years of total mismanagement, but unless we choose a different paradigm that involves the transformation of our enduring structural limitations, we will be going nowhere fast and the talk of reform will morph into a permanent riot. We do need alternative forms of economic thinking that put equality, freedom and to use a neologism, "eco-ality", first before we talk of either structure or reform.

What do I mean by a 'New Paradigm'? After my rage in social media against responses to our downgrade by rating agencies to junk, dozens of e-messages poured my way. Most people pushed hard for an answer: if indeed there was a need for a new paradigm, what should the paradigm be?

That is precisely the question that should be answered by serious networks of socio-economic thinkers and pundits who understand and start addressing systemic and polarising constraints whilst responding to major hazards and crises. It can never be achieved by one or two people or a politically crafted vanguard of praise singers.

What I can submit is that there should be principles underlining any new paradigm before we can even start talking about it. The pandemic demonstrated two facts clearly: we did need decisive leadership that combined science with compassion. By 'science I mean the proximate know-how we can glean from our knowledge systems. By 'compassion', a moral core that prioritises human flourishing (not mere survival).

Decisive leadership: although I was and have been known to be a bottom-up, participatory democrat I submit that our enduring crises demand strong leadership. Even here I would insist on an inclusive 'vanguardism' (excuse the word, it is there merely to provoke.) Enduring crises there is the health crisis now, the climate and ecosystems crisis simmering below our radar, the inequality crisis that has become endemic all demand ➤➤

decisiveness and compassion.[2]

If compassion is important the methods used to act have to be about a moral 'compass' too. What the military and police have been enforcing within their scary powers could have been achieved by social movements, labour and community volunteers and, to use another military metaphor but one that has currency in social movements, 'marshalls', supported by our 'enforcers'. What started well though in government's response moved from science to sophistry and a pathetic rerun of the moralisms of a '50s musical like King Kong. At least the musical was artful in its tensions between the bible and the shebeen and Miriam Makeba and Nathan Mdledle could sing and Hugh could play the trumpet. The minute we argued that that epidemiology was not sociology and that the virus moved between and across classes, races, genders and communities, instead of reflection there was capitulation to specific interests and their moralising advocates. Unless this is corrected, the bar that was raised in our initial response will be placed at a level that all of us could stoop under.

Compassion has to be based on a moral core not on moralising advocacies: a concept like 'humanitude' as articulated by our Malian friend and philosopher, Adama Samassekou: "I use this concept of humanitude to translate what, in Africa, we call *maaya* (in Bamanankan, the Bambara language), *neddaaku* (in Fulfulde, the Fula language), *boroterey* (in Songhay, the Songhay language), *nite* (in Wolof), *ubuntu* (in the Bantu languages), and many more. There are so many terms that literally mean 'the quality of being human'." [3]

I find marginal difference between it and Marx's idea of a society where the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all. Or the kind of musings I subjected people to for some time: that in a post-imperial world where we all are 'others', the ethic I have been punting that the 'other' is not surplus and therefore non-eliminable, that the 'other' is not chattel and therefore non-exploitable and that the "other" is not a non-us and therefore non-excludable is very much their nephew. All such ideas prioritise human flourishing even if we disagree about its details.

At the epicentre of this discussion we need a concrete not an abstract working class: children, old age pensioners, women who are the home-makers and the core of the ignored care economy, wage earners, full-time or casual, informal sector workers collecting metal, paper, plastic, selling edibles at the ranks, spaza shop-owners, young people who hassle an income on the streets, community level volunteers, cultural or social activists in whatever settlement including hostels, it is them who need voice and protection.

The lass in distress for the chattering classes is 'the' economy the lass in distress works when they work and does not work when they don't, subsisting at the moment as self-organising units with remarkable forms of agency ... in poverty.

It consumes their entire energy to remain there. Even when they sacrifice to save the *economy* any demand (save full employment) keeps them within the poverty trap. On the other hand, it is not about capital in general but real economic units that are performing differentially with real constraints on profitability and debt. Some are doing extremely well even under low growth conditions, some badly, some are more about hedge funding and still on an investment strike, some profiteering, some extremely large and highly centralised and some extremely small, many with damaged value chains. Most will be highly resistant to any altering of the current patterns of distribution and wealth polarisation.

In short, the paradigm: although I would find it hard to live in China, I have to agree with Xi Jinping that the paradigm has to be about: "ecological progress, advances in science and technology and all-round innovation". (I would add creativity.) They are the factors that will hold the key to the door of the future. And here, not all innovation, "but innovation based on research and technologies of *public* benefit". Finally, although we have to start from the standpoint of a singular country, nothing can be achieved without multilateral cooperation.

If we agree with these principles, then we can move towards a critical dialogue about alternatives. If not, the delete button has been invented for your convenience.

The balance between living rights and livelihoods needs a decisive state to steer it towards another dispensation.

Emeritus Professor Ari Sitas, former Head of Department of Sociology at UCT, is a celebrated poet and cultural activist. He is now chairperson of, and South African representative on, the South African BRICS Think Tank. This is under the custodianship of the National Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences where Sitas is Board Chairperson. He has held prestigious positions at institutions in Europe, India and South Africa. He established a Master's programme between Germany, South Africa and India on the African Diaspora and Migration. In 2019, Prof Sitas was awarded the Order of Mapungubwe, the highest honour for citizen contribution towards the advancement of democracy in South Africa.

ENDNOTES

1 This is based on a social media series of exchanges and arguments on Facebook and eMail over the pandemic.

2 The fact that the ecosystems crisis is mouthed but not understood and how the very pandemic has its emergence out of human callousness is noted but not internalised. It becomes so obvious in discussions on energy it is not about cost or megawatts nor about 1 or 10 Koebergs, or whether it is safe or not (of course it is dangerous) it is about the unsolvable and unmanageable problem of nuclear waste and what it does to our very prospects and the future of our species and the ecological underpinnings of existence.

3 Adama Samassekou (2018) *Humanitude or How to Quench the Thirst for Humanity*, International Council for Philosophy and the Humanities, Liege World Congress Keynote; Ari Sitas (2008), *The Ethic of Reconciliation*, Durban: Madiba Press. NA

Microbes, mobility and mortality: South Africa's long pandemic history

By Emeritus Professor Howard Phillips

Pandemics are spread by people moving around. The lesson from this is that the way to curb the spread of the coronavirus in South Africa is to maintain tight control over the movement of individuals. This is a lesson we have always found hard to follow, but have had a long time to learn. On several occasions since the arrival of Dutch settlers to the Cape different infectious diseases have taken hold of the indigenous population and since the 18th century they have clearly mapped out the dominant pathways of human movement to and within the sub-continent.

South Africa is no stranger to pandemics. The region's history reveals that it has on several occasions been overtaken by a pandemic, that is, an infectious disease caused by a pathogenic microbe sweeping the globe, which has struck down or even killed an unusually large number of its inhabitants. It is on how the worst of these spread to and within South Africa that this article will focus, in a bid to put one important aspect of the current Covid-19 pandemic into historical perspective.

Apart from the possibility of an epidemic (an excessive local or regional outbreak of a disease) having hit Mapungubwe in the Limpopo Valley early in the second millennium AD,[1] there is at present no strong evidence of such episodes in South Africa before the 17th century. Indeed, in 1678 a group of Khoekhoe leaders told the Dutch authorities at the Cape that 'no particular severe sicknesses are known among them, and Death usually contents himself with old worn out people'.[2] But even as they spoke these words, the disease environment in which they and their forebears had lived for millennia was being fundamentally altered by the region's burgeoning connections with Europe and Asia, which the Dutch East India Company's colonial settlement at Table Bay had formally inaugurated in 1652.

As had happened with the Spanish arrival in Latin America 150 years earlier, this Dutch presence and the interaction with the indigenous population which it brought once and for all breached the isolation which had hitherto shielded locals from the infectious disease pools of Europe, the Middle East and Asia. 'Great sickness' began to be reported more and more frequently among the Khoekhoen. In 1687, for instance, Dutch officials recorded that in the southern Cape, 'there is a very severe and deadly sickness among the Hottentots [sic] who do not know what to do for it; and although they decamp and move from place to place, the sickness still pursues them .... The burning fever drags many, both old and young to their graves.' That earlier in that month an 'infectious fever' had been raging in Cape Town, causing many deaths, strongly suggests the source from which that disease had reached the southern Cape.

Whatever this lethal disease was, it proved but an ominous forerunner to the first identifiable pandemic which struck the sub-continent with devastating effect in 1713, smallpox. Part of an ongoing pandemic which swept the world repeatedly from the 16th century onwards, after 1713 it returned at least a dozen times to the sub-continent over the next 180 years. Thrice during the Dutch East India Company period it was introduced by sailors and passengers aboard Company vessels travelling to Europe from Dutch colonies in the East Indies. In each case it was their smallpox-infected clothing which transmitted the causative variola ➤➤

> **… as the Cape's connection to the international trading system changed as a result of it becoming a British colony in 1806, so did the source but not the fact of its further smallpox epidemics alter.**

virus to the unprotected population of the Cape, via laundrywomen in 1713 and 1767 and via second-hand clothes dealers in 1755. From Cape Town it was carried inland by infected individuals fleeing the disease.

In the 19th century, as the Cape's connection to the international trading system changed as a result of it becoming a British colony in 1806, so did the source but not the fact of its further smallpox epidemics alter. Thus, in 1812 and again in 1840 it arrived aboard a Portuguese slave ship brought into Table Bay after being captured off Mocambique by the Royal Navy's Anti-Slavery Squadron, while the 1882 epidemic reached Cape Town aboard a steamship straight from Britain. As in the 18th century, smallpox was also transmitted from the coast into the interior by infected people travelling there. Smallpox 'always comes from the south', an explorer was told in 1860 by Ngwato tribesmen near Lake Ngami in today's Botswana.[3] Where it travelled, a local told him, 'there are no people left, only stones'.[4] Thus, like a chemical marker used to track digestion, the smallpox epidemics of the 18th and 19th centuries clearly map the dominant pathways of human movement to and within the sub-continent.

Smallpox was already receding as a serious threat to health in the sub-continent thanks to the introduction of vaccinations when a second pandemic reached South Africa in 1900, bubonic plague, which had begun to spread from China to ports around the world in 1894. Travelling also by sea, but in this case not in humans but in fleas on rats aboard ships, the causative bacillus, *Yersinia pestis*, arrived in Cape Town from Argentina with cargoes of fodder to feed the horses of the British army involved in the South African War. From September 1900 numbers of dead rats began to be noticed in the section of Cape Town's harbour reserved for military use. An officer reported seeing sick rats 'coming out to the open daylight, in a dazed state so that you could catch them with your hand.'[5] However, the local military command did not share news of this rodent die-off with the municipal health authorities, and so it was not until fleas carrying the bacillus turned from dead rats to living human beings nearby, and civilians working in the harbour began to die, that the outbreak of bubonic plague in Cape Town was officially acknowledged.

From Cape Town and the other South African ports similarly infected bubonic plague did not spread far inland, except in one significant case, when a man with the pneumonic variety of plague (which is readily transmissible from person-to-person) travelled from East London to Johannesburg where he infected his family and their neighbours, triggering a short, sharp pneumonic plague epidemic in that town.

Military priorities were also responsible for the introduction and primary spread of the devastating Spanish flu pandemic 18 years later, in 1918. Two troopships carrying South African Native Labour Corps soldiers home from Europe during World War I arrived in Table Bay in September of that year. Both had cases of influenza on board after having stopped on the way

at Freetown, Sierra Leone to take on coal. Even though influenza had been raging in Freetown at the time, interaction between the two ships and the dock colliers had not been restricted as the port authorities hesitated to interfere in naval matters. The consequences of this contact became apparent on the next leg of voyage to Table Bay, when influenza began to occur onboard both vessels, prompting Cape Town's port health officer to propose that all aboard be quarantined when the vessels arrived there. However, at the behest of the military authorities, the port health officer recalled in his own defence, he was overruled "as the men were away from home so long, it would be unfair to keep them under quarantine for so long in Table Bay harbour. He must allow them to land and go home."[6] As a compromise, only those who were still sick were hospitalised on shore, while the rest were confined to a military camp where they were placed under cursory quarantine, tested and, after two days, officially demobilised and allowed to entrain for their homes across the sub-continent.

No sooner had they left the city than cases of severe influenza akin to the so-called 'Spanish' flu in Europe and Sierra Leone began to appear in Cape Town among stevedores and dock labourers, fishermen and the military staff at the hospital and camp where the newly-arrived soldiers had been lodged. By then, however, the troops themselves were disembarking at stations along the country's extensive railway network, many of them now infectious and thus transmitting the Spanish flu virus to their families and the communities which had proudly gathered to hail their safe return from the Great War. From as remote a district as Tsolo in the Transkei, for example, a magistrate reported that, since the return of a batch of Native Labour Corps troops early in October, "sickness has become rife amongst both races in village and country and people are being brought in to [the] local doctor by wagon and sledge loads".[7]

Yet, returned soldiers were not the only vectors of Spanish flu. Their transmission of the disease countrywide was supplemented by other effective vectors, viz. families fleeing infected towns for their lives, railway personnel travelling between stations and, particularly, migrant workers desperate to escape from mine compounds and barracks where death was rampant. In Kimberley, for example, thousands of diamond miners insisted "that if they had to die they would rather die at home and that they also wished to go and look after their families". A week later they "had made up their minds to leave," reported a panicky labour agent, "and [declared that] if De Beers [the mines' owner] did not agree they would break out, even if fired upon".[8] In many cases the conditions under which they and other migrant workers returned home were grim. It was reported from Pietersburg, for instance, that corpses of mineworkers were being "found alongside the railway track all the way to Messina",[9] while a farmer in the Graskop district came across "natives [sic] all along the road just left to die."[10] Paradoxically, many of those who struggled so to reach their family homes brought the flu virus with them and thereby the risk of infecting their very own households. Graphic and telling in this regard is an account by a man who had been a migrant worker on the diamond mines in Kimberley in 1918 before leaving for his home in the Taung district at the end of his contract: "He caught the 8 p.m. train to Mafeking. On the journey, passengers were taken ill and some died. He got off with one of his friends at Jan Kempdorp (Border station) and they began to walk home. As they walked, he began to shiver … and soon he and his friend could only crawl, unable to carry their luggage. He struggled on in this way on his knees for the whole day. He reached his home at Driefontein on 3 October and fell into a deep sleep. He only regained full consciousness on 19 October. During those 16 days he was delirious, imagining that he saw his friends when in fact they had died. He believed that 'I carried the "fever" [Spanish flu] to Driefontein."[11]

It is likely that returned soldiers were also the vectors who introduced a new strain of yet another pandemic, polio, to South Africa from the Middle East towards the end of World War I in 1917, and towards the end of World War II in 1944. On both occasions, no sooner had these troops disembarked in Durban than serious cases of this disease began to appear in local battalions and among the staff of military hospitals where they were being treated. From these military hotspots it spread to civilian communities, unchecked by a government unwilling to single out its soldiers as being primarily responsible. This reconstruction of the pathway of the polio pandemic into South Africa is supported by the fact of similar outbreaks at the same time in the USA, Britain, New Zealand and Australia to which their own troops had recently been repatriated, also from the Middle East. Two further outbreaks, in 1947 and 1956, were not obviously linked to the military, but identifying their source was overshadowed by vigorous campaigns in these years to raise funds for medical research to develop a preventive vaccine, a goal which achieved spectacular success in the mid 1950s. Thereby polio was eliminated as a threat to the population of the country.

In the case of the next pandemic to hit South Africa, HIV/AIDS, finding a preventive vaccine is still work in progress today, but medical research has at least rendered it treatable, turning it into a chronic disease which can be managed.

Its path into and within South Africa was along two very different migrant worker routes. The Clade B subtype was probably introduced in the late 1970s by ➤➤

aircrews returning home from the USA where it had begun to manifest itself among gay men. Two SAA stewards who died in Pretoria in 1982 of a pneumonia that their deficient immune systems could not fight off were the first cases to be recorded in the country. Within a year 32 more gay men in Johannesburg were diagnosed as HIV+.

The second HIV subtype, Clade C, seems to have arrived in South Africa a little later via quite different vectors, migrant labourers coming to work on the Witwatersrand gold mines from Central Africa which was adjacent to the then epicentres of the pandemic, Uganda and Zaïre. The first recorded cases of this clade were diagnosed among migrant Malawian miners on the Rand in 1986. Within two months, two local women who had consorted with these miners were diagnosed as HIV+ too. From these sources HIV slowly began to be seeded among other miners and workers on the Rand and then among their families and communities when they returned to their rural homes at the end of their contracts or during Christmas vacations. By 1992 at least 2.2% of pregnant women attending public sector health facilities in South Africa were HIV+.

As vectors of the disease migrant workers were soon joined by other categories of young people on the move: long-distance truck-drivers whose number and routes grew markedly from the 1980s as restrictions on road freight transport were eased and who were known to frequent sex-stopovers along the many domestic and foreign roads they traversed; young political exiles returning home from East and Central Africa after 1990 as South Africa entered its transition to democracy; and, after the advent of democracy in 1994, foreign refugees and asylum-seekers from elsewhere in Africa. By 1995 10.4% of pregnant women being tested at state health facilities were HIV+. Five years later this figure stood at 24.5%.

Sailors, soldiers, ship and train passengers, migrant workers, truckers, exiles, refugees and asylum-seekers – what do these, the principal vectors of pandemics to and in South Africa over the last 300 years, have in common? The answer is physical mobility, for it has been human mobility by sea, road and railway which has unwittingly brought global pandemics to South Africa and then spread them within the country.

The underlying reasons for this are fourfold: South Africa's geographical position on an increasingly busy sea-route between Europe and Asia and its pivotal place, as a consequence, in the burgeoning modern world trading system; the military priorities of successive rulers of the region outweighing public health precautions; the nature of South Africa's industrial system, with its heavy reliance on migrant labourers who travelled along its extensive rail and road networks between their places of residence and of work; and its two national political systems before and after 1994, the first of which saw a significant number of its people take refuge in neighbouring countries to escape apartheid and the second of which opened a democratic South Africa to returning exiles and refugees. In short, people on the move have been the means by which pandemics have been introduced into the country and then spread there.

Nor, as the current Covid-19 pandemic makes clear, does this feature belong only in the past. In 2020, in a world of swift, easy travel between continents by air, Covid-19 appears to have been introduced to South Africa by infected South African tourists returning home on flights from a Covid-19-struck Europe and North America and by infected European tourists visiting the country. Through their contacts with South Africans the coronavirus was then transmitted to locals who, in turn, spread it within their immediate urban communities and even into rural areas to which they travelled by road and train to seek refuge or to bury family members who had succumbed to the virus. As this article shows, this is a pattern of human mobility which parallels closely the region's long epidemic history. A resident who tried to keep Covid-19 out of his home village of Genadendal by blocking the entrance road understood this fact all too well, telling a journalist recently, 'We saw that the moment we can stop the movement of the people, that's the moment we can stop the movement of the virus.'[12]

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ENDNOTES

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Another pandemic, another crisis?

By Steven Robins

Professor Steven Robins has published on a wide range of topics, including the politics of land, development, urban studies, citizenship and governance, and truth and reconciliation. More recently he has been writing on the global climate crisis as well as Covid-19 and the political implications of humanitarian aid. His most recent book is Letters of Stone: From Nazi Germany to South Africa (Penguin Random House, 2016). He is employed as a Professor in the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology at the University of Stellenbosch. He is a member of the board of the Institute of African Alternatives (IFAA).

In striking contrast to Covid-19, the "slow violence" of global health crises such as AIDS, TB, malaria, climate change and malnutrition are left to silently kill in the shadows – without significant disruptions to the global economy, 24/7 media attention and overriding international concern. Could this be because they are seen to be "ordinary suffering" and outcomes of structural violence that unfolds slowly? Why are some crises taken more seriously than others, and how did the Coronavirus come to crowd out these other catastrophes in our midst?

In February 2009, following the devastating 2008 financial crisis, President Obama's White House chief of staff, Rahm Emanuel, publicly stated, "You never want a serious crisis to go to waste." According to Will Wilkinson, a researcher at the libertarian Cato Institute, this statement revealed the Obama Administration's strategic plans: "Not about to waste his opportunity, Obama's going big. A cap and trade carbon permit system, a fundamental overhaul of American health care, and huge new subsidies for 'green' technology are just a few of the big ticket items the president wants to nail down before his window of crisis closes."

Naomi Klein uses terms such as "shock doctrine" and "disaster capitalism" to refer to the ways in which governments and corporations exploit crises for profit and political gain. Clearly, crises are open to many possibilities.

We live in a world where we are bombarded by crises all the time – hurricanes, floods, droughts, nuclear disasters, wars, health disasters, climate change and countless other catastrophes. We are currently in the midst of yet another global crisis, one that has led many writers, activists, scholars and media commentators to speculate on what lies beyond it. For some, the Covid-19 crisis offers the possibility of helping to bring about the end of neoliberal capitalism and usher in a global New Green Deal, while for others it threatens a global economic depression and the spectre of authoritarian populism, possibly fascism.

But even beyond these speculations, what is extraordinary about the Covid-19 crisis is the scale of the response to the virus, namely the global spread of a standardised lockdown approach. By introducing lockdown in almost every country, the global economy was disrupted as never before. Why did Covid-19 alarm governments everywhere, whereas other global health crises such as AIDS, TB, malaria, and malnutrition have been left to silently kill in the shadows, without the same kind of international concern and media attention? Why are some crises taken more seriously than others?

As Rob Nixon has observed, writers, journalists and activists often face difficulties and dilemmas in drawing attention to crises that are not spectacular, but are instead about "ordinary suffering" and structural violence that unfold slowly, and without much public and media attention and visibility.[1] Examples of this include the long-term health consequences of human disasters such as the Chernobyl and Fukushima Daiichi nuclear ➤➤

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meltdowns, the Bhopal gas explosion, HIV/AIDS, TB, climate change, and countless other forms of "slow violence" that do not conform to graphic imagery of instant media spectacles.

While the spectacular explosions at Chernobyl, Fukushima and Bhopal initially drew international television crews, this media attention was short-lived as international journalists and NGOs quickly redeployed to other crises elsewhere. Similarly, the "slow dyings" from diseases such as HIV and TB do not draw the same kind of media and public attention as the dramatic imagery of trucks being used as temporary mortuaries during the Covid-19 crisis in New York City. Yet, in early June 2020, at a time when the United States had over 100,000 Covid-19 deaths, television news migrated from Covid-19 hospital wards to the burning streets and mass protests that followed the police murder in Minnesota of an African American man, George Floyd. Mass media attention proves to be hyper-transient.

As we live through the spectacular high-speed Covid-19 crisis, we seem to have lost sight of other crises taking place in various parts of the world. So, how did Coronavirus come to crowd out so many of these other catastrophes in our midst? Closer to home, what made the Covid-19 crisis so different to another pandemic that hit our country's shores at the turn of the new millennium – HIV/AIDS?

The Covid-19 crisis had economists predicting an unprecedented global economic meltdown. Given the statistics and predictions, it seemed self-evident that this crisis would dominate the international news and our daily lives everywhere. Looking back, the Coronavirus had already been recognised as a global health threat in early January 2020, when it began to spread from the "wet markets" of Wunan city in Hubei Province, China, to the rest of the world.

It was the television images of overwhelmed hospitals and Covid-19 corpses in makeshift mortuaries in Northern Italy, London and New York that provided the most frighteningly graphic evidence of the devastation this virus could cause, even for well-resourced hospitals in the global North. It was also the modelling by scientists that convinced political leaders and governments to introduce extreme forms of lockdown that involved the unprecedented closing down of economies and societies throughout the world.

The speed with which the virus spread through casual contact, along with the expanding media coverage of the disease, provoked considerable fear and panic in countries that were unprepared for such an epidemic. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared Covid-19 a pandemic and recommended a "suppression strategy" ("lockdown") involving the suppression of all transmission for 12 to 18 months until a vaccine became available. The WHO also noted that a second option would be a "mitigation strategy" that would aim to control the epidemic until populations developed "herd immunity" but this would come with a very high health burden.[2]

By March 2020, it was the "lockdown" model that was rapidly implemented almost everywhere. Lockdown became the default global health response even though, prior to the Covid-19 outbreak, it had not been part of global pandemic prevention and containment planning.[3] In an extremely short space of time, variations of the Chinese lockdown model were implemented on a global scale even though it was known that this would bring the global economy to its knees. How did this response come

about with such speed and resolve in contrast to global responses to other diseases and crises, including the global climate crisis?

Anthony Stavrianakis and Laurence Anne Tessier [4] provide a blow-by-blow account of how "lockdown" became the default Coronavirus response in most countries. They describe how the modelling work of Neil Ferguson and his team at Imperial College London provided the scientific justification for lockdown measures. It was the scale of Ferguson's predictions of Covid-19 deaths in the UK, US and Europe that influenced political leaders to opt for such measures.

Stavrianakis and Tessier tell us that on 14 February, during an interview on Channel 4 News (UK), Ferguson had stated that his models indicated that 400,000 people could die in the UK from Covid-19 unless extreme "suppression" (i.e. lockdown) measures were introduced. Four days after Ferguson presented his findings to French president Emmanuel Macron on 12 March, France implemented a general lockdown ("confinement"). On 15 March, the White House received Ferguson's report, and his predictions of an estimated 2 million deaths in the US without a lockdown was the catalyst for the US policy response, including the acceptance of Ferguson's recommendation that schools be closed and that gatherings of more than 10 be avoided. On 16 March, Ferguson met UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson, and on 23 March the UK announced a stay at home order and closed schools. The Chinese model of a blanket shutdown of the city of Wunan and the province of Hubei had rapidly become international "best practice", even though, as Stavrianakis and Tessier have argued, it was based on flimsy scientific evidence.

Carlo Caduff, who has done extensive research on past pandemics, claims that governments in powerful countries used panic and fear about death to justify lockdown measures, which were sometimes driven by "authoritarian impulses" rather than reliable scientific data. He suggests that Covid-19 responses departed dramatically from previous pandemics partly due to the "political visibility of the deaths" as well as "the fear of death in powerful societies eager to repress the inescapable reality of death".[5] Caduff also observes that there have been no equivalent responses to worldwide fatalities caused by preventable and treatable "Third World diseases" – each year there are 1.3 million TB deaths, 770,000 deaths due to HIV infections, and 435,000 malaria deaths. Neither have there been such extreme responses to the between 300,000 to 500,000 people who die from seasonal viruses every year, or the millions who died in influenza pandemics in 1957 (1-2 million) and 1968 (2-4 million). So, why did Covid-19 elicit such measures?

Caduff attributes the exceptional response to a number of factors, including "the speed of infection, the clinical picture of the disease and the impact on demographically older populations causing massive compression of morbidity and mortality that is overwhelming weak healthcare systems with no excess and low surge capacity".[6] According to Caduff, the Covid-19 health disasters that played out in the United States, the UK and Europe, in overwhelmed hospitals and elder-care homes, were largely a result of neoliberal policies that led to the "systematic divestments in public health and medical care that have created fragile systems unable to cope with the crisis".[7] Caduff also suggests that rather than using reliable scientific data and pandemic preparedness strategies that had been developed over the past 15 years, governments justified draconian lockdown measures by means of a "politics of fear". As Caduff concludes, "Loose science, lack of data, speculative evidence, strong opinions, misinformation, exaggerated mortality rates, the 24/7 news media attention and the rapid spread of dramatic stories on social media have led to poor political choices and major public anxiety."[8]

Caduff and other critics have asked how the Covid-19 crisis came to be singled out for such an exceptional and unprecedented global health response, whereas there have not been similar responses to other treatable diseases such as AIDS, malaria and TB. They also ask why the modellers, such as Ferguson, did not factor in "externalities" such as the devastating economic and health consequences of lockdown measures, especially in poorer countries in the global South where AIDS, malaria, TB, food insecurity, chronic poverty and malnutrition are so widespread. To address these questions, we will now turn to the cases of HIV/AIDS and Covid-19 in South Africa, where the Ramaphosa administration has been widely praised for taking the Coronavirus crisis seriously from the start.

AIDS AND COVID-19: A CASE OF COMPETING CRISES?

There are of course many differences between the Covid-19 and HIV/AIDS pandemics in South Africa. For instance, in contrast to the scientific and epidemiological uncertainty surrounding Covid-19, by the late 1990s there was a global consensus regarding the science and treatment of HIV/AIDS. Yet, soon after former President Thabo Mbeki assumed office in 1999, he began flirting with AIDS dissident science, and insisted that AIDS in Africa was a "disease of poverty" caused by malnutrition and compromised immune systems. He also claimed that a profiteering global pharmaceutical industry was using Africans as guinea pigs to test and market their toxic antiretroviral drugs. AIDS activists and health professionals responded to President Mbeki's dissident position by mobilising around a life and death struggle for treatment. In the course of these struggles, activists not only challenged President Mbeki's position, ➤➤

but also legally challenged the global pharmaceutical industry and the TRIPS intellectual property regime in order to clear the way for the production of cheaper generic drugs in countries of the global South such as India, South Africa and Brazil. But the biggest challenge in the late 1990s and early 2000s was to convince the government and citizens that AIDS was indeed a "national health crisis".

Together with health professionals, NGOs and the media, the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) was exceptionally successful in bringing the pandemic into public visibility and defining it as a national crisis. The TAC was founded in Cape Town in 1998 by Zackie Achmat at a time when there was still a veil of silence about the disease due to a range of factors relating to taboo, stigma, fear, denial and shame. Activists not only had to challenge AIDS dissidents, but also a range of alternative explanations of the causes of HIV ranging from dissident science to witchcraft beliefs. As the anthropologist Leslie Bank has noted, the shame and stigma of HIV also meant that families of the deceased often tried to cover up the causes of the deaths.

It was only through mass mobilisation in virtually every space of South African society that activists ultimately succeeded in getting the wider public to accept the basics of AIDS science, to test for HIV, and to take the treatment when testing HIV-positive. In April 2003, following global and international pressure, President Mbeki's Cabinet eventually decided to provide antiretroviral therapy in the public health system. Once treatment became available, the disease began to vanish from media visibility and public discourse. It appeared that it was now no longer necessary for people living with AIDS to mobilise – they simply visited their physicians, clinics and hospitals for checkups and to get their drug supplies. The "slow dyings" from HIV were thereby rendered invisible to the wider public.

In 2014, activist Mark Heywood publicly denounced AIDS complacency amongst government and donors by observing that, on every World AIDS Day on 1 December, there are political speeches and media coverage of the pandemic, but these annual ritualised expressions of public concern are typically followed by silence and denial about an epidemic that has continued to devastate South Africa. In 2018 UNAIDS revealed the following statistics for South Africa: 7.7 million people were living with AIDS; 240,000 new HIV infections; and 71,000 AIDS-related deaths. Although the crisis was clearly far from over, it appeared that the "slow dyings" of people living with HIV meant that this pandemic was no longer seen to be a national crisis. Moreover, with treatment now available, it was widely assumed that AIDS was simply another chronic, manageable disease, much like diabetes, hypertension, obesity and TB.

When it comes to TB in South Africa, the situation is equally grim – in 2018 an estimated 301,000 South Africans became ill with TB and 63,000 people died from the disease.[9] Even though TB deaths in 2017 were four times greater than the 21,022 murders between April 2018 and March 2019, and South Africa has the fifth highest burden of TB in the world, this disease has become normalised and is not seen as a national crisis. The same could be said of gender-based violence, chronic poverty, inequality, malnutrition, poor access to housing, water and sanitation, massive unemployment and so on. Why are these not also seen to be national crises? Could this be attributed to the "unspectacular", slow-moving nature of these diseases?

In the midst of the Covid-19 crisis, top South African scientists such as Professors Glenda Gray and Shabir Mahdi warned government that the lockdown measures were causing "collateral damage" in relation to other health conditions whereby many citizens were not coming to clinics and hospitals for vaccinations and TB and HIV treatment. Professor Gray caused a political storm when she claimed that malnutrition was becoming a problem in the country because of the lockdown and the exclusive focus on responding to the Covid-19 crisis. So, how can we better understand how this concept of "crisis" works in public, political and academic discourses?

In her 2013 book *Anti-Crisis*[10], Janet Roitman analyses the concept of "crisis" in social science theory and writing. Drawing on the work of the German historian Reinhart Kosellek (1988), she examines how crises come to be "defined as turning points in history" and how this shapes decisions and judgements about the past, the present and the future. Crisis moments, according to Roitman, are also "instances when normativity is laid bare," and this makes it possible to inaugurate new redemptive and utopian historical times.[11] Roitman illustrates this with former President Barack Obama's famous speech about a new hopeful future in the aftermath of the 2008 economic crisis. In this speech, Obama not only made judgments about the ethical failure of those bankers responsible for creating the "false value" and "toxic" housing bonds of the "bubble economy", but he also used this financial crisis to envision a new world that would be profoundly different from the past.

Many commentators on Covid-19 have viewed this crisis as a portal to the devastation of capitalism[12], as well as a potential "historical turning point" that could usher in the end of neoliberalism.[13] Closer to home, in April 2020, during the Covid-19 crisis, President Ramaphosa identified the pandemic as a "turning point" in South Africa. In a televised speech to the nation, Ramaphosa told South Africans that this was a totally unprecedented crisis and that the country would never be the same again. He envisaged a

new economy would emerge from the ashes of Covid-19, and announced the country's largest ever rescue package of R500 billion. What this speech also seemed to acknowledge was the need for "radical economic transformation" to address what Covid-19 had laid bare – the extreme racialised inequalities, massive structural unemployment, chronic poverty, inequality and hunger. Although all of this was already known, it was the Covid-19 crisis that made Ramaphosa's revelatory critique of the existing order possible, along with his articulation of an ethical demand and moral task for creating a fundamentally different society in the face of the devastating consequences of the disease. Whether or not that will happen is another story entirely. Meanwhile, for those living in violent and precarious conditions – the poor, marginalized, unemployed and those living in war zones and shantytowns – "chronic crisis" is lived as an enduring everyday reality with no end in sight; for them crisis is endemic rather than episodic.[14]

While we live in a world of multiple, ongoing crises, during the first half of 2020 the world seemed focused on one crisis only – Covid-19. Then, towards the end of May 2020, came the explosion of rage across the US in response to the video of the brutal police murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis. The response to Floyd's cold-blooded murder, one of a litany of similar "lynchings" of black men and women by police, brought to the surface centuries of racialised violence experienced by African Americans – on slave plantations, in prisons and on the streets.

The media reporting of the protests following the "spectacular violence" of the murder of George Floyd seemed to temporarily displace and render invisible the "slow violence" of racial capitalism and its economic and health disparities that have produced disproportionate deaths of black American and Latino citizens from Covid-19. Yet, studies have revealed how racialised poverty has contributed towards the comorbidities of high blood pressure, diabetes and obesity that have rendered black lives more vulnerable to Covid-19. Moreover, black and Latino Americans are also disproportionally represented as "essential workers", even as they are treated as disposable by the neoliberal logic of the capitalist society they live in.

When Covid-19 is over, we may well return to the question of how it was possible that Covid-19 came to obscure the devastation caused by a multiplicity of other ongoing crises of "slow violence" that typically do not make it onto television news. We may also want to reflect on how AIDS in South Africa morphed from being recognised as a national health crisis, to a chronic manageable disease characterised by "slow dyings" and "ordinary suffering." In the spirit of Rahm Emanuel's call not to let a serious crisis go to waste, we need to ensure that the global Covid-19 crisis becomes a catalyst for systemic economic and public health transformations to address the consequences of everyday health disparities that are typically not televised.

While many on the Left hope the Covid-19 crisis could be a catalyst for a shift from fossil fuel-driven neoliberal capitalism to a more environmentally sustainable and socially just future, at the same time right-wing and authoritarian governments everywhere are also determined not to let this crisis go to waste. With the outbreak of Coronavirus, countries such as China extended their mass surveillance systems and introduced new forms of state control over its citizens, while Hungary's Prime Minister Orban used the crisis to further restrict freedom of expression and postpone elections. Similarly, President Trump invoked an economic "emergency" arising from the Covid-19 crisis to dismantle federal regulations designed to protect workers, consumers, investors and the environment.[15] In the name of "unburdening the economy", he signed an executive order allowing agencies to waive 50-year-old environmental laws to accelerate federal approvals of pipelines, highways and other infrastructure projects. Crises can clearly be used and abused for many purposes – in the name of corporate profits, "disaster capitalism" and authoritarian rule, or to promote progressive change and social justice. It is all up for grabs.

ENDNOTES

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Only a public pathway can reach a green recovery: Reimagining the economy

By Bruce Baigrie

The author is a climate justice activist and is part of the Alternative Information and Development Centre's (AIDC) Alternatives to Extractivism and Climate Change programme. He is an ecologist with a Masters in Conservation Biology.

We increasingly hear that the Covid-19 virus creates an opportunity to reimagine the economy. But whether that will be positive for the climate depends on a global political will that is free from the conventional sentiment that the market must decide. This article argues that a public pathway is needed for the post-Covid-19 recovery to address the climate crisis.

'The pandemic gives us a chance to reimagine the economy'. The list of those who subscribe to such sentiment continues to grow. Most recently the SARS commissioner Edward Kieswetter and former University of Cape Town Vice-Chancellor Mamphela Ramphele who outsourced UCT workers have joined its supporters.[1],[2] This is because for many, including our President, the pandemic "reveals how grinding poverty, inequality and unemployment is tearing the fabric of our communities apart." It should worry us that it took a pandemic to reveal such brutal realities, not least to our President. But that does not detract from the fact that an opportunity is available to those of us who want to meaningfully transform our society.

The covid-19 pandemic, in just its first few weeks, shifted economic "sensibility" to what the modern Left has struggled over for decades. The state can in fact be, and now has to be, a central player in the economy. The neoliberal dogma that mass borrowing and spending are impossible and that austerity is simply mandatory, is done – although probably not without a fight.[3] The editorials of publications such as the Financial Times and The Economist lead the charge, where "governments will have to accept a more active role in the economy … must see public services as investments rather than liabilities" and where "[b]ragging about having slightly healthier finances … would be like boasting about having the cleanest face at a mud-wrestling contest."[4] Here in South Africa, the South African Reserve Bank (SARB) broke from its rigid inflation targeting position and has slashed interest rates by 2.5%.

However, government has hardly followed their lead. The President announced a misleading stimulus figure, which after reallocations amounts to just 2% of GDP, far below the global benchmark. The social grant top-ups were too little too late, and by the rime of writing just 100,000 people have received the special R350 grant.[5] It is scary to think that South Africa's record high unemployment can get worse. Couple this with the fact that millions are likely to have moved into absolute poverty and the scale of the intervention required becomes apparent.

CENTRING THE CLIMATE CRISIS

What is encouraging is the growing number of politicians, academics and other public figures who believe that the post-Covid-19 recovery should centre on the climate crisis. This is critical, as the coming decade is our last chance to avoid the climate catastrophe of global warming of more than a 1.5°C increase. To do this, we must cut our emissions

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of carbon by 50% by 2030, and reach net-zero[6] emissions by 2050.[7] South Africa has a significant obligation to achieve this. The country has higher per capita emissions of greenhouse gases than China[8] and, aside from some far smaller economies, has the most carbon intensive economy in the world[9]. To meet this burden, many of the figures mentioned above believe that this recovery should be led by the private sector.

South Africa's Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme (REIPPPP)

This programme aims to increase the proportion of energy generated from renewables (sun, wind and water) by relying on private sector companies to invest in the infrastructure. The companies will be attracted by the opportunities to make profits from the sale of renewable energy to the national electricity grid.

In South Africa, this means freeing up the REIPPPP. The view that the REIPPPP is the best way forward to a renewable energy future is widely held. Eskom and the ruling party remain highly contested terrains, embedded with powerful coal interests. What renewable energy exists has come almost entirely through the REIPPPP programme and those in the state who see a renewable future have tethered themselves to it.[10] But a market-led transition will fail the core components of the recovery many seek. This is a recovery that both meets climate targets and is just.

THE MARKET HAS FAILED (AGAIN)

The last two decades have seen renewable energy production around the world excluding hydropower increase almost 5-fold.[11] Countries such as Germany have been presented as great success stories and China accounts for almost a third of all renewable energy. Critically, as many proponents of renewable energy point out, is how cheap it is, far cheaper than energy based on fossil fuels.

So, what percentage of global energy has been produced by this boom? Around 8%.[12] But will this 8% grow at rates similar to the significant rate during its production? No. The bad news is that the rate of global investment in renewable energy has in fact fallen[13] (specifically in the world's largest economies such as China, Germany and the US) and it should thus surprise no one that emissions continued to rise[14] following the Arctic and Australian fires. But the slow-down in the rate of investment should puzzle no one given the inherent logic of markets. The primary constraint on firms in a market is competition, which inevitably forces those firms to drive down their prices. This process begins what Sean Sweeney from the Trade Unions for Energy Democracy[15] describes as a "three-fall effect". As competition between renewable energy firms increases, the bidding price of renewable energy falls whilst capital expenditure costs do not do so at the same speed. As a result ››

of this, profit margins fall as well, and thus a planet threatening fall in the rate of investment follows. To give the scale of the investment required, the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) estimated (in 2016) that "the [annual] average then needs to reach US$900billion between 2021 and 2030". Decrease in the rate aside, 2019 was still a record year for total investment in renewables. The record amount? US$282.2billion. Worse still, the IRENA projections are based on limiting the average global temperature rise to 2°C, which is not good enough.

Renewable energy is profitable, but not remotely profitable enough to meet even the woefully insufficient targets of the Paris Climate Accords. They have not been able to displace fossil fuels under market conditions which remain profitable, subsidies aside. The IEA's 2019 report found that just 0.8[[16] of the oil and gas industry's capital investment went into renewables. Fossil capital, whether it be oil, gas and coal, or the automobile industry, will not transition on its own accord. It will have to be forced, something only the state can do. The motivating force for averting climate breakdown will have to come from outside the profit motive, as unsettling as that may be for some.

The good thing for those who want to reimagine the economy is that this is good for the justice and equality that they seek. When markets require firms to lower their prices, they overcome this by reducing their costs, usually the cost of the wages of their employees. More significant locally is our issue of generating employment; the potential of renewable energy through the REIPPPP is often cited with great promise. However, since the REIPPPP will always seek the cheapest inputs, it is not nurturing the local manufacturing industry for renewable energy. The latest round of the REIPPPP saw all photo-voltaic panels imported from China.[17] In markets the costs of externalities, pollution, for example, are also pushed elsewhere, usually onto poorer countries, people and the environment. Finally, in the long run, the price of privatised electricity in a society like ours will be too high for the majority of people. Electricity, among other things, must be produced as an essential public good and a human right.

What is encouraging is the growing number of politicians, academics and other public figures who believe that the post-Covid-19 recovery should centre on the climate crisis.

WHAT DO TO WITH ESKOM?

In South Africa we are faced with a momentous challenge. Whilst the markets cannot avert a climate catastrophe, how could Eskom ever be the vehicle to do so? With energy demand dropping, the slimmest of silver-linings of the pandemic has been the space afforded to Eskom for critical maintenance. The blackouts of this year are a now distant memory – although not for some. None of this changes the fact that Eskom is still R480billion in the red and still produces around 90% of its electricity from coal. There are a number of factors that have led to this situation. Prominent in the press is the rampant looting that took place during the Zuma years. Through their lackeys in the state and aided by private consultants[18] and even international auditing firms, the Guptas managed to steals billions.[19] This corruption required the gross mismanagement of Eskom's coal contracts, a key contributor to previous load shedding, alongside aging and poorly maintained infrastructure,

But there are other factors at play. The commercialisation of Eskom by government meant it had to act as a for-profit company. In a country with poverty levels like South Africa, it is nigh impossible to recover costs through a user-pay system. The result of this is that South African municipalities owe around R35billion to Eskom, R15billion owed by Soweto alone.[20] This is a core component of Eskom's death spiral. To make up for these losses it hikes up tariffs, evident in the four-fold increase over the last 12 years.[21] The increased price means less electricity is bought bringing further losses and subsequent tariff hikes to continue the spiral. The coal-fire mega-projects of Medupi and Kusile, due to be completed well over five years ago, are unlikely to be completed by next year and are almost 300% over-budget. This delay is good for the climate and local environment, but as the President admitted, "The problems with the construction of Medupi and its 'twin' Kusile account for much of the financial crisis at Eskom". The World Bank also happened to give a US$3.75billion loan to Eskom to build Medupi. In 2019, the loan had a carrying value of R22.3billion and earned interest of 4.9% per year, comprising about 5% of Eskom's total debt.[22] The delays at Medupi are in no small part due to failures of Hitachi Power Systems Africa, contracted to build the boilers. It should surprise no one that they were awarded the contract, since Chancellor House Holdings, an ANC investment arm, owned a 25% stake. Given that (1) the World Bank was well aware of the corruption around Medupi; and, (2) that the bulk of the loan was going towards a coal-fire station despite impending climate change, this debt to the World Bank must clearly classified as odious.[23]

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The challenges of building a "New Eskom" are immense, and go beyond generating 100% of its electricity from renewable energy. But its current crises were caused by political decisions and they can be undone with political will. The New Eskom we require would need to be restructured around a series of principles that make it a truly publicly owned utility. This requires much deeper levels of public and worker participation. There are examples for us to follow. In Paris, the water utility was municipalised with various civilian bodies that provide oversight.[24] In Chinese state-owned enterprises there are elected employee congresses with decision-making power on a variety of social issues, including welfare and housing, wages and bonuses. They also have a say in the nomination of senior managers, a safeguard against outside "cadre deployment". It is through such processes and bodies that the transparency and accountability required of Eskom can be developed.

Shifting the Overton Window

The stark reality is that the required levels of investment in renewables among so many other things required to build a low-carbon economy can be achieved only through unprecedented levels of public-led investment. But such a public role, particularly after a crisis like Covid-19, is hardly unprecedented.[25] In any event, it's the public sector that has gotten us this far through financing the high-risk innovation[26] and nurturing the growth of private renewables.[27] Fortunately for us, such an investment drive and the potential millions of jobs it will bring[28] is incredibly appealing to the mass of unemployed people and those workers whose wages are depressed as a result.

The appeal of the transition to a low-carbon economy goes beyond employment. The mass roll-out for climate resilience of public transport particularly commuter railways; the retrofitting of RDP houses; and the overhauling and expanding of sanitation services are all in the interests of the working-class and the poor.

The crises of Eskom are some among many that show the enormity of the challenge of the South African state in leading a just transition. But South African policy-makers serious about a just transition must exit the echo chamber of a REIPPPP or a coal-powered economy. The data is clear. We have examples all around the world to look at the market cannot save us. Any proposals that are serious about meeting climate targets must begin from this position and do the hard work of preparing the public pathway to a renewable energy future. This does not have to be limited to a reformed Green New Eskom,[29] but through direct municipalisation of renewable energy as well. Critical to such proposals is that they provide the knowledge and support that assist social forces, whether they be trade unions or movements, in shifting the state.

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Parliament: an unlikely champion of the Auditor-General

By Dr Martin Nicol

Martin Nicol, former BEC member and two-term treasurer of the ANC Gaby Shapiro Branch, was most recently (from 2013 to 2019) employed by the non-partisan Research Unit in Parliament to assist Members and committees with their oversight responsibilities. He has a PhD in Economic History from UCT and has worked with entities in all spheres of government.

The Institute for African Alternatives's "Checks and Balances" project, to investigate the role of Parliament in getting the Auditor-General's (AG) recommendations implemented and how it can do a better job, shows ample evidence that Parliament considers the recommendations of the AG, endorses them and is fully aware that the findings of the AG illustrate the risks of corruption and that public money has been wasted, and yet holds no one to account and does nothing about it.

"Peoples' money is being squandered by the executive and Parliament is complicit in this."[1]

– Ben Turok, November 2019

BACKGROUND

The Checks and Balances project arose from the outrage of the late Professor Ben Turok at the scale of corruption in South Africa – as revealed in the hearings of the Zondo Commission and in the repeated failure of the executive to act on the recommendations of the Auditor-General (AG). Preliminary research shows that Parliament has not taken effective steps to hold the executive to account when the executive ignores the AG's recommendations and often fails to support the work of the AG.

This project was initiated by Professor Ben Turok only weeks before his death in December 2019 (at the age of 92), making it the last of a lifetime of his projects asserting the need for state accountability and responsiveness to citizens. Originally, intended as a six-month scan of the landscape, the interest with which this Dutch Embassy-funded project has been met by diverse stakeholders has seen it expanded into a year-long mobilisation and consultation process.

In the most recent 2018/19 Auditor-General South Africa (AGSA) Annual Report, the Deputy Auditor General, Ms Tsakane Maluleke, said:

Our general reports indicate that audit outcomes for departments, public entities and municipalities had regressed. Irregular expenditure remained high, non-compliance with supply chain management (SCM) legislation continued to increase, and auditees' financial health deteriorated.[2]

Turok was sceptical that new powers granted to the AG by Parliament would have the impact needed.[3] "The AG said it is not for him to send people to prison. Why not?" said the Prof. Why is the executive not doing its job? What part of the system is not working? Some people say that Parliament's committees cannot do anything but send reports to the House. Parliament should be able to intervene, as in the Ethics Committee.[4] If there is a problem, the Committee chair should call in the police.

The founding view for the project was that the problems of looting of public funds and massive corruption illustrate failure on the part of Parliament. Parliament has the constitutional responsibility to scrutinise executive action and to hold the executive to account.

Parliament seems too keen to

> **"Peoples' money is being squandered by the executive and Parliament is complicit in this" – Ben Turok.**

sub-contract these responsibilities to endless, expensive, repeated commissions of inquiry and to institutions like the Auditor-General.

The auditors of government finances and performance need to have independence from the executive branch. Otherwise the AG (referred to internationally as the "supreme audit institution" [SAI]) would soon find itself dependent on the government it is auditing. "The SAI would become nothing more than a puppet of the government".[5]

It is in the light of this concern for independence that questions have been raised about the conduct of the AG since 1994. Most obvious and notorious was the arms deal, where the AG, ill-advisedly, participated in a "joint investigation team (JIT)" with the Office of the Public Protector. This JIT, in which the then AG Shauket Fakie participated, allowed the executive to edit their report in 2001, before it went to Parliament.[6] There is no agreed version of what happened in the arms deal. The report of the Seriti Commission of Inquiry into the arms deal was overturned by the courts in 2019.[7] Books by Terry Crawford Browne, Paul Holden and Hennie van Vuuren, and Andrew Feinstein[8], make a plausible case that the AG allowed its independence to be severely compromised. This view is not accepted by the AG which maintains "to and fro consultation" on its findings is part of its normal engagement with government.[9]

The AG also maintains that it was vindicated of responsibility for the Oilgate Scandal. In 2003, the state oil company PetroSA made an unusual "advance payment" to a company called Imvume Holdings. Imvume immediately donated R11million of the money to the ANC to assist with the expenses of the 2004 elections.[10] The AG maintains that the Oilgate Scandal was a good test of the new professionalism in the AG's office. The scandal, it says, "raised the status of the AG's office" and enhanced its "reputation for integrity and no-holds-barred reporting, which was recognised and respected by all politicians".[11]

In all countries, the AG has to wage a continuous struggle to preserve its independence from the executive power. The AGSA diplomatically describes this as "audit contestations" or "push back" from auditees when they disagree with the AG on whether the financial accounts submitted for audit have been properly prepared.[12]

But the natural tension between auditor and auditee does not exclude cooperation with the government. In fact, such cooperation is considered normal in a democratic state under the rule of law. Cooperation is in the interests of making the most efficient use of public funds and meeting the concerns of the taxpayers.[13]

RELATIONSHIP OF THE AG WITH PARLIAMENT

Independence of the AG is the key point of the Lima Declaration of Guidelines on Auditing Precepts adopted by the international meeting of government auditors held in Lima, Peru in 1977.[14] South Africa's Apartheid-era AG participated in the congress as a member, although the independence of its AG was not secured in law until the 1994 Interim Constitution. Today South Africa's AG is one of the Chapter Nine Institutions, all of which are guaranteed independence under the Constitution.

The AGs relationship with the executive branch of government is always ambivalent. This is because the impairment of the AG's independence is always a possibility, as was seen in the arms deal.

In contrast, the relations between AG and the legislature are unlikely to be affected by the same degree of tension because ultimately they both pursue the same goal – exercising scrutiny over the way that public funds are managed. The power to exercise control over the manner in which the government implements the budget is ››

a necessary complement to the power of budget appropriation. A democratic state, like South Africa, ultimately vests these rights in Parliament, the body acting as the true and constitutionally legitimised auditor.

However, while Parliament exercises its right over budget appropriation, it does not have the human and administrative resources to exercise control over budget implementation. For this task, Parliament depends on a separate monitoring body, i.e., the AGSA. Hence, there is a close relationship between the AG and Parliament in South Africa, as in all democratic states.

The AG's importance to Parliament derives primarily from reports from the AG on the government's use of the funds in the budget voted for each year. Constitutionally, all revenue the government collects, including taxes, has to be deposited in the National Revenue Fund. Government can only access this money for its activities when Parliament has voted its approval. For this reason, legislation[15] provides for the AG's reports about its audit activities to be tabled in Parliament. This corresponds to the requirement in the Lima Declaration that the SAI be empowered and required by the Constitution to independently report its findings to Parliament (Sect. 16.1).

If it were not for the AG's reports on the use of public funds, Parliament would be unable to exercise its power of scrutiny over the government, which would ultimately impair its budgetary sovereignty. This demonstrates that the AG is an essential pillar of parliamentary democracy. By exercising its government audit function on behalf of Parliament as the holder of the supreme control prerogative, the AG strengthens Parliament's budgetary authority.

For the AG itself, the right to report to Parliament implies – or should imply – a greater chance of having its recommendations put into practice.

The audit reports of AGSA enable Parliament to demand that public bodies, above all the government, assume their political responsibility and ensure that AG recommendations are implemented. Parliament can resort to several instruments of control such as portfolio committee hearings, questions, resolutions, or votes of no confidence in the pursuit of this goal. Each portfolio committee can make use of its annual Budgetary Review and Recommendation Report (BRRR) to send direct messages from the National Assembly to departments and entities on any concerns it has with the way the executive is managing money and performance. The Treasury is obliged to respond to BRRR Reports under the Money Bills Act. A committee can schedule hearings/meetings with departments and entities to get evidence on how they are implementing AG and committee recommendations.

Thus, both the effectiveness of government audit and the scrutiny and oversight duties of Parliament clearly depend to a large extent on the AG and Parliament cooperating in a spirit of mutual confidence. If Parliament and the AG take a common position vis-à-vis the administration, the recommendations issued by the AG might be put into practice more easily and Parliament is in a better position to effectively exercise its oversight responsibilities.

Government auditors and the legislature both benefit from responsible cooperation in the taxpayers' interests.

In many states, including South Africa, the existence of this relationship between the AG and the legislature manifests itself in the right of the legislature to participate in the appointment of and/or removal from office of the AG. The responsible committee in this regard is the Select Committee on the Auditor-General (SCoAG).[16] The AGSA reports to Parliament[17] and all its audit reports of departments and entities have to be tabled in Parliament. These are tabled by the responsible ministry according to deadlines set in the Public Finance Management Act and other legislation. AGSA representatives brief all the portfolio committees at length on the findings and concerns raised in audits. The AG has powers to decide which public entities to audit and to receive the evidence it requires.

In South Africa, unlike in many other countries, the independence of the AG is absolute. The AG is independent of the government and independent of Parliament itself. This status is protected by the Constitution. Maybe there would be a danger if a renegade chartered accountant like Brian Molefe were appointed AG, through the offices of Parliament and the executive. He would, however, still have to convince a court that he was "a fit and proper person" to hold the office of the AG.[18]

Parliament does not pose a threat to the independence of the AG. But Parliament can undermine the effectiveness of the AG. It does this by failing to hold the executive to account. It is the executive who is supposed to implement the recommendations of the AG. Parliament lets the executive get away with a lot of repeated poor performance. This poor performance is documented in the reports of the AG and also in the reports of portfolio committees themselves, as reproduced by Parliament in the voluminous Announcements, Tablings and Committee Reports (ATC) publication available on Parliament's website.

Parliament's weakness flows from the system that is in place to select Members of Parliament. South Africa's electoral system is based on the election of parties. It is the parties who decide who represents each party in Parliament, not the voters. Internal party processes for selecting potential MPs and ordering the ranked lists of party nominees that go to the Electoral Commission are not subject to effective oversight.

The party that is entitled to the

majority of seats in Parliament appoints the President who, in turn, forms the government. MPs owe their positions to their parties. The overriding interest of MPs for the majority party lies in keeping the government in power and in expressing their solidarity with it. So when the reports of an AG highlight material inconsistencies in the financial statements of government departments or entities, political considerations come into play. The government has to weigh the implications of doing "what is right"[19] against the implications of delaying action because "no one has been found at fault in a court of law" or of suspending CEOs from duty (on full pay). Governments invariably undertake a balancing act of satisfying different internal factions. President Jacob Zuma expanded the Cabinet and the cohort of deputy ministers to number over 60 people, so as to include all of the warring factions in the ANC. The balancing goes far down to the officials who manage departments and public entities, their "special advisors" and often departmental staff. If AG recommendations are followed, this could destabilise the government itself.

Members of the governing party, as they sit in the portfolio committees, are acutely aware of the political ramifications of seriously setting out to hold the executive to account. Often they are unwilling to make use of the arsenal of parliamentary instruments to control and/or sanction the government. Sometimes, always being the majority in each committee, they try to hold sensitive discussions "in camera" or choose not to allow participation in committee meetings by government critics. At other times, they edit committee reports to soften or even remove criticism and transmit them to the National Assembly under-recorded protest from opposition members.

It is no surprise that MPs representing the governing party (and its allies) only support criticism voiced by the AG[20] up to a point.

But this cannot be the end of the comment. What is surprising – given the structural and theoretical incentives for ANC committee members to defend the government – is the robust and focused way that portfolio committees often engage with departmental officials when findings are reported by the AG.

The meeting reports (and audio recordings) assembled and published by the Parliamentary Monitoring Group provide clear evidence of the anger roused in Members (across all parties) when the AG reports instances of irregular expenditure and fruitless and wasteful expenditure. The smallness of some of the amounts of money is no defence against the indignation expressed by Members! And often the numbers have been large.

The problem is that the indignation is only expressed. It is rare for portfolio committees to follow up effectively – beyond receiving assurances that the findings are being, or have been, addressed. Committees may note that the previous year's qualifications of financial statements have recurred – something which can happen sometimes year after year. The annual BRR Reports regularly recommend that the department or entity implement the recommendations of the AG. But that is as far as it goes.

When Ben Turok said that Parliament was complicit in the failure of the government to implement the recommendations of the AG, this is what he meant.

Parliament spends a huge amount of time scrutinising the finances and performance of departments and entities. It publishes lengthy committee reports detailing MPs observations, findings and recommendations.

But Parliament, in practice, lacks the ability/willingness to hold the executive accountable.

World-class government audits – but Parliament leaves it at that!

South Africa is a world leader when it comes to the powers and protections granted to its AG under the law and the Constitution.[21] The Lima Declaration requires that the independence of SAIs be preserved vis-à-vis Parliament. The principle of the SAIs autonomy and responsibility for the selection of its audit subjects, audit methods, and reporting also applies to its relations with the legislator. This is the case in South Africa.

In 2007, the international public sector external auditing community adopted the Mexico Declaration on SAI Independence,[22] building further on the basic requirements of the Lima Declaration. South Africa meets all of the principles—except for number 7!

"There is ample evidence that Parliament considers the recommendations of the AG – and that it endorses them. … But Parliament does not take strong steps to hold the executive to account whilst the executive does not ensure the AG recommendations are followed in practice. Parliament is thus not an effective champion for the AG. »

INTOSAI 2007 MEXICO DECLARATION: CORE PRINCIPLES FOR AN EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT AUDIT	**SA compliant?**
1. The existence of an appropriate and effective constitutional/statutory/legal framework for independence and the corresponding provisions for de facto implementation.	YES
2. The independence of SAI heads and members of collegial institutions, including security of tenure and legal immunity in the normal discharge of their duties.	YES
3. A sufficiently broad mandate and full discretion in the discharge of SAI functions.	YES
4. Unrestricted access to information.	YES
5. The right and the obligation of the SAI to report on their work.	YES
6. The freedom of the SAI to decide on the content and timing of its reports and to publish and disseminate them.	YES – with some legislated timelines
7. The existence of effective follow-up mechanisms on SAI recommendations.	NO
8. Financial and managerial/administrative autonomy and the availability of appropriate human, material and monetary resources.	YES

CONCLUDING SUMMARY

Parliament should be part of the follow-up mechanisms to ensure that AG recommendations are all implemented.

There is ample evidence that Parliament considers the recommendations of the AG – and that it endorses them. Parliament cross-questions Ministers, Deputy Ministers, Directors General, Chief Financial Officers and Deputy Directors-General to interrogate the reported findings of the AG and ask about progress in implementation.

But Parliament does not take strong steps to hold the executive to account whilst the executive does not ensure the AG recommendations are followed in practice. Parliament is thus not an effective champion for the AG.

Parliament is aware of the problem – and, in particular, how the findings of the AG illustrate the risks of corruption or the fact that public money has been wasted, and no one held to account.

Parliament's response has been to put indirect pressure on the executive, by "expanding the mandate" of the AG. From April 2019, Parliament gave the AG itself the additional burden of following up on individual accounting officers who have not done their jobs.[23]

Parliament, in an exceptional move, has voted R50-million from the National Revenue Fund directly to

AUDITOR-GENERAL SOUTH AFRICA

Auditing to build public confidence

> **The founding view for the project was that the problems of looting of public funds and massive corruption illustrate failure on the part of Parliament.**

AGSA to fund, amongst others, "the cost of conducting further work on material irregularities".[24] The AGSA – in order to ensure its independence from government, raises its own revenue by charging fees to auditees. This new R50-million appropriation, small as it is, is a step away from full AGSA independence. The government is paying the AGSA to do its dirty work, in pursuing accounting officers (as individuals) who fail to recover money lost through maladministration and corruption.

The AGSA, in another exceptional move, increased its Employee Wellness budget for 2020/21 by 282.2%, to a total of R15.288 million, to factor in "additional emotional support programmes for employees affected by threats and intimidation."[25] Serious threats and intimidation against audit staff were

highlighted in the 2018/19 Annual Report.[26] Audit staff members are placed in danger by the expanded mandate as corrupt officials fear being issued with a personal certificate of debt.[27]

These new powers of the AG provide a preventative control, not a regulatory control. The new powers come into play only if Parliament fails to do its duty and if the executive fails to respond.

Why does the government not act when it is told of "rampant abuse of public resources" by the Auditor General?

How can this situation be changed?

This is the investigation that IFAA will take forward in the coming months.

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[This article makes free use of parts of the 2003 analysis by Dr Franz Fiedler, adding some South African characteristics.]

ENDNOTES

1 Ben Turok – Notes from Checks and Balances project discussion, November 2019. [M4]

2 AGSA Annual Report, 2018/19, p15.

3 From 1 April 2019, the AG can act directly against accounting officers who fail to address "material irregularities" reported in the AG's reports. This follows Parliament's amendments to the Public Audit Act, 2004. See Makwethu (2020) for an excellent explanation.

4 In 2013, Parliament's joint committee on ethics and members' interests (then under the chairmanship of Prof Turok who was then an MP) controversially sanctioned Ms Dina Pule MP who had abused her position as communications minister to benefit her boyfriend, Phosane Mngqibisa. < https://ewn.co.za/topic/phosane-mngqibisa >; Zapiro (2013); Public Protector (2013).

5 Fiedler (2003a) – parts of this chapter have been edited in below, adding South African characteristics.

6 See Feinstein, (2007: 213-215).

7 Corruption Watch and Another v Arms Procurement Commission and Others (81368/2016) [2019] ZAGPPHC 351; [2019] 4 All SA 53 (GP); 2019 (10) BCLR 1218 (GP); 2020 (2) SA 165 (GP) (21 August 2019)

8 Crawford-Browne, T. (2020); Holden, P. & van Vuuren, H. (2011); Feinstein (2007).

9 IFAA interview 2 June 2020; "In 2001 Shauket Fakie also came under fire for allegedly bowing to political pressure over the so-called Arms Deal, and after prolonged discussions, arguments, accusations and investigations, he too was eventually vindicated." AGSA (2014:20)

10 See AGSA (2014:26)

11 See AGSA (2014:26)

12 See AGSA (2019b:74) The Annual Report records 55 national departments and SOE "audit contestations" and 33 municipal-level contestations in 2017/18. "Some officials tried to intimidate the audit teams into changing their audit findings" because they were concerned to lose a 'clean audit' status or because auditees rejected the AGSA audit findings or technical consultations. AGSA has a protocol for reporting potential contestations early and resolving them if possible.

13 See Fiedler (2003a)

14 This was the 9th Congress (INCOSAI) of the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI). See INTOSAI (1998).

15 The Constitution and the Public Audit Act (PAA), along with the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) and the Money Bills Act.

16 The procedure for the participation of SCoAG in the appointment of the AG is set out in the Public Audit Act, 2004. SCoAG also considers the annual strategic plan and budget of the AG and reviews the AG's annual report and financial statements. SCoAG is responsible for the appointment of the private sector auditing firm that audits the AGSA.

17 See the example list of the substantial annual reports to Parliament by the AG.

18 Constitution Section 193 (3). Just one instance: Times Live report by Zingisa Mvumvu "Transnet was being robbed under Brian Molefe: Judge Raymond Zondo". 24 January 2020 <https://www.timeslive.co.za/politics/2020-01-24-transnet-was-being-robbed-under-brian-molefe-judge-raymond-zondo/>.

19 i.e. Insisting that accounting officers are held to account and that AG recommendations are implemented forthwith.

20 Cf. The reference by Andrew Feinstein to an "unconstitutional attack on the Auditor-General" made by Penuell Maduna MP of the ANC. (Feinstein 2007:186) This is outlined twice – but in general terms. Maduna was not censured by the ANC.

21 See AGSA (2014), an enthusiastic, but reflective, book that establishes the real achievements of AGSA in terms of its independence, professionalism and communication/education outreach.

22 See AGSA (2014:94)

23 Makwethu (2020) sets out and explains the expanded mandate excellently.

24 See AGSA (2020:35 and 45) Note 1.5 to the Detailed Budget shows the annual R50million appropriation included in the AGSA budget forecasts to 2022/23.

25 See AGSA (2020:63)

26 "Some officials tried to intimidate the audit teams into changing their audit findings" AGSA (2020b: 74); Serious incidents in 2018/19 included death threats and a hostage incident. AGSA (2020b: 75)

27 See one example presented by the AGSA to SCoAG in December 2019 when the AG had to withdraw an audit team from the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality because of intimidation by municipal officials. (AGSA 2019c). SCoAG called municipal officials and police to explain themselves in March 2020, but failed to take further effective action in the three months after being made aware of this situation. NA

I have a story to tell about Daveyton

By Siphelo Ngcwangu

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The Covid-19 pandemic came at a time when South Africa was already experiencing chronic and unacceptably high unemployment, especially among the youth. What statistics and analysis have neglected to reveal in any real way, however, is the personal affect of unemployment on those who find themselves permanently excluded from the labour force, and driven to abandon conventional means of seeking any, usually part-time, work, drawing instead on desperate measures to find jobs. The author spoke to a number of these young people and recounts their personal stories as part of a wider project on the area on responses to the youth unemployment crisis.

INTRODUCTION

Over the last 25 years, the state has introduced a range of policy ideas to respond to the youth unemployment crisis in South Africa. These range from tax incentives for youth employment and youth service initiatives aimed at incorporating the youth into government schemes, to private sector programmes of short-term employment opportunities or internships. The success of the measures adopted by the state at a national level has been uneven. In some cases, ideological contestations over the underlying ideas of the programmes stopped them in their tracks. The Youth Wage Subsidy was conceptualised to boost youth employment but it was met with criticism from organised youth formations and progressive social movements as being too accommodative of the interests of big business.

In the 2020 State of the Nation Address (SONA), President Cyril Ramaphosa acknowledged again the crisis of youth unemployment by announcing six initiatives to address the crisis. Amongst other things, these initiatives include ramping up already existing state programmes that target the youth and adding new programmes, such as the 1% allocation of the budget to youth employment programmes as well as establishing a Presidential Youth Service Programme.[1]

Neoliberal changes in the global economy have intensified the level of economic insecurity among young people. There are fewer full-time jobs. Outsourcing makes jobs more precarious and the youth are particularly disadvantaged because they lack work experience. The youth comprise a large proportion of marginalised groups that are forced to contend with competition for scarce resources, insecure living conditions, the presence of people born elsewhere and forms of systemic violence. Young people, particularly in the global South, have developed expert knowledge of how to cope with adversity, as they hustle to survive and adapt to circumstances of rapid change.[2]

When we analyse the youth unemployment challenge in South Africa, we need to understand the local context in which the youth reside which reflects the inherited endurance of apartheid. Some recent South African scholarship on youth unemployment has emphasised issues such as lack of education, skills and the need for an 'entrepreneurial culture' amongst the youth,[3] while other research

> **Neoliberal changes in the global economy have intensified the level of economic insecurity among young people. There are fewer full-time jobs. Outsourcing makes jobs more precarious and the youth lack work experience.**

concerns itself with the link between unemployment and disruptions to social cohesion.[4]

The story of youth in post-apartheid South Africa is in many ways the story of South Africa itself. It is marked by contending perspectives. On the one side South Africa is portrayed as a miracle of reconstruction and tolerance. On the other side we have a tragedy of missed opportunities and wrong policies. Young South Africans in turn may be pushing back centuries-old boundaries of race and class, or they may be stuck in servile economic roles scarcely different from the past, with few substantive exit routes.[5]

I have a story to tell about Daveyton. Research I did there in 2019 illuminates the reality of youth unemployment in South Africa. I use a qualitative approach to understanding youth unemployment as opposed to the labour market statistics approach, which has dominated the landscape of recent research in South Africa. There are issues that surveys and desk-bound policy research overlook which are best understood through in-depth qualitative research.[6]

The context of the Covid-19 pandemic has placed additional challenges for society to respond in ways that ensure multiple voices are heard in response to the consequences of the pandemic. We see that Covid-19 has exposed already existing inequalities in South African society and in many ways exacerbated them. People in communities like Daveyton and other black townships are clearly unable to self-isolate as per the rules outlined by the authorities regulating the pandemic. Such areas are characterised by a high concentration of informal settlements, poor housing infrastructure and poverty. Given the nature of the Covid-19 crisis and its effect on poor and marginalised communities, it is vital that authorities engage closely with young people in communities such as Daveyton in order to listen to their voices as interventions are being debated.

The National Coronavirus Command Council (NCCC) has been criticised for a lack of transparency in its decisions and absence of consultation structures. Even though the country is in an emergency situation due to Covid-19, there is still a preserve the practice of wider consultation and listening to the diversity of voices in the society. At a policy level – both during lockdowns and in their aftermath the state needs to liaise with organised youth formations in the communities and those in various social groups.

For example, one concern of the youth leaders in Daveyton was the absence of a broader community structure that brings together all the youth formations in the community. There are several initiatives that mobilise young people such as arts and dance groups; sporting clubs, Non-Governmental Groups Organisations (NGOs); computer resource centres; political parties; and religious groups that work with the youth from different perspectives in Daveyton. However, to make effective interventions during and after the Covid-19 crisis, the state needs to work much more closely with such groups.

The Municipality of Ekurhuleni, like many other municipalities, has a youth development unit, which should play a facilitating role in this regard, so that there is a better sense of how some of the recently announced interventions of the state will be implemented. In this ››

way, the gaps in policy implementation will be exposed and simultaneously those youth structures will have their voices heard by the authorities. I have been in telephonic communications with some of the activists within Daveyton who already raise concerns about the roll out and application processes regarding the R350 Covid-19 relief initiatives. Their concerns are that many young people are not aware of the application processes, they lack resources to access the online platforms to apply, and in the conditions of a lockdown, some facilities like internet cafes are closed, meaning they are unable to complete their applications timeously.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT – PART OF A WIDER PROBLEM

In common with many economies worldwide, South Africa is confronting a youth unemployment challenge. Youth uprisings across the world are reactions to a deepening socio-economic crisis that affects the youth unemployment, lack of access to basic services which raise demands that are addressed to political authorities. The challenge of youth employment is central to the development discourse in South Africa. Youth unemployment is structural. It flows from the stagnant political economy and questions the nature of state responses to youth unemployment as well as what sort of education interventions could alleviate the crisis.

The largest proportion of new labour market entrants at any given time is the youth. So unemployment hits the youth the hardest. In times of crisis, when jobs are diminishing, young people will also be the largest group within the ranks of the unemployed. Young people are more likely to hold jobs requiring less experience and skill. They are the most recently hired staff members, so when firms retrench, the youngest workers are likely to be the first to go.[7]

The University of Johannesburg's Centre for Education Rights and Transformation (CERT) held a workshop in 2012 on the unemployment crisis in South Africa. This concluded that youth unemployment should not be singled out as a special problem requiring specific attention but be seen as part of a larger problem of unemployment. Otherwise, changes we make to try to improve the situation of younger people might create problems for other parts of the population. For example, we might create a situation in which employers simply replace older workers with younger ones.[8] The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) expressed similar concerns about the substitution effects of the Youth Wage Subsidy which was proposed by the National Treasury, stressing concerns that firms would have an incentive to let go of existing workers in order to employ subsidised ones.[9]

There are many examples of failures in the numerous state initiatives aimed at addressing the high levels of youth unemployment. The Southern African Labour and Development Research Unit (SALDRU) at the University of Cape Town (UCT) has pointed to the ineffectiveness of the Employment Tax Incentives (ETI), arguing that the ETI did not have any substantial, positive and statistically significant impact on youth employment probabilities. There was also no statistically significant effect in the extent of the labour market churning amongst youth. In the first six months after the introduction of the ETI in 2014 the researchers found no evidence that the ETI had any substantial positive and statistically significant effect on aggregate youth employment probabilities.[10] The R5 billion Youth Wage Subsidy introduced from 2010[11] was particularly unsuited to South African conditions, as local employers have shown a bottomless appetite for casualised and externalised labour. Fears that the policy would simply swap older for younger workers and accelerate the job churning were said to be well grounded.[12]

The many obstacles in the way of finding employment are accentuated by historical racialised divisions of labour, leftovers from the job colour bar; by spatial disparities where black workers have great distances to travel to work or look for work; by gender inequalities, where women (mainly) are discouraged from working in certain industries (like mining) or jobs (like auto repairs); and other social cleavages. But while it is true that young people have limited means to explore alternative ways to survive economically (such as entrepreneurship) and they may lack individual resources to resist, the socioeconomic circumstances in which they live also provide a source of power which they draw on to search for employment or work preparation opportunities. Youth find ways to draw on social networks, groups, family ties and other resources to negotiate access to employment or other economic opportunities.

EKURHULENI – DE-INDUSTRIALISATION AND SPATIAL INEQUALITY

How do we strengthen the resilience of the poor and alleviate the depredations of poverty? Mondli Hlatshwayo argued in New Agenda no 66 that the progressive and collective responses of marginalised people in working-class communities must be taken into account in formulating policy. The innovative industrial strategies under discussion will provide employment for only a tiny minority and jobs in both the public and private sectors will probably offer less security and lower wages.[13]

In a study of eMbekweni township in Paarl, the late Prof Ben Turok stated, "I believe that there is a problem with regard to the way we understand industrial policy. The problem is how we can extend a growth strategy to encompass the people in these townships. We cannot continue with

this kind of dual society under this government … Can't we mobilise these communities and give them resources to develop an industrial policy for Mbekweni."[14]

Up until the 1970s the region of Ekurhuleni (formerly the East Rand) was based on heavy industry, mining and manufacturing. In the last 30 to 50 years, the structure of the economy of the region has been transformed. There was no move to a healthy, diversified economy. Rather, the growth of services introduced casualised, low-wage employment to the region's fragmenting rust belt. This had a profound effect on workers' organisation and confidence. East Rand's history of militant worker organisations linked to community activism has been dashed and undermined by the changes to the economic base. [15]

Daveyton was established in 1955 as a dormitory township for black workers in the white-owned factories and businesses of Benoni. After the National Party won its second general election in 1953, it systematically implemented its programme of racial social engineering and built up all of the major African townships of Ekurhuleni – Katlehong, Daveyton, Thokoza, Vosloorus, KwaThema, Tsakane, Tembisa – according to a rigidly racialised and ethnicised pattern.[16]

A total of 3,379,104 people lived in the City of Ekurhuleni in 2016, an increase of one million since 2000.[17] Ekurhuleni represents over 6% of the total population of South Africa. In-migration accounts for a large part of the net population growth. The population is primarily concentrated on the periphery of the Gauteng metropolitan area within historical townships. The core urban nodes and centres (formerly the white areas) have a significantly lower proportion of the population. Unemployment is chronic, with Ekurhuleni's 2019 rate of joblessness exceeding the provincial average by more than 1%, at 30.1%. [18] It is against this backdrop that my research heard the voices of young people in their struggle to find employment. The description of immediate challenges that confront them and the explanation of the prevailing socio-economic realities gives us an insight into their everyday struggles.

THE VOICES OF UNEMPLOYED YOUTH IN DAVEYTON

I interviewed young people to gauge the depth of the unemployment crisis and to hear the frustrations that the youth are confronted with on a daily basis.[19] The types of personal frustrations and anxieties that young people who are out of work face are often easily overlooked in the broader discussion of youth unemployment. In her detailed study of youth struggles in Zandspruit, an informal settlement west of Johannesburg, Hannah Dawson[20] states that the inability of young men to live up to ideals of adulthood and respectability, experienced as exclusion and frustrated aspirations, fuels the collective struggle at the local level. In Daveyton, Mandla, who is a 32-year-old man told me:

> You get hungry very fast when you are just sitting at home. Every now and then your stomach grumbles and feels worse as I feel I don't have a plan. You go everywhere trying to find work or some form of income [but] it's the same (kuyafana). I have a backroom but still to say that I'm going to go out searching for work what will I be searching for because I don't have enough to afford the rent for that backroom. So staying at home with my parents is the best option for me. I'm even afraid to ask for money. I have to wait for my plate to be served and my mom or sister to tell me 'here is food'. Priority in the home is for the little ones who must have food to eat after school. Even at home they start putting pressure on me to put something on the table but when I come back with nothing it's not a good thing.[21]

The kinds of psycho-social pressure that young people go through as a result of being out of work affects their life circumstances in ways that transcend the search for employment itself. Sifiso raised similar sentiments. A 29-year-old man, he articulates the frustration of being at home without work and what finding a job would mean for his family and also his young child.

> They would be very happy at home if I could find a job and bring something 'onto the table' because as things are we are just sitting around in the township doing nothing. Especially because many of us have our own kids now. We are trying to confront the situation by doing things like the security guard training courses but these courses are quite expensive. They cost about R1200. We end up unable to take on such courses because the mere R20 you get somewhere we must contribute at home. That is the problem we are faced with.[22]

Unless family members with income are prepared to keep on contributing, job searches can often be broken off because of the accumulating costs and the lack of resources to continue.[23] The situation must be more difficult for those who have no relatives to support them materially as they search for job opportunities.

Education has a central place in South Africa's discourse on youth unemployment. It is seen as the panacea to address the unemployment crisis, although policy-makers and politicians place emphasis on the need for maths and science education or subjects, that align to labour market needs at a given time. In reality, it is the rhythms of the labour market as well as employer appetites to absorb labour that determine who is able to access the available jobs and who is not. For those at the lower levels of the labour market vulnerability is high. Employment cycles directly impact on the youth, who either get temporary access to employment or are retrenched when ››

> **The story of youth in post-apartheid South Africa is the story of South Africa itself. On the one side South Africa is portrayed as a miracle of reconstruction and tolerance. On the other side we have a tragedy of missed opportunities and wrong policies.**

the economy is not performing well. Mduduzi and Clifford have Grade 11 level education and face similar struggles of securing employment. Mduduzi, who is 25 years old, said:

I did not finish school. I stopped at Grade 11. I had a baby and was therefore forced to go and find work to support my child and then recently my friend and I have just been retrenched from [an] engineering company. I have since then been hoping that my friend and I will be employed somewhere else in order to live nicely again. [24]

This is a broader issue regarding what education means in South Africa and its function. It raises questions about how going to school is being framed in the country's discourse. Should education be seen as a means to getting a job or as a formative experience essential to one's life experiences and personal development? Those I interviewed prioritised the need to either finish subjects they had failed previously or continue pursuit of employment in the short-term.

There is an abundance of scholarship in South Africa that explores the job search strategies of the unemployed youth and various interventions or pathways to find work.[25] While there are nuances of difference across the research findings there is a consensus that black African youth and women, in particular those who reside in black communities, are disproportionately affected by the crisis of unemployment. The ways in which these youth respond to the crisis are not uniform. People I interviewed pointed to how the realities of everyday struggles result in them pursuing strategies to find work that differ from what literature on job searching tends to prescribe. They have found that the formal approach of submitting CVs and waiting for responses does not work as some employers never respond. An alternative is to simply visit the company and stand at the gate awaiting a possible job opportunity or on-the-spot recruitment. Mandla elaborates on some of these issues and his daily experiences.

Many of us are no longer interested in making our CVs because people will tell you that even with your CV written down the people receiving it will just throw it away. This means you would have wasted your money in writing that CV. So rather than write a CV I would rather go to the gate of the company and if I'm lucky, they will take me. There are a few companies that still hire people who just come to the gate looking for work. These days people get jobs via connections because you can apply and wait for ten years then someone just applies and six months later they are hired. You never know if this thing is now about people paying bribes to get these jobs or something.[26]

The experience of Mandla points to the fact that some young people are beginning to abandon or ignore the formal routes of looking for work. They realise that they may not have social networks or contacts to support them in finding a job.

The youth I interviewed rarely looked for a particular kind of job. And they did not limit their search to the myriad of interventions offered by NGOs, consultancies and private sector initiatives. These include service programmes; temporary employment services (from labour brokers); recruitment agencies or online job portals; and other similar interventions that try to match job seekers with particular jobs. The 'piece jobs' that are usually part time invariably become the immediate option for these young people. Sifiso said:

When the situation is like this, anything will help. If they say we must

go and do some piece job, I will go and do it as long it helps me put something on the table. There's an old man around here. When he needs extra help he takes us to assist him. You find yourself going up and down in town (Benoni) to the shops not even knowing where you are going. That's what we do to look for work, otherwise we would have to stay in the township doing nothing.[27]

Sifiso's experiences bring to light the material and contextual specifics that many youths in black communities confront. These are young people who are in insecure working environments in the context of general instability in their daily lives. Because they are never fully absorbed in employment, young people experience the impact of incomplete transition that involves social exclusion and a sense of alienation.[28]

CONCLUSION

This article contributes to a growing body of research that seeks to build concrete understanding of the day-to-day struggles of young people in black working class communities and understand the ways young people survive economically in conditions of a worsening capitalist crisis. A number of development initiatives, community groups, resource centres and social movements are organising to address the issue of youth unemployment in the Daveyton communities.[29]

Hearing the voices of young people is vital to understand the nature of local struggles of the youth who are unemployed in black communities. The young people I interviewed in the Daveyton community in Ekurhuleni are far removed from the contestations over which intervention are best suited to address the youth unemployment crisis. Their concrete realities need to be appreciated. Concepts such as employment and unemployment should be understood as complex and cannot be meaningfully assessed if people are just split between the statistical categories to which we have become accustomed. A worsening of the socio-economic crisis that faces young people pre-dated the Covid-19 disaster that has engulfed the country. It cannot (and should not) be separated from the broader structural crisis of the South African economy and high levels of unemployment generally.

ENDNOTES

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South Africa "off track" to reach Agenda 2063 goals

African Union report bashes South Africa

In 2013 the African Union (AU) adopted a fifty-year "blueprint and master plan for sustainable development and economic growth". This is known as Agenda 2063.[1]

Agenda 2063 comprises seven "aspirations":

1. A Prosperous Africa Based on Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development
2. An Integrated Continent, Politically United and Based on the Ideals of Pan-Africanism and a Vision of African Renaissance
3. An Africa of Good Governance, Democracy, Respect for Human Rights, Justice and the Rule of Law
4. A Peaceful and Secure Africa
5. Africa with a Strong Cultural Identity, Common Heritage, Values and Ethics
6. An Africa whose Development is People Driven, Relying on the Potential of the African People
7. Africa as a Strong and Influential Global Partner

The content of the aspirations are described in 20 goals – each of which has targets and indicators attached – to judge whether progress is being made.

To take **Aspiration** 1 as an example – a prosperous, sustainable Africa by 2063,

One of the **goals** is Goal 7: Environmentally sustainable climate resilient economies and communities.

Under Goal 7, the **priority** is to ensure "Bio-diversity, conservation and sustainable natural resource management."

The specific ***targets*** to be achieved are two-fold

1. At least 30% of agricultural land is placed under sustainable land management practice
2. At least 17% of terrestrial and inland water and 10% of coastal and marine areas are preservedSouth Africa recently filled in its "Agenda 2063 First Ten Year Implementation Plan (FTYIP) Progress Reporting Template". This has 66 indicators.

In February 2020, the African Union launched the *First Continental Report on Implementation of Agenda 2063*.[2] The report is an assessment of 31 (out of 55) AU Member States who provided responses.

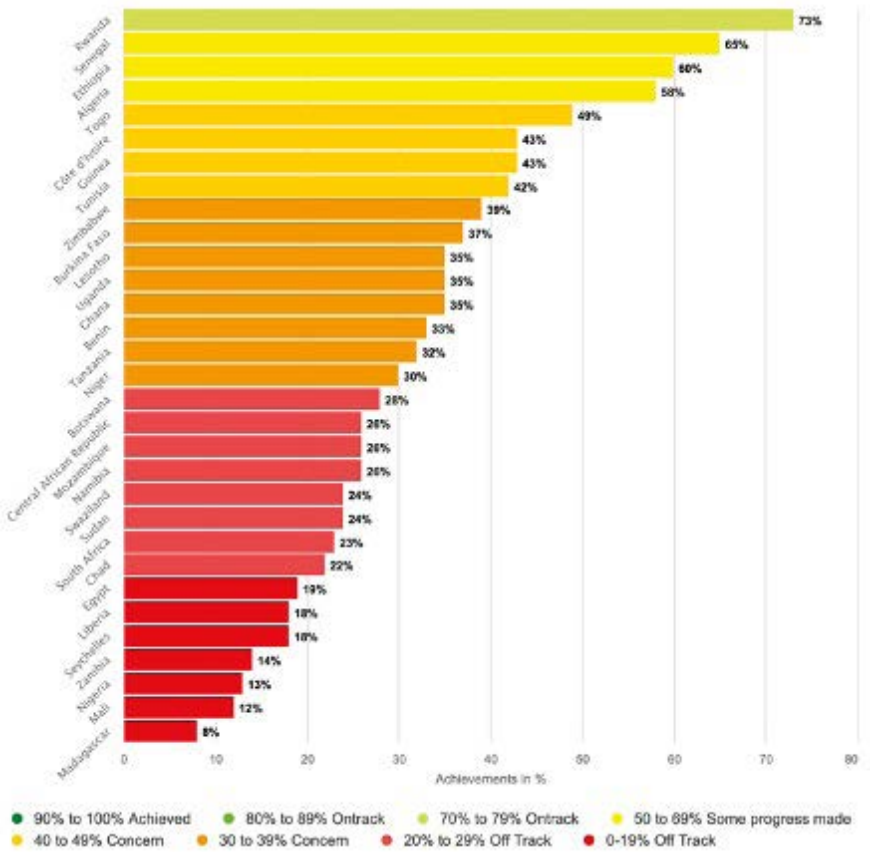
South Africa's combined performance dashboard is reproduced opposite.[3] After six years of implementation, South Africa scored 23 percent. This is "off track" and below the average mark of 33% for the continent. The leader was Rwanda with 73%.

ALL ASPIRATIONS MEMBER STATE SCORE[4]

The only aspiration on which South Africa scored zero was number 5. SA was unable to show progress towards the target of "at least 60% of content in educational curriculum is on indigenous African culture, values and language, targeting primary and secondary schools."

SA scored surprisingly poorly on many goals – zero on eight goals and less than 5% on three.

A close look at score measurements raises questions on the seriousness with which our leaders responsible for international relations take Agenda 2063 and reporting on achievements. In 2007, then President Thabo Mbeki spoke out against the first AU peer review of SA because it was so critical – unfairly so, he said, and he delayed its public release.[5] The present government seems simply not to care what the AU publishes.



Some of the low and zero scores seem to defy reality. Like the zero score for education.

The reasons are:

- The percentage of children of pre-school age attending pre school has not improved
- The net enrolment rate by sex and age in primary and secondary school has deteriorated
- South Africa has not provided a baseline measure for the proportion of teachers qualified in Science or Technology or Engineering or Mathematics (STEM), so a zero score is recorded automatically

The 1% score for infrastructure – by the continent's undisputed leader – is also dominated by South Africa's failure to provide the baseline information that is needed for measuring progress. Although no one would question the zero awarded for the high speed rail network!

The 100% scores, flattering as they may appear, are also open to doubt on what they actually mean. South Africa got a perfect score for a "fully functional National statistical system" – when Statistics South Africa has been subjected to deep budget cuts for several years.[6]

A perfect score was also awarded for Fast Track realization of the Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the main target for "Goal 9: Key Continental Financial and Monetary Institutions established and functional". All that SA did in practice here was sign some agreements.[7] SA has declared its strong commitment to the AfCFTA, but the AU template gives a zero score for SA's failures around the removal of non-tariff barriers to inter-African trade.[8]

Overall, the first AU implementation report of Agenda 2063 suffers from incompleteness. It bears the signs of a document produced to meet someone's personal job performance goals. The report on South Africa does not offer analytic insights. And it seems wrong and unfair – even in the context of all our deep problems and slow progress.

The Agenda 2063 website is extremely impressive from a visual and IT perspective. Just look at https://www.nepad.org/agenda-dashboard

But its ability to add to our understanding of Africa or Agenda 2063 is questionable, because of uncertainties about the quality of the underlying data.

ENDNOTES

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Silencing the guns 2020: Truth or fantasy?

By Rachael Nyirongo

Rachael Nyirongo is an attorney in possession of a Baccalaureus Legum (LL.B) degree from the Nelson Mandela University and a Master of Laws (LL.M) degree in International Human Rights Law from the University of Cape Town. Originally from Malawi, she is a Legal Research Intern at the Institute for African Alternatives (IFAA) in Cape Town, currently conducting a comparative analysis of Anglo Gold Ashanti's human rights record in Southern, West and East Africa.

The African Union's (AU's) 50th celebration of its establishment of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), its first iteration, introduced Agenda 2063 with the slogan, "The Africa We Want". 'Silencing the Guns', a flagship project of Agenda 2063, has as its goal ending all wars, civil conflicts, gender-based violence, violent conflicts and genocide on the continent. Silencing the Guns' Operational Manager, Aïssatou Hayatou, stated that the African leaders came together to ensure that they would not leave conflict as a legacy for generations to come.[1]

The theme for 2020, "Silencing the Guns by 2020," captures the determination by some member states to reach the goal of eradicating conflict on the continent. Moreover, Ms Hayatou expressed the importance of youth participation in the process, as this is for their future. In November 2018, the AU's Peace and Security Council (PSC) launched the Youth for Peace Africa Programme. The program collaborates with the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), youth departments of governments and civil society[2] and is a platform for youth to participate in the peace initiatives of the continent.

Yet today Africa continues to battle with insurgents, jihadists and increasing cases of transnational organised crime. Groups such as Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram and the Islamic State (IS) remain at large and are becoming better organised, developing into cross-border rebel groups. This has been a significant cause of the refugee crisis and sub-regional economic struggles.

Seven years after its launch, the AU has seen some successes in its efforts to maintain peace and security on the continent, however there have been many missed opportunities over the years. In 2014, the PSC met to discuss the way forward for the Silencing the Guns flagship project and the need to develop a roadmap for the achievement of the goals.

The PSC agreed on the adoption of structural changes, such as the operationalisation of the African Union Standby Force (ASF). Participants also agreed on the need to identify the basis of conflict on the continent, conduct further research on the flow of illicit weapons and publicly shame those who were at the centre of these issues.[3] While the conversations of a strategic plan were ongoing, that same year Africa saw the highest number of fatalities caused by political conflict since the 1950s.[4]

In 2016, the PSC presented the African Union Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by the Year 2020 (also known as the Lusaka Roadmap), a strategic plan with "realistic, practical, time-bound implementable steps" for achieving the goal by 2020. It addressed issues such as political hindrances, illicit flows of weapons, poor governance within states and the need for funding.

SUCCESSES THUS FAR

Positive steps have been taken towards silencing the guns. In 2016 the ASF was declared fully operational for the first time since its establishment in 2003. Although it is yet to be deployed, its first continental logistical base has been established in Cameroon, which will aid the AU in providing better logistical support to peacekeeping missions. Further, there have been talks on how the ASF can cooperate and communicate better with the Standby Forces of the Regional Economic Communities. The ASF is an important asset to the AU for rapid responses and reduces dependency on the UN.

‘Silencing the Guns’, a flagship project of Agenda 2063, has as its goal ending all wars, civil conflicts, gender-based violence, violent conflicts and genocide on the continent.

UN peacekeeping missions are only deployed when a peace agreement has been reached which can take months. The ASF plans to be able to respond within two weeks as a preventative measure.

The Lusaka Roadmap identifies the need to address peace matters through preventative measures, peace-making, peace support and national reconciliation.[5] In the past few years, African states have signed peace agreements with rebel groups including in January 2020 when the transitional government in Sudan signed an agreement with the leader of one of the two factions of the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N). This agreement granted two of the regions in Sudan special status, including the right to enact their own laws.[6] The Central African Republic (CAR) government signed a peace agreement with 14 rebel groups in February 2019 – a deal which afforded the rebel group leaders’ positions at ministerial level.

The peace agreements are progressive in several aspects. First the willingness of African governments to cooperate and compromise with their opponents is itself a win. Second, the agreements have enabled more collaborative efforts between the AU and its global partners as well as amongst African countries. For instance, the CAR peace agreement came after eight failed attempts in seven years following these collaborative efforts.[7] This time, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) took the lead in the mediation process between the rebel groups, civil society and government, consulting all for a year before the agreement was finally signed. With the support of ECCAS, the peace talks were led by the AU and UN and preparations were supported by the EU, Russia and Sudan.

These peace agreements are just a stepping stone to what needs to be achieved in these countries to create real sustainable peace. In most cases, more problems have arisen within months of the adopted agreements. The CAR is a prime example of this: Despite the government’s willingness to work with the rebel groups, rebels have continued to attack civilians and humanitarian aid workers within the country. Just six months after the agreement was signed, over a million people were internally displaced, hundreds killed and attacks on aid workers had doubled. There is concern that the rebel leaders will go unpunished for their actions.

THE HARSH REALITY

According to research carried out by the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), the number of conflicts on the continent has been on the rise since 2013. State-based and non-state conflict significantly increased between 2017 and 2018. Non-state conflicts are a cause for greater concern as they are not only escalating, but rebel groups, especially IS, have ventured into this territory. The UN has been leading peacekeeping efforts on the continent but the AU has started taking more of an initiative to find African solutions to these challenges by launching peacekeeping missions in the biggest conflict hotspots on the continent, including Somalia and Sudan.

However, as expressed by the AU and African states, funding continues to hinder these efforts. The AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), the AU’s longest-running peacekeeping mission, faces funding uncertainties. This mission has been a big success in many ways. It succeeded in pushing back Al-Shabaab and reclaiming the capital whilst protecting the transitional, and eventually federal, governments. African states collaborated by deploying troops, ultimately making AMISOM the biggest peacekeeping initiative globally in terms of personnel in 2017. However, because of its size and the duration of the mission, it expenses mounted, costing $1billion per year since 2014. The UN and EU provided funding, whilst the USA is providing training workshops for the troops. The result is that, despite Al-Shabaab still being at large and the high ➤➤

> **Seven years after its launch, the AU has seen some successes in its efforts to maintain peace and security on the continent, however there have been many missed opportunities over the years.**

probability of resurgence, AMISOM will be pulling out of Somalia in 2021 due to funding uncertainties. Al-Shabaab has been forced out of Mogadishu and other Somalian cities, however the group remains undefeated and militants are joining other jihadists in Tanzania and Mozambique.[8]

Kenya, one of the main contributing states to AMISOM, has been attacked by Al-Shabaab multiple times in attempts to force Kenya to remove their troops from Somalian territory. In the past, President Uhuru Kenyatta has stated that Kenya will not withdraw from Somalia until it is certain of stability. Should Kenya choose to remain, it will not only have to bear the costs but also suffer the damage Al-Shabaab will continue to inflict on Kenya, which is a big risk. Somalia's Federal Government and National Army are not adequately capacitated to suppress Al-Shabaab on their own. As the gradual removal of troops has begun, those spaces are quickly being filled by Al-Shabaab.[9] If funding was available, keeping AMISOM in Somalia would in the best interest of the entire region.

FINANCIAL INCAPACITIES

As funding is holding the AU back from meeting its goals, it has outlined plans to become more independent. In January 2016, African leaders agreed to increase their contribution to costs until Africa takes responsibility for 25% of peacekeeping missions by 2021. The balance of costs would be subsidised by international partners. With this in mind, the AU has been working to find ways in which African countries can contribute more to the AU. African contributions are determined according to GDP per country but by 2016 only 40% of the AU budget was paid for by African states. About 65% of that contribution came from just five countries (South Africa, Nigeria, Egypt, Libya and Algeria).[10]

In July 2016, the AU imposed a compulsory contribution levy of 0.2% on all imports from non-African states. In 2018, however, the Deputy Chairperson of the AU reported that only 45% of African states were complying with the compulsory contributions and only half of the estimated contributions had been received. In 2018 the AU decided to impose stringent sanctions on states that did not pay at least 50% of their estimated contributions within six months, one year or two years. The sanctions vary and include member states losing their ability to participate in AU activities, to take the floor in meetings, or to attend any meeting or have any representation within the institution. It does allow leeway for states that can prove that their inability to contribute is beyond their control. The approach has been successful and in November 2019, the AU Peace Fund Board of Trustees reported that 50 states had contributed $131million since 2017 and it was getting closer to its goal of $400million by 2021.[11] Not only is this the highest number of contributing states since its initiation in 1993, having a fully operative Peace Fund would mean the AU would no longer be completely dependent on foreign funds for its peacekeeping missions.

AREAS OF GROWING CONCERN

There have been significant signs of progress in the journey to sustainable peace on the continent, but there are issues that the AU has not been able to address. The third agenda in the Lusaka Roadmap addresses how to deal with the illicit inflow of weapons onto the continent. In line with implementing the practical steps of the plan, the AU has encouraged states to implement

regional and international treaties that regulate the flow of weapons. The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) was established in 2018 with a purpose and objective to, "prevent and eradicate the illicit trade in conventional arms and prevent their diversion" in an aim to "promote cooperation, transparency and responsible action amongst states".[12] Garnering the cooperation of Africa states in this regard has been difficult as only 25 states have ratified this so far and 15 are signatories.

Small arms and lights weapons (SALW) are the main focus of the Lusaka Roadmap as these are the ones that have caused the most fatalities on the continent. Despite the goals of the UN and AU for transparent reporting on the production and flow of legal and illicit SALW, globally very few countries are complying. In a survey conducted by the Small Arms Survey (SAS) in partnership with the AU, only nine of the 21 responding states provided numbers of registered SALW, whilst eight offered estimates of illicit SALW. Lack of participation in this reporting has been global and resulted in organisations like the SAS collecting only estimates of the number of weapons on the continent. In 2017, the SAS suggested that Africa had 40 million SALW held by non-state actors (including private individuals, registered businesses such as private security companies, and non-state armed groups). In contrast, only 11 million were held by government institutions. Even out of the 40 million, only around five million were registered and 16 million were found to be unregistered.[13]

SAS has identified that the main inflow and movement of illicit weapons on the continent stems from the trafficking of illegal weapons across borders. The remainder is from the diversion of national stockpiles including stockpiles held by peacekeeping forces through theft, loss or corruption, and the production of craft or artisanal firearms. Cross-border trafficking is a major feature in the illicit arms trade, especially for organised non-state armed groups. Despite the damage these weapons are causing, the governments have not been willing to establish a transparent system. The porous borders are difficult to manage and the involvement of some government officials in these deals is problematic. Even in instances where arms or ammunition produced by certain countries were identified amongst the illicit weapons and ammunitions, governments have rarely taken the initiative to investigate this. The African governments that are involved in the manufacturing of these weapons and ammunition are not willing to sign the ATT. Many investigations have revealed that the products of large corporations (both African and international) end up in the hands of these rebel groups, at times with the help of the corporations themselves.[14]

Beyond these issues, the AU also has to look into resolving social issues that contribute to the conflict on the continent i.e. issues of with gender-based violence (GBV), irregular migration, sexual violence and human and drug trafficking.

Faced with the setbacks brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, many funders of the civil society and youth formations doing work on the ground have been requested to 'COVID-proof' their plans. This means a shift in areas of focus for these groups. For instance in Mozambique organisations are being forced to focus more on issues such as GBV rather than the insurgency in the north. Additionally, governments that were already struggling to contribute to the Peace Fund now have to prioritise health care expenses. Imports have been reduced globally, which is sure to affect the 0.2% contributions to be made by states to the Peace Fund. Few states are willing to comply with international norms in practice. Clearly Silencing the Guns will not be achieved by the end of this year, despite the collective interests of the continent.

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Andrew Mlangeni: We must follow in his footsteps

By Cheryl Carolus

Cheryl Carolus held positions as Deputy Secretary General of ANC of first leadership after unbanning, UDF National and Western Cape Executive Committees, Executive Committee of United Womens Congress, Member of Welcoming Committee for released prisoners, Student leader at UWC during 1976 and 1980 student uprisings. Currently active in ANC Stalwarts and Veterans Group. She is currently Executive Chairperson Peotona Group Holdings, Chairperson Constitution Hill Trust. Writing in her personal capacity.

Struggle stalwart Andrew Mlangeni died aged 95. Here, fellow anti-apartheid activist CHERYL CAROLUS pays tribute to an "exceptional, modest" leader whom she says has now put the baton in all our hands.

As a nation, we mourn the death of Bab'Mlangeni. We feel a deep hole that we know cannot be filled. For he was indeed another great tree that has fallen; the last of the Rivonia trialists who represent an era where leadership was earned not decreed and where leadership was a responsibility to serve. And he was among the best of the best of them.

As I mourn, I am overwhelmed with gratitude and full of celebration.

I am grateful to have known him and to have learnt from him, to have laughed with him and to have cried with him. I will forever remember his unstinting courage and wisdom in some of the darkest hours of the country and of the ANC.

Andrew Mokete Motlokwa Mlangeni was born to farmworkers who were forced off their land and who went to Johannesburg in search of a livelihood. His educational aspirations were abruptly cut short because the family needed him to help sustain them. He quickly became a worker who helped to organise a number of worker actions to demand better pay and working conditions even before he joined the ANC Youth League in 1942.

He was one of the first to take the bold and courageous step to join Umkhonto We Sizwe and to go for military training when the ANC decided to take up up arms against the apartheid regime after the Sharpeville Massacre. His history as a Rivonia Trialist and his time on Robben Island together with Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu and others, is well documented.

They are all deservedly held high in our memories for their bravery, for their courage and for their refusal to compromise on what they stood for, what drove them to act as they did in the formation of Umkhonto we Sizwe and the grounds on which they based their defence throughout their trial.

When faced with the strong possibility of getting the death penalty (as argued for strongly by the prosecution), Mandela famously took to the dock for his speech in mitigation. Speaking on behalf of all the trialists, he said: "These are the ideals for which I hope to live for; but, if needs be, for which I am prepared to die."

Those of us who were barely out of nappies when they went to jail, but who had gone through our own journeys that brought us into the fold of the liberation movement and who found our home within the ANC eventually, were hugely inspired by their bravery, and the purity of what drove them.

Upon their release, we were almost certain that they could not possibly live up to the images we had built up of them. Even elements in the apartheid regime believed that they would soon lose their "leadership shine" if they were released and would eventually just become "mere mortals".

I can say without fear of contradiction that they not only met those expectations but in fact exceeded them.

Andrew Mlangeni was exceptional in that firmament of stars. While sharing the important characteristics of his fellow Rivonia trialists of patriotism;

principled, ethical leadership; incorruptibility and just plain old fashioned human decency, he stood out in a number of ways.

He lived his life modestly. The house he moved into with Mam'June in Soweto is the one he was carried out of to the hospital when he died.

His love and appreciation for Mam'June is well known. He spoke till his death of "the woman whom I found where I left her after 27 years in jail". His enduring sadness was that she passed on shortly after his release. He wished God had given him more time to make her happy.

He was naughty and impish in his humour. He famously livened up an otherwise boring birthday party in his honour when he told the gathering that the secret to his longevity was to practice moderation in everything, one enjoyed, including sex. He went further and told the assembled guests that as much as they enjoyed sex, he and Mam'June agreed they should limit themselves to three times per week. Of course, there was much creeping under the table by children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren!

His golfing passion and his contribution to the sport is legendary. In Parliament, he is remembered by many for this. Leon Wessels speaks fondly of their days on the benches of Parliament where many thoughts were fine-tuned on the Milnerton Golf Course. The Soweto Golf Club will miss him as they honour him annually.

He was never one to mince his words. He was always the one you could rely on to call a spade a spade and not a gardening implement. It was he who called out Jacob Zuma about the lack of ethics in his behaviour in the Nkandla scandal.

It was he who led the drive in the ANC to hold those accountable who abused public funds.

It was he who fought to have the ANC suspend those who are charged with serious crimes, particularly around abuse of public funds or public office. It was he who sounded the first alarm bells about State Capture.

It was he who named Zuma as a ringleader who abused his leadership position in the ANC to enable the large-scale capture of our state for personal gain. ››

Under his leadership of the ANC Integrity Committee, our movement was urged to acknowledge the seduction of power and of greed that was to corrupt our organisation and create a rot in the capacity of our state that was and still is most acutely felt by the desperately poor people who, election after election, entrusted the ANC with their most precious possession, the vote.

He was as strict about this even when it came to ANC resources.

As the Head of Transport in the newly unbanned ANC, we all ran the gamut of having to painstakingly account for every cent he gave us for petrol – no-slip, no refund. Finish and *klaar*. He was fiercely insistent on how we used vehicles given to us by the ANC for our work. This included keeping the vehicles spotlessly clean because it was an asset that was paid for by the membership fees of our mostly poor support base.

Trevor Manuel said that Bab'Mlangeni was the best living example of "*Batho Pele*" long before it was adopted as the supposed ethic of our civil service. Tata was not only a leader, but he was also willing to be led if you deserved it. Zuma was the first ANC President that Bab' Mlangeni criticised publicly. He had criticisms of and advice for the other two presidents too. But he was always granted the opportunity to offer his counsel over tea. And his criticisms were always about policy, strategy or tactics. Never about values or morality. He publicly criticized Zuma after many attempts to speak with the then-president quietly in one on one meetings and, when those failed, he dutifully took his concerns formally through the Integrity Committee and eventually to the top leadership.

When even this failed and those involved in State Capture became even more brazen and it became clear that the ANC was being captured too, Mlangeni decided to publicly express concern and called upon Zuma to step down until his name was cleared.

He joined his other two last surviving Rivonia Trialists, Denis Goldberg and Ahmed Kathrada in the work of the ANC Stalwarts and Veterans group that was formed explicitly to bring together cadres who remain loyal to the ANC and who decided that they will not keep quiet about their concerns. I was among the younger members of that group.

Many in the group strayed away from the ANC because it had become a monster that could not be reconciled with dearly held beliefs and hard-won freedoms. Comrades Mlangeni, Kathrada and Goldberg gently but firmly pulled everyone back into the fold.

They were clear that the monstrous manifestations in the ANC at the time was not the ANC. They refused to abandon it to the rank opportunists who had embedded themselves around a corrupt leadership who bought loyalty to themselves personally through patronage and greed. They made it clear to us that it was another one of those moments in history when we had to "submit or fight". Under their leadership and inspiration, we decided to fight the enemy within us.

Comrades Mlangeni, Goldberg and Kathrada were singled out for vilification by some like the leader of the so-called MKMVA as being "empty tins with no struggle credentials". Many of us were outraged and wanted to respond. Bab'Mlangeni just laughed, from the bottom of his belly, in the way only he could, and asked us why we would want to get into a mud-slinging match. He said, "my dear, only pigs do well in the mud" and laughed some more.

He took his views all the way into the belly of the beast in the NASREC conference of the ANC.

He went to his grave proud of the day when Cyril Ramaphosa was elected ANC President and subsequently as president of our beloved country. And he was very sober about the reality that even though a decent, tried and tested leader like Ramaphosa was the President, and that our work was to cut out the cancer of corruption and it was only just beginning.

So as I mourn and as I smile, and give thanks for having known this giant, I am mindful of the fact that he had, in his usual gentle, firm manner, put the baton in our hands. We dare not drop it.

There is work to be done. This dreadful pandemic has stripped bare for us if ever we became blind to the scourges of poverty and inequality, and the misery it visits upon our people.

But the gift of Covid-19 is that there is at least an intellectual acceptance that it cannot be "business as usual". If we are to rebuild our economy and our society, there has to be a new social pact. The "haves" and those who have the social capital to access the opportunities that our country offers, cannot do so at the expense of the vast majority. Shared prosperity is the only sustainable future.

We cannot build the future we deserve on the sand of corruption and State Capture. We need to ensure accountability for those who masterminded our near demise so that it never happens again. At least, not in our lifetime.

Ramaphosa and the decent people in the ANC leadership will only succeed if the public (of whom the vast majority continue to trust the ANC), become active once more in building strong civil society organisations, not only strong vibrant ANC branches that can lead the country on a fresh path of success once more.

In the name of Andrew Mlangeni.

Lala Kahle, Brave warrior, mensch.

This article first appeared in the Daily Maverick. NA

Denis Goldberg: The engineer whose aim was to build a new world

By Debbie Budlender, approved by the Denis Goldberg Legacy Foundation Trust

The author, a highly respected activist and independent research consultant was for many years a specialist researcher with the Community Agency for Social Enquiry (Case). Among other roles, she is now also the manager of the Denis Goldberg Legacy Foundation Trust which aims to soon open the struggle icon's dream of a Denis Goldberg 'House of Hope' to share art and culture with the children and youth of the different communities of Hout Bay.

Tributes have poured in for Denis Theodore Goldberg (1933-2020), the former Rivonia trialist who spent 22 years in prison and who, on his release, simply carried on his life's work for the ANC. A lover of the arts, a man of humour and intellect, an academic, and a 'mensch' who loved children, his dream to build a Denis Goldberg 'House of Hope' to share art and culture with the children and youth of the different communities of Hout Bay is about to be realised. The first building blocks could be laid within two to three months after his passing.

The messages that poured in after Denis's death was announced on 30 April 2020 and the many tributes offered on print, broadcast and online, paint a picture of a man who was many things to a large number of diverse organisations and individuals, both in South Africa and beyond. Capturing his essence in a single tribute is difficult, if not impossible. We tried in our online memorial on 8 May to capture some of the diversity (the youtube recording of the proceedings can be found at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uWJNT1Bv8BU). This tribute similarly tries to capture some of the unique and diverse mixes that made up Denis Goldberg.

Within the diversity, a range of common threads can be identified across the messages and tributes.

Denis was down-to-earth. He was an engineer to the core – someone who was prepared to give his all to get things done – and done thoroughly. The most obvious example of this was his preparedness, as a young white South African, to use his engineering skills and knowledge to create physical weapons that the ANC's military wing, uMkhonto weSizwe, might use to help destroy apartheid. And, once this had happened, he would be able to build the houses, roads and bridges for all the people of South Africa, which had been his motivation for studying engineering.

Denis's Mr Fix-It approach permeated his attitude to life – that obstacles existed to be overcome and that he would bring all his creativity, ingenuity and energy to playing his role in getting things to work properly and well. Further, the fact that no-one else had done something previously did not mean that he and those he worked with could not find a way to do it now; *'n Boer maak 'n plan*. His engineer's conception of the world surfaced in the way he engaged with other fields of endeavour – such as his understanding of the arts, and his theory on the roles of libraries in community development. The diagram below is from the thesis he wrote for his four-year librarianship degree, entitled: *The Public Library as a Communicator of Information.*

Denis was an intellectual. In his autobiography, *A Life for Freedom: The Mission to End Racial Injustice in South Africa,* he refers to his fellow prisoners, David Rabkin, Jeremy Cronin and Raymond Suttner, as the "Academics". However, while he was in prison Denis completed studies across many disciplines. One could argue that he did so because there were few other options in prison. But that would not explain why Denis continued to read widely beyond these subjects – and in the arts in particular – after his release. Denis wanted to understand the world so he could change it. But he also wanted to understand the ➤➤

world to enjoy it to the full.

Denis was a talker, not a writer. In this Denis differed from a typical academic, who might well prefer writing a carefully constructed piece to talk. Denis loved to talk, and fortunately, there were many who loved to listen to him, and who were inspired by what they heard. In the words of Brian Filling, leader of the Scottish anti-apartheid movement and now of Action for Southern Africa Scotland:

Denis's speaking style was neither that of a firebrand nor tub-thumper. His speeches were informative, gentle in tone, laced with humour, and inspired his audiences into action. He had people laughing out loud and then brought tears to their eyes not just in the same speech but sometimes in the same scenario if not the same sentence.

Denis was a dreamer. Denis believed in a better life for all. This "all" was not an abstract universal. Instead, it consisted, among others, of the children and youth of Imizamo Yethu, Hangberg and the Valley in Hout Bay, the suburb in which he spent the last decade and a half of his life. Denis understood that dreams do not come true without effort. He devoted much of the energy of his last years to creating opportunities in arts and sports for the young "all" of Hout Bay through support for other organisations and then through the establishment of the Denis Goldberg Legacy Foundation Trust and its arts and culture education centre, the Denis Goldberg House of Hope (https://goldberghouseofhope.co.za). In his will, Denis bequeathed the majority of his estate to this cause.

Denis was a principled pragmatist. Denis remained loyal to the ANC to the end. On cold days, he always wore his green, black and gold ANC knitted scarf when attending events at which he would speak. He did this regardless of the political leanings of the audience on that day. He was pleased and proud that the ANC bestowed upon him the Isithwalandwe-Seaparankoe award, its highest honour awarded to those who have made an outstanding contribution and sacrifice to the liberation struggle.

Denis's loyalty was to the values of the party and the vision encapsulated in the Freedom Charter, rather than to any and every practice that others might do under its banner. His speaking up against Jacob Zuma before many others did so was, therefore, to be expected. Further, his own political affiliation did not prevent his collaborating with people – including leaders – from other political parties. Instead, what was important for Denis was whether the person could help with the achievement of some part of his dream of a better world.

Denis's humility. Denis was proud of what he had done, including that he had been one of those who stood alongside Nelson Mandela when he pronounced the famous words: **"It is an ideal for which I hope to live for and to see realized. But, My Lord, if needs be it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die."** Denis would, however, emphasise that the real credit for finally bringing apartheid to an end belonged to the approximately two million people who campaigned under the banner of the United Democratic Front and trade union movement in the 1980s.

After 1994, Denis did not want a high-level (and well-paid) position within the new government and associated agencies. Instead, he spent the first years after he was released, while his first wife, Esme, was still alive, continuing the international work he had done for the ANC since his release. However, instead of garnering support for the anti-apartheid struggle, he was winning financial and other forms of

support for the new democracy. On his return to South Africa, he spent several years using his engineering skills as an advisor to the then Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry, Ronnie Kasrils, and his successor, Buyelwa Sonjica. As an advisor, he did not spend his time in an office and at high-level meetings. Instead, he travelled the country finding out what was happening on the ground in the lives of ordinary people. Subsequently, he moved to Hout Bay where he immersed himself in community-based work.

Denis's humour. The story goes that the lawyers for Denis and the other Rivonia Trialists were very anxious that when Denis gave evidence and was cross-examined, he would respond with his usual humorous quips, that this would be seen as disrespectful of the court, and that it would undermine the case of the group on trial. To the lawyers' relief, Denis acquitted himself well and seriously on this occasion.

Giving evidence at the trial must have been one of the very few occasions on which Denis reined in his humour. The tributes and messages after his death are filled with anecdotes of his humour and sense of fun. He used humour in many different ways – to entertain, to get a message across in a non-confrontational way, to lighten a heavy moment, to mock himself, and perhaps also to hide difficult emotions. His humour was sometimes "naughty", but it was never nasty.

Denis was a patron of the arts. Denis spent his last decades revelling in the arts, making up for a youth focused on political activism, followed by 22 years in a grey prison cell, and further decades garnering international support for a free and equal South Africa. His home in Hout Bay reflected his enjoyment of the visual arts. It was filled with more than 200 paintings and artefacts. His was not the usual collection of an art connoisseur. Instead, it was a graphic illustration of what he valued and loved about life. Many of the art works were created by emerging artists. Most were created by South Africans, and especially Western Cape artists. There is a concentration of art related to music, dance, workers and, in particular, producers of basic foods. Above all, there are bright colours, movement and energy.

Denis enjoyed children. Denis was adamant that he did not regret his participation in the struggle and would not if he had the option of choosing another path, do anything different. His primary regret was what his participation and, in particular, his imprisonment, meant for his family and family life. Denis missed the larger part of his daughter and son's childhood years. They missed out on a father who loved engaging with children. This could be seen when he became President of the Woodcraft Folk, a progressive British children's organisation in which his family had been active; in how he pretended to want the crayons all to himself when joining Hout Bay children in decorating paper bags in which they would take home the products they created at one of the Denis Goldberg House of Hope workshops; in the inclusion in his art collection of a tortoise created out of an egg box carton by a five-year-old who stayed in his Hout Bay house, and in his pleasure in watching children perform on stage.

Denis was a "mensch". The word "mensch" was used many times in the tributes to Denis. In describing Denis in this way, people were recognising Denis's humanity, his warmth, his living out of "ubuntu", and his ability to move people at a very personal level. It is therefore not surprising that many of those sending messages wrote that they had cried when hearing of his passing and/or when watching and listening to the memorial.

Denis was not always easy. Denis's commitment, energy and love of life could also manifest itself in an obstinacy – a reluctance to ask for, and accept, help if he could do something himself (but much less reluctance in garnering help for others), a determination to fulfil commitments even when he was ill and would face the consequences the following day, and foolhardiness that saw him drive alone in his car with his oxygen machine alongside him, even when he spent much of his remaining time in a wheelchair. Denis was also obstinate (or determined) to remain alive far beyond doctors' predictions after receiving the diagnosis of stage 4 lung cancer. In particular, he wanted to see the Denis Goldberg House of Hope become a concrete reality. For his obstinacy in the face of his predicted death, we and many others are grateful. And in June 2020, construction of the Denis Goldberg House of Hope is happening at last.

A BETTER LIFE FOR ALL, BECAUSE #LIFE IS WONDERFUL...

Denis wanted two Brecht poems to be read out at his funeral. The first of these – *Questions of a Worker who Reads History* – was read by Karlind Govender during the on-line memorial. The second, *The Carpet Weavers of Kujan-Bulak honour Lenin* (Die Teppichweber von Kujan-Bulak ehren Lenin), encapsulate at least some of the characteristics described above – the pragmatic engineer who recognises that taking practical steps to improve the lives of poor people is the best way of showing respect for our political leaders and ideals. ➤➤

THE CARPET WEAVERS OF KUJAN-BULAK HONOUR LENIN

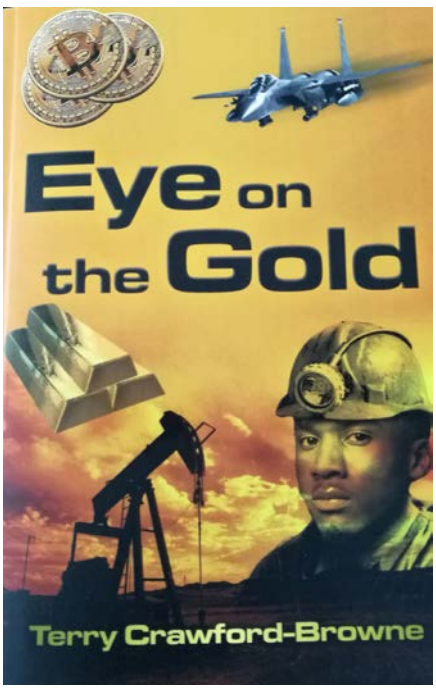
Often and copiously honour has been done to Comrade Lenin.
There are busts and statues; cities and children are called after him,
Speeches are made in many languages.
There are meetings and demonstrations, From Shanghai to Chicago in Lenin's honour.
But this is how the Carpet Weavers of Kujan Bulak honoured him in a little township in Southern Turkistan.
Every evening there, twenty-nine carpet weavers
Shaking with fever rise from their primitive looms.
Fever is rife. The railway station
Is full of the hum of mosquitos. A thick cloud
Rises from the swamp behind The Old Camel's Graveyard.
But the railway train which
Every two weeks brings water and smoke, brings
The news also one day
That the day approaches for honouring Comrade Lenin.
And the people of Kujan Bulak decide
Poor people, carpet weavers,
That Comrade Lenin's plaster bust shall also
Be put up in their locality.
Then as the collection is made for the bust
They all stand shaking with fever and offering
Their hard-earned Kopeks with trembling hands.
And the Red Army man Stepa Gamalev, who
Carefully counts and minutely watches,
Sees how ready they are to honour Lenin and he is glad
But he also sees their unsteady hands
And he suddenly proposes
That the money for the bust should be used for petroleum
To be poured on the swamp behind the Old Camel's Graveyard
From where the mosquitos come, which
Carry the fever germ.
And so to fight the fever in Kujan Bulak thus
Honouring the dead but, Never to be forgetting, Comrade Lenin.
So it was decided.
On the day of the ceremony they carried
Their dented buckets, filled with black petroleum
One after the other
And poured it over the swamp.
And so they helped themselves by honouring Lenin and
Honoured him by helping themselves, and thus
They understood him well.
We have heard how the people of Kujan Bulak
Honoured Lenin. When in the evening
The petroleum had been bought and poured on the swamp,
A man who was at the meeting demanded
That a plaque be fixed on the railway station
Recording the events, and containing
Precise details of their altered plan and the exchange of the
Bust of Lenin for a barrel of fever-destroying oil.
And all this to honour Lenin.
And they still also
Put up the plaque. NA

Eye on the Gold

Terry Crawford-Browne

Self-published using Reach Publishers' Services

Review by Keith Gottschalk



Terry Crawford-Browne is the doyen of veteran anti-armaments activists in South Africa. He heads the South African affiliate of Economists Allied for Arms Reduction, today renamed Economists for Peace and Security (EPS).

His latest book is dedicated to archbishop emeritus Desmond Tutu for his inspirational leadership against apartheid, "a 'miracle' then betrayed by corruption in the African National Congress in collusion with European governments and arms companies".

Eye on the Gold is structured into four parts. Part One "Mlungu Tegate – White Man's Plunder" is a historical section dealing with gold and plunder through the centuries, culminating in Cecil Rhodes and the Randlords after 1910.

Part Two, "We Marched for Peace in Cape Town," is the most personal part of the book, summarising "why a banker became a revolutionary" during the 1980s struggle.

Part Three, "Betrayal of the Struggle," takes us through the 1990s and 21st century in the aftermath of the arms deal.

Part Four, "America against the World," discusses some aspects of US imperialism, with a focus on the role of the dollar in the global financial system.

What are the book's main takeaways for a critical left-wing readership?

First are eternal issues: what proportion of state expenditure in a developing country, where half the population lives in poverty, should be spent on the military in general and armaments in particular?

The annual military budget cannot afford to maintain more than one submarine out of three, and one frigate out of four, on patrol at any one time. South Africans have never seen more than three Gripen fighter jets out of the 26 fly at any one time (p.206). Irrefutably, therefore, it was financially irresponsible to pay for weapons the country cannot afford to maintain and use.

Crawford-Browne has argued elsewhere that priority should have been not frigates and submarines but coastguard vessels that could intercept fish poachers everywhere between Marion Island and Gansbaai. The frigate had to be withdrawn from further patrols against pirates in the Mozambique channel because it was too expensive to maintain on patrol. Likewise, instead of fighter aircraft, should not the SAAF priority have been more helicopters with Bambi buckets for firefighting?

This reviewer does not fully agree with Crawford-Browne's dismissal of the principle of offset contracts as a fraud. As I understand it, the principle is that a foreign contractor will, as a condition of the tender, sub-contract one or more local firms as a production partner. One instance of a genuine example was when Denel Aerostructures started manufacturing parts for the Military Airbus consortium, with the intention that the SAAF would purchase several planes for transport to peacekeeping deployments elsewhere in our continent. (This contract was cancelled, and Denel later stopped participation in this value chain).

But Terry hits the nail on the head with his exposure that the foreign firms in the 1990s arms deal in fact provided less than 3% of the offsets, and hence less than 3% of the jobs, provided in the contracts (p.204). Surely the government should be suing the foreign firms for only part fulfilment of their contracts?

Second is an issue that pacifists, feminists and ecologists will make. The book records the tragedy when eight workers were killed at the Rheinmetall munitions factory in Cape Town (pp.224-225). But someone must ask the question: if those eight workers had not been killed by what they were making for export, ➤➤

might it not have killed eight working class or other poor people in Yemen?

Looking back on the arms deal from 2020, it is sobering to note that the aborted nuclear power station deal would have been for more than ten times the cost of the arms deal.

Third, this book comes as a warning to civil society activists that they should never choose the strategy of lawfare before getting written guarantees of financial support from NGOs or philanthropists before they start to litigate. Terry mentions a few of his court victories and defeats. One defeat alone left him with a bill of one million rand for costs. Even when lawyers offer their services pro bono, they will not contribute to costs awarded against you.

Fourth, a reviewer must note the moral courage of Terry in openly discussing how the 1980s struggles caused him burn-out, a nervous breakdown, and the need for psychotherapy. Today, post-traumatic stress disorder is more widely known and accepted, and a few others have also discussed their experience with this after their struggle years.

As readers would expect, a book by Terry Crawford-Browne comes with provocative polemics. By the second page of his preface, Terry writes of the USA: "The presidential choice in 2016 had been between a war criminal and a lunatic. Ironically, the lunatic was arguably the better option." (p.12)

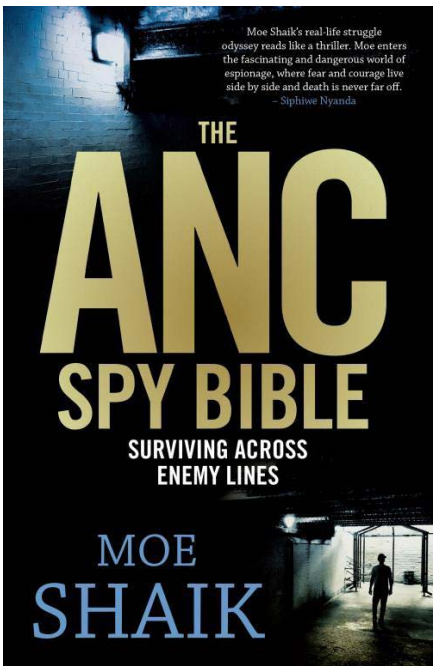
The context here is Hilary Clinton's advocacy for repeated military interventions abroad, versus Trump's election promises to end endless wars in the Middle East. There are too many other examples to mention in this review. This book is a must for every activist to buy and read, and for university libraries. *Keith Gottschalk is a South African poet, known for his anti-apartheid poetry. A political scientist, he is former Head of Department of Political Studies at the University of the Western Cape. His cycle of astronomy and spaceflight poems is due for publication later in 2020.* NA

The ANC Spy Bible: Surviving Across Enemy Lines

Moe Shaik

Publisher: Tafelberg

Review by Pippa Green



In the afterword to this memoir, Moe Shaik writes that it began as a "badly written novel" and that his publishers had "strongly suggested" he rewrite it as a memoir. Which he did with the help of writer, Mike Nicol.

We should be thankful for the publisher's suggestion because the result is not only a finely woven quintessentially South African story but one that is stranger and stronger than fiction.

It is much more than a thriller, although it is that: it is a deeply reflective work about the transition of the ANC from liberation movement to the governing party, about heroes who faded and in some cases became anti-heroes, and of the tensions within the liberation movement which became accentuated once it was in power. It is also about the high price in personal trauma, much still unresolved, that activists paid.

The story begins with a jolt: in 1985, Moe Shaik agreed, at the behest of his brother Yunis and Ebrahim Ebrahim, to become a "decoy" for the security police, giving Ebrahim a chance to leave the country.

He is told to hold out for three days. Once in jail, detained under the Internal Security Act, he describes his terror waiting for his torturers. "I could taste fear in the dryness of my mouth. It oozed out as sticky sweat that pooled in my armpits and trickled down the sides of my body." His torture and that of his brother, Yunis, who was detained later, is almost unbearably painful to read.

But it was here, in a Durban prison, that he was to meet the man at the centre of this story: the Nightingale.

Shaik, born in 1959, the fifth of six boys, experienced tragedy early in life when his mother, Rabia, left the family

when he and his younger brother, Shamim, were just out of babyhood. A year later she was killed in a car crash. His father, Lambie, he writes, never spoke about her. "All I know is that her absence left in me a debilitating fear of abandonment." It also developed in him "an obsession with unravelling secrets."

As it happened, both in the ANC underground and in the post-apartheid era, this obsession became central in his life and work.

The Nightingale, a security police officer in Durban, was apparently so appalled by the torture of both Moe and the even more severe torture of his brother, Yunis, that he became Moe's secret informant – effectively a double agent for the ANC.

The book chronicles the last violent years of apartheid, not only contiguous with the negotiations process but overlapping them. Shaik himself successfully evaded a police dragnet as a Vula operative.

He had suffered severe trauma, including the death of his beloved stepmother, Kaye, while he was in jail in the mid-80s. After his release "loud noises and laughter jarred me into a state of agitated anxiety. I found being in a group disconcerting."

He returned to his work as an optometrist, and then, just a few months later, encountered the security police officer who had shown such empathy when he and his brother were tortured.

The story of the information that the officer passed onto the ANC through Shaik is gripping, and a little puzzling. There was no pecuniary motive; it seemed the "Nightingale" was motivated by his conscience, in spite of his fear. The consequence of failure, as he and Shaik told each other, was death.

This is a personal account but also tells of a vivid slice of our history. He writes of his first encounters with ANC leaders who became powerful in the democratic era – such as Jacob Zuma, "known to be a crafty and skilful underground operator." (How Shaik left the country when he was a wanted man is testimony to his own craftiness and skill).

The Nightingale's reports turned out to be so accurate that Oliver Tambo, the then leader of the ANC, called the venture Project Bible.

Shaik interweaves testimony heard years later before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to unravel what had happened to certain of his comrades who disappeared – such as Phila Ndwandwe, whose fate "was left to the whisper of rumours". It emerged at the TRC hearings, 13 years later, that the security police had murdered her after she had refused to "turn". She was buried on a farm outside Pietermaritzburg, her body covered with lime.

He also provides a unique view of the Vula operation – its dangers and the politics around it. It tested ANC unity and also endangered Shaik's valuable source. The deep contradictions in the potholed transition to democracy are illustrated by the fact that when all other political prisoners were being released, Shaik himself was in hiding fearing for his life.

There is another factor to this book that makes it a valuable read and that is Shaik's insights into how those he had known in the struggle – such as Zuma – behaved once they had secured personal power. Or had the characteristics always been there? Shaik doesn't make it clear.

His reflection of Zuma's rise to power – "six short years" from being a provincial MEC to deputy president – tells a particularly personal story involving his brother, Shabir. Part of that story involves the former head of the National Prosecuting Authority, Bulelani Ngcuka, who announced charges against his brother and a "prima facie" case against Zuma although they would not prosecute.

The rift with then-president Thabo Mbeki over his (and Mac Maharaj's) allegations that Ngcuka had been investigated for being a spy became a canyon with Mbeki's establishment of the Hefer Commission. (Vanessa Brereton, the real agent with the code RS452 that supposedly applied to Ngcuka, revealed herself as the Commission got underway).

I recall how, at the Hefer Commission an ashen-faced Shaik declared his loyalty and love for Zuma, even as the evidence about Ngcuka was destroyed. (To his credit, he apologized to both Ngcuka and his wife Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka afterwards).

So the fallout with Zuma, when Shaik was in the intelligence services, must have been momentous, not only for their relationship but in the ANC. Much of this is now the subject of testimony at the State Capture Commission and revolves around the services' alarm at the extent of the influence the Gupta brothers wielded.

In many ways, the book is a chronicle of heroes, those who survived intact, albeit at a cost, and those who failed. History has recognised them, except for one: the Nightingale, a man then in "the cauldron", today barely remembered, and not yet honoured.

This book is a fitting tribute to him.

Pippa Green is a print and radio journalist, author and lecturer in journalism, who is now the Press Ombud for the South African Press Council. Her gripping podcasts in the History for the Future series cover interviews with Andrew Mlangeni and TRC commissioners.

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