

REFLECTIONS ON THE BALANCE OF FORCES: IS THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION IN DANGER?

INTRODUCTION

At its 53rd National Conference, the ANC concluded its assessment of the state of the nation and the broader environment in which we live by calling for a second phase of transition to a national democratic society. This conclusion stemmed from an appreciation of the progress that had been made in changing South African society since the advent of democracy. It was also informed by an acknowledgement of the weaknesses that beset this process.

The ANC has to pose and find answers to questions about its own long-term evolution as an organisation, its core vision and the capacity to pursue it. This depends on the balance of forces. This balance is a function, firstly, of objective conditions much beyond the ANC's control. Secondly, it is also dependent on subjective factors that reflect organisational and human agency. Actions by those who seek social transformation do shift the relationship among the array of forces in society. Indeed, even objective conditions are impacted on, for better or for worse, by organisational and human action. Further, the global alignment of forces does influence the domestic balance.

Why is it necessary to assess the balance of forces? The primary aim is to clarify the opportunities and constraints in the journey to a national democratic society. It thus becomes possible to avoid paralysis dictated to by an overestimation of the difficulties, or voluntaristic adventurism based on overestimation of our own power.

Such assessments were made in the recent past, particularly at the 2007 and 2012 ANC National

Conferences. These are reflected in the Strategy and Tactics documents, as summarised below.

This discussion document is not a Strategy and Tactics document, and it should be read together with the latter as adopted at the 2007 and 2012 National Conferences.

BACKGROUND STRATEGY AND TACTICS DOCUMENTS

In the Strategy and Tactics document adopted at the 52nd National Conference (2007) and the Preface appended at the 53rd National Conference (2012), the ANC reaffirms its commitment to the attainment of a national democratic society. Such a society does not emerge *"ripe and ready for harvesting at the point of transfer of power"*. It needs to be built consciously by the forces of fundamental change.

Domestic balance

Having captured the beach-head in 1994, these forces indeed sought to transform the state at the same time as they utilised its capacities to change society as a whole. This saw to the forging of a vibrant multi-party democracy based on a Constitution that enjoys the allegiance and support of the overwhelming majority of South Africans. State institutions were transformed in terms of policy frameworks, practices and demographic composition. Formal instruments of accountability were put in place and space was created for organs of civil society to thrive. However, weaknesses in the state have hindered the speed with which social change can be implemented; and the extent of mass involvement still leaves much to be desired.

Processes of social transformation saw to the rise of many Blacks into middle and upper strata. However, this had not translated into systemic changes in ownership and control of wealth, including land; with the locus of economic power largely unchanged. Related to this is the persistence of poverty affecting mainly Black people and women in particular. Levels of economic investment and rates of labour absorption were too low to absorb large swathes of the unemployed into economic activity.

While much progress had been made in attacking abject poverty through the social wage – combining access to basic services and social grants – this had not made sufficient impact on social marginalisation especially among youth, women and people in rural areas. Improved access to basic services such as education, health, water and electricity did not necessarily translate into requisite quality of such services. At the same time, levels of inequality in terms of income, assets and opportunity had not much improved.

There had been progress in the forging of a sense of nationhood and some measure of acculturation. But spatial dynamics and the socio-economic disparities that reflected apartheid racial patterns conspired to undermine this. Added to this is the issue of the dominant societal value system and frame of ideological discourse which *“encourages greed, crass materialism and conspicuous consumption”*.

In other words, by 2007, the balance of forces had *“shifted in favour of the forces of change”*, creating the platform to speed up programmes of social transformation. Yet the question was posed then whether society was mobilised for faster progress; and whether the liberation movement had the corps of cadres to lead such change!

It is on account of these weaknesses that the 2012 National Conference resolved that decisive interventions were required to speed up change, *“especially with regard to economic and social transformation”* as well as *“democratic consolidation”*. For this to succeed, the state should be capable and developmental. Further, the ANC needs to exercise leadership in all pillars of transformation: building a democratic developmental state, transforming the economy, ideological work, international work as well as mass organisation and mobilisation.

International environment

All this has to be undertaken, the 2007 Strategy and Tactics document argued, in a global environment in which the world is dominated by a capitalist socio-economic system characterised by the dominance of one ‘hyper-power’. This reflects primary unipolar and secondary multipolar features. It was further argued that globalisation reflected technical (and largely positive) features. It also has socio-political manifestations that are characterised, among others, by domination of transnational corporations, the undermining of global governance, homogenisation of media and cultural content and militarism.

The 2012 National Conference noted both the continuing global shift of centres of economic growth and development to the South as well as the causes and impact of the global economic crisis. Critical in these developments was the retreat of laissez faire market ideology, after two decades of dominance. This had *“reopened discourse on the relationship between the state, the market and the citizen on a global scale”*.

Further, South Africa’s immediate neighbourhood – sub-Saharan Africa – was experiencing not only improved conditions of peace and better democratic governance and economic management. It was becoming one of the epicentres of high rates of economic growth and development. This provided South Africa with unique possibilities to leverage continental opportunities and *“integrate differently into the global economy”*.

In brief, the 2012 National Conference affirmed a continuing process in which the balance of forces was shifting in favour of the forces of social change and a humane global order. With regard to South Africa, in particular, it embraced the National Development Plan and asserted that there was *“a growing appreciation among various sectors of society that the current configuration of the country’s political economy [was] unsustainable... The clamour for a national vision and programme to speed up movement to shared prosperity is commonly shared”*. However, it was acknowledged that such factors as resistance by capital and its allies to radical transformation, state weaknesses, as well as corruption and perverse practices within the broad liberation movement could undermine the drive towards speedier movement forward.

GLOBAL DYNAMICS AND PROSPECTS

Have there been any changes in the global terrain, with a bearing on South Africa's democratic project? It can be argued that the conclusions reached at both the 2007 and 2012 National Conferences remain largely accurate and relevant. Critical in this regard is the fact that the global system is still characterised by primary unipolarity and secondary multipolar features. This is reflected, among others, in the re-emergence of China as a world power and the rise of Asia, the quasi-autonomy of regional alliances such as the European Union (EU), Latin American states, the fledgling Russian-led Euro-Asian Union as well as BRICS and other such cross-regional partnerships.

Global economy

China in 2011 overtook Japan as the second largest economy in the world. According to some estimates – using purchasing power parity – China overtook the US as the largest global economy in 2014. It surpassed the US as Africa's largest trade partner in 2009. Some scenarios suggest that, in the next forty years, global economic ranking will have in the top 6 the following countries, in order of GDP size: China, US, India, Brazil, Russia and Japan. However, this will not necessarily translate into political influence. Current US military strength surpasses that of the next 10 powers combined.

The global economic crisis which started in 2008 has accelerated economic re-balancing, with anaemic growth in the EU and Japan slated to continue for a few years. This has gone along with new coupling and decoupling in terms of global economic relations, with growth correlation between China and Africa at its highest level. This, however, should not be exaggerated. China still depends, for its growth, on the markets of the North. Its efforts to reconfigure its economy to rely more on domestic consumption will take time to materialise.

The capitalist system has seen rapid development of productive forces: for e.g. information and communications technologies including the emergence of artificial intelligence (AI), as well as the application of technology of very small particles (nano-technology), bio-technology, genetics, space science and so on.

Large transnational corporations enjoy global dominance; and many operate as a unit across

many countries. In search of low costs and high returns, they locate production sites in areas with the cheapest labour and low taxation rates. As China modernises and improves workers' incomes, a number of manufacturers are relocating to countries such as Vietnam and Bangladesh; and some African countries have been identified for such off-shoring

The global economic crisis brought to the fore the dominance, adventurism and sheer power of finance capital. What some have referred to as the 'casino economy', with all manner of derivatives and tenuous links to actual production, not only brought the world economy to the brink of collapse. It has also generated greater activism by regulators to limit the impact of financial crises on governments and citizens.

Geopolitics

Although not immediately obvious, rivalries among the world's big powers continue. This is more patent in ongoing attempts to undermine the relations China is building with developing countries, the 'containment strategy' represented by the US' Asia Pivot, and geopolitical upheavals in Central and Eastern Europe. In many of these initiatives, the US presents an impression of unity with its European and other traditional allies. However, elements of narrow national self-interest underpin some of these initiatives, so the US can remain the dominant and uncontested global power.

One of the major manifestations of unipolarity in the recent period has been the assertion of unilateralism by the US and its allies, especially with regard to regime change and in the fight against terrorism. From drone attacks in Yemen and Pakistan, to military operations in Libya, Mali and Cote d'Ivoire and the interventions in the Middle East, the US and its allies have developed a narrative and concomitant conduct that seem to worsen rather than alleviate the tensions. There is global consensus that terrorism – the deliberate targeting of civilians in armed conflict – is inhumane, criminal and obnoxious. Yet a single-minded ham-fisted approach to this issue cannot bring lasting solutions, precisely because it ignores the root causes in various parts of the globe. Among these issues are: social marginalisation of youth and minority communities, political and religious dynamics within the Middle East, intolerance of various hues and the regional tensions arising from the failure to resolve the Palestinian issue.

More than at any other time in the past three decades, unbridled market capitalism has lost its shine. The global economic crisis has brought to the fore not only issues pertaining to the role of the state in regulating the financial sector. It has also exposed growing social inequality and alienation of large sections of society within most countries. Dismissed only a few years ago as irrelevant and in any case benefitting from the advances of neoliberal capitalism, “the 99%” are demanding their place in the sun. Indeed, the issue of distribution of national income – the fundamental question of political economy – now occupies an important place in mainstream discourse. Neoliberal ideology faces a crisis of confidence and credibility. This has brought to the fore the question of the very legitimacy of market capitalism as well as that of the state and the polity in these developed countries. Along with this, is the rise of the right-wing and growing militarism, phenomena that have always played out when capitalism is in crisis. The experience of Greece – where the convergence of the interests of finance capital, market fundamentalism and right-wing politics threatens to ride roughshod over democracy itself – is profoundly instructive.

In brief, capitalism remains the dominant socio-economic system on a global scale. In the era of globalisation, it has advanced technological progress, opened up vistas for human progress and created the basis for the alleviation of poverty on a grand scale. However, the rampant unregulated practices of the past 30 years, including appropriation of most of national income by a few, have undermined its legitimacy and the legitimacy of the states and polities that pursue such policies. While the leading players in the global system retain the capacity to use both hard and soft power to assert their dominance, new centres of power are emerging, and a new discourse has gained prominence challenging the prescripts of neoliberalism.

DYNAMICS ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT

Africa has been both beneficiary and, in some instances, victim of the changing global dynamics. But, to the extent that there have been advances and retreats, Africans themselves have been the primary agents. The Strategy and Tactics documents from the

past two National Conferences identified progress in most of the continent reflected in, among others: the attainment of peace and stability, the entrenchment of democratic systems of government, better economic management, higher rates of economic growth, improvement in quality of life and greater activism by intellectuals and other sections of civil society. These trends have largely persisted.

Africa Rising

Seven of the ten fastest growing economies in the world are in Africa. On rebasing its GDP after some twenty years Nigeria emerged as the largest economy on the continent. It is followed by South Africa and Kenya. Estimates of 2014 growth in sub-Saharan Africa are at 5.1%, second only to Asia. In the manner of fashionable acronyms, from BRICS and MINTs (Mexico, Indonesia, Nigeria and Turkey), today focus is shifting to the KINGs (Kenya, Ivory Coast, Nigeria and Ghana) as countries with much potential – though these groups do not of course belong at the same level of economic power.

Most of the narrative on Africa Rising has focused on the extractive industry. However, growth on the continent over the past decade has been roughly in this order: tourism, financial intermediation, transport and telecommunications, construction, utilities and resources. Whatever the details, these trends have continued, with minor dips as a result of the global economic crisis. Trade with the rest of the world has ballooned; inflation has dropped; foreign debt has declined; and labour productivity has improved. Unemployment has declined and the proportion of the working population with low income has decreased; rural poverty has been reduced; under-five mortality rates have declined and primary education enrolment has improved.

Projections are that Africa’s collective GDP which recently was more or less equal to that of Brazil would almost double by the middle of the 2020s. The same is expected of consumer spending. The infrastructure deficit that the continent suffers from is now a boon. With about 60% of the world’s total amount of uncultivated arable land, there is huge potential for African agriculture in the coming decades. The growth in the number of employed people and the middle strata will drive a major consumer revolution.

Continental challenges

As all this happens, a few trends are starting to manifest, which require further reflection in terms of growth and development paths. Firstly, the offshoring referred to above is reaching the African continent. As China climbs up the manufacturing sophistication ladder, some transnational corporations and even Chinese companies are considering African countries for relocation – in search of cheap labour. Is this a necessary evil that the continent should welcome, as a phase in its development journey? Secondly, with access to new technologies such as cell-phones, Africa is evincing in actual practice the leapfrogging of stages of development. Thirdly, poor land policies and traditional tenure systems can conspire to encourage land grabs by foreigners, impoverishing rural communities.

Challenges in Africa still include such matters as macroeconomic management, reliance on a handful of sectors for exports, and patronage linked to familial and party-political links. Further, while most African countries have adopted formal democratic forms of government, this has not necessarily translated into requisite accommodation of difference. Related to this is the emergence of extremism attached to religious allegiances which requires the kind of deft management that goes beyond Western narratives. Some global powers have taken advantage of these weaknesses to intervene in various ways, including through military invasion. Indeed, a careful analysis of the genesis of heightened lawlessness and conflict in the Sahel and neighbouring areas, for instance, does point to the ill-advised NATO intervention in Libya. These weaknesses also account for high levels of migration from areas of conflict and economic under-development, and the desperation that attaches to this phenomenon.

African economic integration has not been pursued with the enthusiasm it deserves. Discourse at the continental level on long-term strategies as reflected in Agenda 2063, does give a sense of a vision. However, there are weaknesses in terms of implementing continental programmes such as NEPAD; and the continent does not seem to have collective strategies in dealing with various regions of the globe. In addition, greater effort is needed to forge progressive alliances across the continent, among forces committed to profound social transformation. At the core of Africa's weaknesses is the strategic and organisational capacity

of the state and societal leaders in general.

How do these opportunities and challenges relate to South Africa's own growth and development? Is Africa Rising a threat or an opportunity? Barring countries largely in conflict, South Africa is the economic growth laggard on the continent. This speaks directly to the question whether the country is sufficiently and strategically networked on the continent, or whether it has persisted with an outlook of the colonial era as an 'outpost' of the North in Africa. In reality, as in South East Asia, economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa presents major opportunities for mutually-beneficial osmosis that South Africa should seize with both hands. This needs to go beyond investment in retail, banking and telecommunications. Sub-Saharan Africa can develop shared manufacturing capacity that takes advantage of the massive infrastructure programmes which will continue for decades to come. South Africa can also exploit the natural advantage of its geography – situated as it is in the south between East and West.

In brief, the Africa Rising narrative is being confirmed by concrete economic growth and development trends. The infrastructure and other deficits on the continent and the massive endowments it possesses are an opportunity which should lay the basis for rapid growth and development. Combined with the building of capable states, forging of inclusive polities, improved economic governance and strategic international relations, there is huge potential for Africa to emerge as the new epicentre of global economic growth. South Africa stands to benefit massively from these developments, as long as it adapts its economic and diplomatic outlook to actually implement its long-held Africa strategy: that is, to forge alliances with regional anchors and act as a partner in pursuing Africa's multifaceted interests.

THE DOMESTIC BALANCE: MACROSOCIAL TRENDS

As with the global balance of forces, the assertions in the Strategy and Tactics document about the domestic balance remain relevant. To recapitulate: From the period of capturing the beach-head in the mid-1990s, the balance of forces has shifted in favour of the forces

of social transformation. This is reflected, to varying degrees, in the character of the polity and the state, economic transformation and macrosocial dynamics. The same can be said, variously, about the changing nature of social demographics, electoral trends and the state of progressive organisations. Those assertions are, however, being pummelled by the winds of time, with new positive and negative dynamics.

Legitimacy of the polity and the state

The South African polity is essentially a stable one, with the Constitution accepted across the board as the broad framework for the regulation of socio-political relations. Its articulation of different generations of rights lends it a progressive character for the pursuit of speedier transformation.

Concerns have been expressed about whether interpretation of its provisions can result in undermining the electoral mandate. Such a possibility does exist in a constitutional (as distinct from parliamentary) democracy. However, from socio-economic rights and individual freedoms to matters of administrative justice, the leaning in rulings by the highest court has been towards the transformative spirit of the Constitution. This is not to confer ultimate wisdom on those required to adjudicate these matters. It is rather to emphasise that contained within the system are mechanisms for self-correction through the judicial hierarchy and in the fine balance of power including appointment processes. This comes out in even bolder relief if there is a deconstruction (in conceptualisation) of the mistaken conflation of related but not identical notions: the people, the state, the government and the party.

A worrying trend in the recent period has been the tendency for leaders of various sectors of society, especially in the political arena, to seek judicial resolution for matters that can be managed through other channels. These range from quarrels with a puppet and the singing of songs, to legal challenges against constitutionally-valid administrative actions by the Executive. On the one hand, such 'lawfare' can suck up the judiciary into the maelstrom of day-to-day societal management and thus unnecessarily splutter it with mud. On the other, repeated attempts of this kind, into which huge resources thrown, do suggest that some privileged sectors of society seek to undermine the popular electoral mandate.

It should also be noted that, from time to time, tensions have boiled over between the judiciary and the other arms of the state, and between the executive and the legislatures. Such tensions can be healthy – and are perhaps normal – in a constitutional democracy. However, to the extent that these tensions may reflect a slow pace of transformation in the judiciary, poor accountability by the executive, or disdain for electoral outcomes by opposition parties and a poor sense of inclusivity by the majority parties in the legislatures, these need to be addressed in a systematic manner, with the fundamental aim of strengthening the democratic system.

A state that in 1994 represented the interests of a minority has been transformed, in terms of both form and content. This democratic state draws its legitimacy from the basic law of the land. But such legitimacy is also won in the crucible of actual practice: by the extent to which it is effective in devising and implementing policies of change; by the conduct of the political leadership; and by the professionalism and responsiveness of the bureaucracy. In other words, legitimacy has to be continually earned.

Many issues have been identified in previous documents on participatory democracy (people-driven and people-centred approach to change) as well as transformation and capacity of the state – and our weaknesses in this regard.

One of the overriding trends in the recent period has been the response of South African society to the National Development Plan. Both the process and the content of the Plan were embraced by most parties represented in Parliament. The same applies to organisations representing various sectors of society – business as well as sections of workers' and civil society organisations. There is of course contestation around proposals on how to attain Vision 2030. But, except for targets on income inequality and some economic proposals, the objectives of the NDP are embraced by all. These include: elimination of income poverty; reduction of the unemployment rate to 6% and below; access to quality social services; a capable developmental state; and an active citizenry.

However, many developments which suggest that the legitimacy of the polity and the state may be fraying bear scrutiny:

- Popular protest has been part of South Africa's body politic for many years in the post-1994 period.

The levels of poverty and inequality will certainly inflame passions, even as progress is made to deal with the challenges. This is the **flammable social tinder** that the democratic state has to manage, through practical action and by continuously infusing the hope that tomorrow will be better than today. What seems to be new, with major implications for state legitimacy, is how deeply-entrenched corrupt practices (driven by a few state employees, public representatives and the private sector) and arrogance by some in leadership positions have become, directly affecting social delivery. This finds expression especially, but not exclusively, at local government level. The consequence is that the state security apparatus becomes the first and last line of defence, and is itself then targeted in popular upheavals.

■ **Civil society** in South Africa has historically been among the most vocal and active. From community to sector-based organisations, these have added to the legitimacy of the system as they provide a platform for pursuing specific aspirations. A few such organisations have sought to challenge programmes of transformation. But the overwhelming majority (in terms of mass constituencies) have been supportive, and they form part of formal forums such as NEDLAC. However, in the recent period, major trends have included: a weakening of worker organisations (through poor organisation, divisions and even violent competition); campaigns bringing together a wide variety of interests to challenge government policy; organisational meltdown in civic structures; and a weakening of progressive engagement among women as well as youth and students.

■ Even with regard to concrete instances of **corruption** at any level of government, the sense that there is clear intent and serious action to deal with these matters does give confidence to society about the ethical foundations of the state. However, when there is repetitive poor management of allegations of corruption and patronage within high leadership echelons, the legitimacy of the state and the polity as such are undermined. Indeed, over the past few years a general impression of systemic corruption has been created, ranging from unsavoury developments in State-owned Enterprises, strange machinations within security and tax authorities, to unconvincing responses to admonitions for accountability by relevant Constitutional bodies.

■ Related to the above is the very question of the **capacity of state institutions** to meet their mandates. When the general impression referred to above can be directly linked to poor capacity within state agencies which is also a consequence of high turnover in the management echelons; poor decision-making that suggests patronage and cover-ups; and appointments that defy any rational logic, the state as a whole starts progressively to lose the confidence of the people. The hope that prevents South Africa's social tinder from catching fire can thus dissipate.

■ It is precisely this state of affairs that emboldens forces opposed to transformation to seek to **challenge the very legality and legitimacy of the system and to disrupt its stability**. They find courage also from the fact that self-declared 'revolutionary' elements are adventurously seeking to set the social tinder alight and to assail the legality and legitimacy of the system. A cocktail of forces of the right and the self-declared 'left' thus find alignment of tactical objectives.

Socio-economic trends

Assessments at the 2012 National Conference as well as reviews conducted on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of democracy do outline the progress and challenges facing the forces of change. These conclusions are relevant to the balance of forces in the sense that they relate to popular legitimacy of the system, the sense of hope or otherwise in society, the array of social forces, prospects for joint action and the possibility to use capacities of the state to speed up transformation.

In particular, the 2012 Preface to the Strategy and Tactics document identifies, among others, the following advances:

- *Programmes aimed at meeting basic needs such as housing, roads, and access to electricity, sanitation and water; ...*
- *Programmes to empower women and to transform gender relations;*
- *Improving access to health care and dealing with the burden of disease;*
- *The introduction of an extensive system of social grants, free basic services and other social policies to eliminate poverty and provide sustainable livelihoods;*

- *Measures to develop our human resources through education and skills;*
- *A programme of economic transformation that saw growth and some job creation after decades of stagnation...*

Further observations in this regard pertain to the structure of the South African economy, which is trapped in the path dependency of the mineral-energy complex. As a small open economy with a colonial background, it reflects subordinate relations with countries of the North. Yet, due in part to this history, it has developed major corporations some of which have assumed transnational status. The huge concentration and centralisation of capital, with monopolies dominating most sectors of the economy, and some of them engaging in uncompetitive practices, is a major challenge. Small, medium and micro-enterprises do not enjoy the same broad proportion of GDP as in other developing countries.

Over the years, manufacturing has in a number of sectors been decimated, and it has declined as a proportion of GDP. However, deliberate policies reflected in the industrial policy framework which also links up with the potential of the infrastructure programme, mining and niche technologies, do hold the promise of changing the structure of the economy and taking the growth trajectory onto a higher level.

As elaborated in the documents of the National Planning Commission, the critical challenge is that the economy creates too few jobs and economic opportunities. The skills development programmes have been proceeding at too slow a pace. All this impacts most negatively on youth, women and rural communities.

The distribution of wealth and income is largely still characterised by the racial and gender demographics of the colonial past. To cite a few figures for illustration: According to a 2011 BUSA study of JSE-listed companies, while white males make up only 6.7% of the economically active population, they account for 52% of Board positions, and 76% of both CEOs and CFOs. According to StatsSA, in the fourth quarter of 2013 unemployment among Africans was at 27% compared to 7.2% among whites. Further, in 2011, 54% of Africans lived below the 'upper bound poverty line' (R620 per person per month); while this was 27.6% among the Coloureds, 3.4% among Indians and 0.8%

among whites.

It is the combination of all these factors which have impelled the ANC to call for radical economic transformation, as a critical pillar of the second phase of transition to a national democratic society. As intimated above, such transformation has to address, among others, issues of high rates of economic growth, changing structure of the economy in terms of sector configurations, equitable distribution of wealth and income, de-racialisation of ownership of capital, better skills and training programmes, efficient provision of social and economic infrastructure, and diversification of our international economic partnerships.

Among the major issues that have been thrown up by developments in the past few years and ongoing discourse in society are the following:

- Movement to a new growth and development path will not come of its own accord. It requires active leadership by a **capable developmental state**; and signs of this have shown themselves in the actions of various state agencies. However, given the challenges identified above with regard to state capacity and legitimacy, the question does indeed arise whether the leverage that the state has to drive economic change, including through State-owned Enterprises and Development Finance Institutions, is not being squandered!
- The National Development Plan calls for an active citizenry; but most critically that the various social partners should work together to realise Vision 2030. What is required in this regard is a **social compact of common and varied programmes** to realise the objectives of the NDP. This should include, among others, higher rates of productive investments and job-creation as well as provision of efficient services by the state. For the state to provide leadership in this regard, it has to enjoy popular legitimacy.
- Social compacting should be founded on an appreciation that there is serious intent on the part of the state and the business community to deal with the **root causes of poverty and inequality**. Radical economic transformation is meant to address, among others, matters of the structure of the economy, skills development, labour-absorption and demographic balances in ownership and management. It should also pay keen attention to spatial economic and settlement

patterns which weigh heavily on the poor, high mark-up prices in the production market, a national incomes policy and minimum wage(s), and arrangements through which workers share in the ownership and returns of companies in which they work.

- Given the paucity of resources available in the fiscus – in this current period of **low economic growth and a huge budget deficit** – it will be necessary to ensure proper prioritisation and sequencing of state interventions. It is also necessary to find creative ways of drawing in the private sector in realising some of the objectives such as urgent infrastructure projects.
- As has been emphasised repeatedly, most of the challenges with regard to the **intensification of the programme to provide basic social services** do not derive from the availability of resources. They are largely dependent on the capacity and effectiveness of the state, and the ability to combine quantitative access with quality of these services.

Social demographics

Social demographics or class composition of society is a fundamental factor in weighing the balance of forces. Historically, ANC strategy and tactics were keenly influenced by the understanding of the intersection between race and class. In this regard, the central place and role of *'Africans in particular and Blacks in general'* was emphasised, given the position they occupied in colonial society. It was also appreciated that South Africa's level of industrialisation and a numerically large working class would impact on the social content of the national democratic revolution and methods of struggle. All the classes and strata in the Black community were designated as motive forces of the revolution: they objectively stood to benefit from change and were most open to mobilisation to attain it.

In terms of racial demographics, as reflected in Census 2011, the overall balances have remained largely the same since democracy, with a slight increase in the proportion of Africans (77.4% in 1996 to 79.2% in 2011), a stable proportion for the Coloured (9%) and Indian (2.5%) communities and a reduction in the proportion of whites (11% to 9.5%).

The critical shift has been in the class composition of

society. For purposes of this discussion [ref. JV, Econ3X3, July 2013], a category of 'middle class' (middle strata) is used to denote those with per person after-tax monthly income of between R1.4-thousand and R10-thousand in 2008 prices, translating into total household income of R5.6-thousand to R40-thousand per month for a family of four. Below this would be the 'lower class', and above, the 'upper class'. This may be too generous especially at the lower end of 'middle class' as many of these are in fact workers in formal employment; but it does help to illustrate broader trends. It should be noted that the majority of workers earn below R3.5-thousand per month (more often as the only income for the whole family).

And so, between 1993 and 2008, the proportion of the 'middle class' in the population grew from 19% to 21% and the number of Africans in this category more than doubled to over 5-million. The upper class more than doubled to 2.8%, with the number of Africans increasing by more than ten times to 257-thousand, and that of whites doubling to over 880-thousand. The lower classes declined from 79.6% to 75.9% of the population, numbering over 32.7-million.

What these and other data indicate is that there has been a steady improvement in people's incomes. Within the African community, the proportion of middle classes increased from 7% to 14%. Comparatively this is quite small, but it does reflect a significant shift in African social demographics. At the same time, the proportion of those with at least Grade 10 education within the African community increased from 15.6% in 1996 to 35% in 2011.

It is in the functional distribution of national income that an even more important macrosocial issue arises. While the middle class increased in number, its aggregate share of national income actually declined (and this also applies to the combined share for lower and middle classes, from 83% to 68%). The share of the upper classes increased from 17% to 32%. The actual growth in annual income has been highest at the top end, followed by the lowest end – with the latter reflecting social grants and low-paying jobs.

From all accounts, these trends have continued into the current decade.

With regard to the composition of the working class, most jobs in the past 20 years have been created in the public sector and services (including low-paying

ones such as security guards), with the proportion of industrial workers declining. At the same time, high unemployment rates among young people, combined with urbanisation, have created a large swathe of marginalised and alienated youth – with major implications for social stability.

All other social indicators such as consumption patterns and access to formal housing, potable water, electricity and quality education do reflect the racial demographics referred to above.

The implications of all these macrosocial trends in relation to political consciousness will be dealt with using various proxies below. What deserves noting at this stage is that South African society (including particularly the Black and Coloured communities) is more educated, with a higher proportion located in the middle strata and a smaller proportion made up of industrial workers. This does bear relevance to: the persistence of the national (racial) grievance which inspired the anti-colonial struggle; character of the working class and assertions about this class being the core motive force; the benefits that the various social forces derive from transformation; the tenuous position of the emergent middle strata; and the outlook and value systems that drive each of these social forces.

Critically, these dynamics are more pronounced in specific provinces and municipalities of the country, with Gauteng and the Western Cape and the metros in all parts of the country reflecting faster changes as a consequence of concentration of resources and migration.

Identity and value systems

Various factors in people's consciousness affect their sense of identity. The fact that these identities, such as race, language, nationality, religion and sporting preferences co-exist is natural and should be welcomed. The issue that is relevant to the assessment of the balance of forces is the choice of the primary self-descriptor and whether any identity is seen to preclude others.

It is a measure of the progress that has been made in trying to forge a common nationhood that, according to Markinor data, around half of South Africans describe themselves first and foremost as 'South African' – though this has not changed much

since about a decade ago. About one third refer to themselves as 'African' to which many meanings can be attached. Language and race rank third and fourth as a primary self-descriptor. Other research (SA Barometer Survey, IJR) reflects slightly different results in terms of percentages and ranking; but the overall trend is confirmed. Encouraging is the fact that the sense of being South African is strongest among the young. It is also a matter of great interest that class identity, according to some research (FutureFact People Scape Survey, 2004), has been on the rise: in 2000, 14% described themselves primarily by class or occupation, compared to 37% in 2004.

This however does not mean that opportunistic exploitation of ethnicity within the ANC and in broader society has been eradicated. At the same time, if poorly managed, the laudable efforts to engender pride in language, history and culture can have the unintended consequence of generating negative ethnic consciousness.

Of concern in relation to these issues is that, the number of those who believed that race relations were improving had increased from less than half into the 60's in the mid-2000s; but had declined to about a third in 2012. The same applies to confidence "in a happy future" for all races. According to research quoted above (IJR), the desire for a united South Africa has also declined. In relation to spatial and related dynamics, it further observes: "while levels of interracial contact and socialisation have improved over the past 11 years, the poor remain largely excluded from this positive social integration. The percentage of South Africans who report often or always talking to someone from another race in a social setting increased from 10.4% in 2003 to 23.5% in 2013. However, when we disaggregate this figure by class, we see that South Africans in the higher living standards measure (LSM) groups are much more likely to socialise across race than the middle LSMs, and the lowest LSMs are the least likely to socialise across race."

Some such surveys do have major methodological challenges; and at times they are influenced by concrete incidents during the periods of field work. But they do serve as a useful guide to major trends.

As argued in the 2007 Strategy and Tactics document, South African society is deficient in relation to value systems. Predominant are values which encourage "greed, crass materialism and conspicuous consumption."

These are tendencies that go beyond the necessary spirit of entrepreneurship, ambition, daring, competition and material reward that are inherent to a market-based system and perhaps to human development in general. Related to this is the fact that the means of ideological discourse are dominated by forces with an outlook that is either ambivalent or hostile to principles of human solidarity. Among the consequences of all this are vacuous media discourse, corruption in state institutions and corporate greed reflected in outrageous executive packages, short-termism in the conduct of business and private sector corruption."

The state has, as matter of policy, sought to implement redistributive policies and to promote a spirit of human solidarity. However, the lived experienced of the overwhelming majority in society, wherever each individual may be located, is one of a nation driven by cut-throat competition, a rat race to climb the social ladder, and the fear of falling among those higher up who thus use legal and not-so-legal efforts desperately to cling to what they have. Apprehension about falling down the social ladder afflicts especially the new, mostly-first-generation middle and upper strata (essentially from the Black community), who have nary an inheritance to fall back on.

The national democratic society is meant to be based on human solidarity and the spirit of caring for the most vulnerable in society. These ideals are writ large in the country's Constitution. So logical are they that only a negligible section of society would dare openly to challenge them. Indeed, the acceptance of the need for a long-term vision and a national plan to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality is a reflection of the changing balance in societal discourse.

However, the formal educational system and civic education hardly encourage the inculcation of the ideals contained in the Constitution and the National Development Plan. Basic education curricula are somewhat equivocal on these values. Even in the universities, the teaching of history, philosophy, economics and sociology, to quote a few instances, barely reflects the totality of the generations of rights enshrined in the Constitution, particularly socio-economic rights. This is besides the tendency towards overspecialisation, and the diminution of humanities and social sciences which should serve as a foundation of all education.

Indeed, the ructions in the universities around

issues of curricula content, institutional culture and symbols are a welcome reflection of young people taking the initiative to address a patent gap in the unfolding process of social change. On the other hand, such contestation also brings out in bold relief the weaknesses of the movement in leading ideological debates and in facilitating a 'cultural renaissance' as part of the NDR.

The totality of these circumstances and the single-minded pursuit of profit affect the platforms of public discourse in a profound manner. Juniorisation of newsrooms, homogenisation of content, anti-government oppositionism, a lackey mind-set towards powerful forces in society (economic and political), and a herd mentality in dealing with news events – all these undermine the depth and transformative relevance of media content. This also plays itself out in social media. Combined with this is the tendency across all platforms of intellectual and public discourse to repeat 'Western truths' without much critique.

The upshot of this is that the objective reality of life under rampant capitalist relations conspires with a vacuum in intellectual, policy and public discourse to hollow out society's professed commitment to the humane values enshrined in the Constitution.

In brief, the polity and the state do enjoy popular legitimacy; and there is broad consensus (at least in public statements) on the need for decisive action to deal with poverty and inequality, shown in support for the NDP. But, apart from developments that have the effect of undermining our efforts to build a developmental state, the very legitimacy of the state seems to be fraying. In part, the persistence of poverty and inequality account for this. But it is more a reflection of a weakening sense of hope and optimism. As a consequence, in addition to stirrings of discontent among the motive forces of change, forces opposed to transformation – including rabid racists who had gone into hibernation – are emboldened to use unsavoury developments in government structures as an excuse to question the capability of Black people to govern and to challenge the very legitimacy of the state. In other words, poor performance by, and perceptions of systemic corruption within, the state are partly responsible for this situation.

A strange alliance between forces the Right and the Far Left starts to take root. The fact that these challenges congeal in a period of low economic growth, depleted fiscal space and an electricity-supply crunch aggravates the sense of crisis in society. The change in social demographics, with a growing numbers of Black 'middle and upper classes', has not fundamentally changed the skewed racial distribution of wealth and income. It has also brought to the fore social disparities within the Black community itself. At the same time, the value system based on selfishness and crass materialism is getting further entrenched in society. Along with this are weaknesses in the substance of intellectual and public discourse. This places the national democratic revolution in danger!

LEADERSHIP AND THE PARTY POLITICAL TERRAIN

The analysis above reflects the global and domestic environment within which the ANC operates. This environment has changed over the years, as a consequence in part of the ANC's own actions. The broad direction of the change in the balance of forces, as argued above, has been positive. However, major challenges have come to the fore in the recent period.

Background and notion of vanguard

The basic approach in understanding the issue of leadership in the NDR is captured in the Strategy and Tactics document: *to carry out the revolution in the current phase requires a progressive national liberation movement which:*

- *understands the interconnection between political and socio-economic challenges in our society;*
- *leads the motive forces of the NDR in pursuing their common aspirations and ensuring that their sectoral interests are linked to the strategic objective;*
- *masters the terrain of electoral contest, utilises political power to advance the objectives of the NDR and wields instruments of state in line with these ideals as reflected in the National Constitution;*
- *organises and mobilises the motive forces and*

builds broader partnerships to drive the process of reconstruction and development, nation-building and reconciliation; and

- *conducts itself, both in its internal practices and in relation to society at large, in line with the ideals represented by the NDR and acts as a microcosm of the future."*

The ANC has historically played this role, and it seeks to do so well into the future. In this context, it is legitimate on its part to claim the massive progress that has been made since the advent of democracy. The corollary of this, however, is that it should also accept responsibility for the weaknesses. The negative trends outlined above are therefore an injunction for the ANC to mend its ways. This is not a new discovery; but a restatement of the resolutions that have been taken at recent National Conferences, particularly in 2012 on organisational renewal. Such renewal, the 2012 Conference resolved, should *"principally be about building the ANC's resilience, enhancing its transformative capacity and its ability to adapt to changing situations so that it can continue to serve and lead the people"*.

In the context of electoral democracy, is it arrogant and anti-democratic on the part of the ANC to claim a vanguard role in society? The ANC has always acknowledged that a vanguard role is not decreed; but is earned through an appropriate strategic posture and actual practical work. Indeed, the most obvious manifestation of such earned status is performance in the elections – an issue to which we shall later return.

How then should we read the balance of forces in the current period, in relation to these subjective factors?

Societal alignments and party politics

The fact that the overwhelming majority in society pay allegiance to the Constitution, and most of them broadly embrace the National Development Plan should be welcomed. Beyond this, at least in public discourse, most of the political parties have even sought to appropriate symbols of struggle and transformation, including the Freedom Charter, as their own. The fact that the substance and form of liberation politics has infused discourse among all the major political players should be celebrated as a victory of the ANC.

Part of this, of course, is pretence and make-believe. Some of these forces realise that they can make little headway in the South African political terrain without

at least mouthing progressive slogans. It may as well be that profound self-interest is driving the most privileged in society to seek approaches that will ensure social stability and protect their wealth. Where there are inconsistencies and deception, these should be challenged. But, such contestation should reflect a mature vanguard movement, capable rationally and logically of dealing with substantive issues and lifting the refinement of public discourse. In other words, the ANC needs consciously to avoid the temptation to compete with the Far Left in the stakes of pretentious 'revolutionary' rhetoric, and systematically implement programmes that in actual practice bring about a better life for all – as reflected in its Conference resolutions, the Election Manifesto and the National Development Plan.

It is such gravitas that will further entrench the status of the ANC as a leader of social transformation. Critically, it will create fertile ground for it to build and lead a broad front of forces that seek shared prosperity.

With regard to the elections, both voter registration and turnout remain on the high end, by global standards. It is concerning though that these have been on the decline. Further, the outcome of the elections was accepted by all the participants.

The electoral trends reflect an ANC that, at above 60%, enjoys the support of the overwhelming majority of voters. However, from the last two national elections, the ANC has shed support, coming down from 69.7% in 2004, to 65.9% in 2009 and 62.2% in 2014. In the same period, the DA has been gaining support, while breakaways from the ANC (COPE and now EFF) have received significant support.

In 2014, ANC support remained stable or improved in most rural areas and new formal settlements. Turnout in many ANC-supporting areas (especially some rural areas and old formal settlements) was relatively low. These are some of the areas where the DA seems to have made some gains – though relatively small. The EFF secured its largest support in informal settlements, though it also performed well in some black formal settlements. Overall, the 2014 election outcome suggests the following macro-trends:

- **Race** largely still accounts for electoral choices, with the overwhelming majority of African people voting for the ANC and other parties that have a 'liberation struggle background'. The gains of the DA among African voters suggest, among others,

that the UDM and COPE may have served as parking stations for movement away from the ANC. But 'white-based' parties, combined, started at 24% in 1994, declined and are back at 23% in 2014. While there is much variety in terms of African voters' choices, whites have remained solidly behind the DA. More and more voters from the Coloured and Indian communities have been drifting to the DA.

- There is little suggestion of **ethnic and regional allegiances**, with the three largest parties having a national footprint. Significantly, KwaZulu-Natal, which historically reflected significant support for ethnic-based parties, has now attained national averages in terms of ANC support among Africans.
- The most dramatic shifts have happened in the **metros**. Except for a marginal gain in Buffalo City, the ANC's support declined in these areas by an aggregate of 10.3 percentage points, with the EFF gaining 11.4% and the DA increasing its support by 6.5 percentage points. In these areas, the ANC seems to have shed support among the lower and upper middle strata among Africans as well as the poorest of the poor.
- The aggregation of political choices in accordance with self-declared **socio-economic policies** does present an interesting picture. This is that Left of Centre parties (ANC, UDM and COPE) had 74% of the vote in 2009, which came down to 64% in 2014. Right of Centre parties (DA, IFP, NFP, UCDP, ACDP and FF+) attained 24% in 2009 and 28% in 2014. The aggregate self-declared Far Left (PAC, APC, AZAPO and EFF) had not performed much beyond 1% since 1994: in fact it attained 0.4% in 2009; but went up to 6.6% in 2014.

What is the relevance of these trends and aggregates in relation to the balance of forces? Besides matters already canvassed above, the first major issue is that the sentiment for social transformation remains strong; but some of the motive forces no longer consider the ANC as the representative of such change. Secondly, there is patent impatience with the pace of change – and this expresses itself among the poorest in society as well as some African professionals and youth. Thirdly, while white multi-class support for the DA has remained solid, a section of the Black middle strata (Coloureds, Indians and a small segment of Africans) now view this party as being representative of their interests. Fourthly, the choices also reflect the rising primacy of current issues such as manifestations of

corruption and Gauteng's eTolls in electoral decisions – introducing an interesting (though still moderate) fickleness to South African politics, especially among the middle strata.

Post-election political dynamics

Having sensed this tentative shift with regard to popular confidence in the ANC and the government, the opposition parties – particularly the EFF and the DA – believe they have drawn blood and can inflict further blows to undermine the ANC. The disruptions in parliament and some legislatures, campaigns to occupy land and others that border on illegality, are all meant to, or do in fact have the effect of, undermining the legitimacy of the ANC, of the government and ultimately of the state as such.

The three notions (ANC, government and state) should not be conflated, for they belong to different levels of abstraction, authority and legal status.

The ANC is a 'political party' which led the struggle against apartheid colonialism and is at the forefront of programmes of social transformation. Its status in this regard is dependent on whether it musters the strategic and organisational capacity to continue playing this role. The government is a political entity formed by the victorious party, mandated to carry out its programmes. It is obliged to serve all South Africans as decreed in the Constitution and relevant legislation; but it derives its mandate and legitimacy from electoral outcomes. The state is a non-partisan instrument of the people as a whole which derives its mandate from the Constitution. Its actions are informed in part by the mandate accorded the ruling party (and thus the social forces committed to fundamental transformation). But it has cohesive and coercive tasks that transcend the party political realm, as the custodian of South African sovereignty and legality.

In some post-colonial societies, progression in a de-legitimisation campaign has hopped from one to the other – from the leader, to the 'liberation party', to the government and then to the state – ultimately resulting in the overthrow of government and forceful seizure of power or at least increasing reliance by the state on security agencies and repression. This has often encompassed a convergence of interests between forces of the Far Left and the Right, and conversion or at least paralysis of the very motive forces of the revolution. A coup d'état is not possible

in South Africa. Some of the disruptive and near-illegal campaigns may have the effect of initiating mass uprisings or other actions that may goad the state into precipitate action; as has happened with the unseemly disruptions in Parliament and, on the extreme, the Marikana tragedy. Whether this would be by default or by design – on the part of the adventurers – is a matter of conjecture.

The obvious intention of these forces is to improve their electoral prospects and, by democratic means, to displace the ANC as government across the spheres. This is rough, clumsy and distasteful; but it is legal political engagement all the same. It behoves the ANC to develop tactics that obviate the impact and attractiveness of these trickeries.

This assertion is based on the assumption that, across the chain of de-legitimisation referred to above, the ANC can honestly claim to represent the letter and spirit of the Constitution, to reflect the aspirations of all the motive forces of fundamental change, and to have remained true to its revolutionary mandate. For, the question cannot be postponed whether there are things that the ANC is doing which create fertile ground for, and in fact ironically legitimise, incipient revolt against it and the government it leads! Is it implementing the resolutions taken at the 53rd National Conference to correct its weaknesses and renew itself; or when it finds itself in a hole, does it in fact dig deeper?

As agreed at the 2012 National Conference, the current major focus of the ANC should be to play a leading role in the mobilisation of society to implement the National Development Plan. In this regard, its credibility and that of the government it leads are fundamental. Inversely, if both are not held in high esteem by society, it will be well-nigh impossible to undertake the strategic task of forging a social compact.

In brief, both in terms of its formal policy positions, its organisational network in society and the level of popular confidence reflected in elections, the ANC currently remains the only primary force capable of driving the project of social transformation. However, this is dissipating. The ANC's leadership status and role are under threat; and other political forces seek to exploit its weaknesses to dislodge it. Especially with regard to such issues as state

capacity and effectiveness, ethical conduct, dignity and gravitas, the ANC is losing the moral high-ground. It also faces the danger, in the context of current provocations, of being goaded into precipitate action. All this threatens to undermine the cause of social transformation. At the same time, the ANC needs consciously to avoid the temptation to 'out-left' the Far Left in 'revolutionary' rhetoric, and focus on implementing programmes that in actual practice improve people's lives.

SOME ORGANISATIONAL CHALLENGES

For the ANC to "*continue to serve and lead the people*," it should have organisational capacity and a corps of cadres who are able to give leadership to society at large – to ensure the hegemony of ideas of social change. Both these elements are fundamental to social transformation – and they are a crucial subjective element of the balance of forces. As stated above, the national democratic society does not fall on the laps of revolutionaries at the point of transfer of political power. It has to be consciously constructed. Without a corps of cadres capable of transcending the weaknesses of the present, there can be no revolutionary organisation. Without revolutionary organisation, there can be no revolution.

The 2012 resolution on organisational renewal outlines the tasks of the current period in terms of, among others, cadre policy, safeguarding the movement's core values, improving organisational design and strengthening of the Alliance. In elaborating these tasks, the Conference called for a combination of numerical growth and improvement in academic, ideological and ethical qualities of members. It resolved that steps needed to be taken to protect the image of the organisation by acting against "*public officials, leaders and members of the ANC who face damaging allegations of improper conduct*." It condemned factionalism and argued for firm and consistent action to enforce discipline. The organisational structure of the movement, Conference resolved, should be informed by its Strategy and Tactics.

Many programmes and activities have unfolded since the 2012 National Conference to implement

these decisions. These include: efforts at deepening democracy and political education in the branches and other structures; attempts at improving the functioning of Headquarters; mass recruitment; and an effective 2014 election campaign.

However, there are indications that some of the weaknesses identified in the resolutions of the Conference are not being corrected. Instead, they continue to fester and thus subtract from the capacity of the ANC to lead society. A few of these do illustrate the magnitude of the challenge:

- **Factionalism and 'money politics'** were identified as some of the critical weaknesses sapping the very revolutionary core of the organisation. While some detailed issues may have been attended to, there hasn't been a systematic campaign to root this out. Indeed, it is these and other weaknesses that have resulted in disruptions of some ANC meetings, worsened the ructions in the Leagues and presented the spectre of violent conflict among tripartite alliance partners. Further, many of the acts of corruption in government derive from party dynamics; and similar challenges afflict allied organisations in various centres of power.
- National Conference was resolute that the ANC could "*no longer allow prolonged processes that damage its integrity*"; and therefore needed firmly to deal with "*public officials, leaders and members ... who face damaging allegations of improper conduct*". Processes to set up Integrity Committees have largely been undertaken and some work has started in this regard. However, there has been a retreat from the letter and spirit of the Conference resolution, given the manner in which the matter is formulated in the Election Manifesto, where the onus is shifted back to decisions by courts of law.
- Unremitting efforts have been put into **preventing a split within, and thus the fundamental weakening of, the progressive trade union movement**, represented by COSATU. However, can we genuinely claim that all leaders of the ANC are committed to this objective and are promoting it wherever they may be located? Can we assert with confidence that we have done a thorough study of this situation and developed strategies and tactics to stem this unseemly '*fight among the powerless for power over one another*'? To speculate: how would a team made up of Mandela, Sisulu, Mabhida and Slovo have handled this challenge?

- Both in relation to dynamics within COSATU and beyond this, there is an urgent need to interrogate the rise of a **self-declared “leftism” that is inimical to social transformation**; and more comprehensively to reflect on the tactics that the ANC needs to adopt to combat it – patiently and maturely in a manner that strengthens the forces of change. This will require a keen understanding of both the objective conditions that give rise to this phenomenon, as well as the subjective factors (including the posture of the Tripartite Alliance as a whole and the conduct of the leadership) that encourage it. Simply put, the central question is: why now, when there have been major differences in the past on fundamental issues!
- Beyond the subjective efforts required to address this challenge is the very question of how the progressive labour movement has found itself in such a rut! Briefly, this is a reflection of a variety of issues, including: the **social distance between the union leadership and the mass of the workers; the business unionism that derives from poor management of union investment resources and co-option of some leaders by capital; blatant thievery that has played out in some unions; and the importation into the union body politic of the factionalism prevalent in the ANC and the SACP.** Related to this are the changing demographics of the working class. In other words, if not consciously prevented, weaknesses in each of the Alliance partners do flow into the other in the manner of multi-directional osmosis.

Organisational renewal of the ANC, the leader of the progressive alliance, is central to addressing all these challenges. This requires more serious and practical intent to implement “the urgent and central tasks of renewal” identified at the 2012 National Conference. To quote from the Preface to the Strategy and Tactics document, these tasks are:

- *Deepening our analysis of the present political, economic and social conjuncture and the shifts that have happened since 1994;*
- *Development and systematic implementation of cadre and leadership policy;*
- *Renewal of the ANC’s core values and safeguarding its reputation;*
- *Re-organising the ANC organizational machinery to improve its performance in all the pillars of*

transformation;

- *Strengthening the Alliance and progressive civil society as well as progressive social movements;*
- *Building the strategic, organizational and technical capacities of the ANC structures and cadreship to mobilize and advance women’s emancipation and gender equality; including consciousness raising programmes for men, to empower them to understand and support the liberation of women and gender equality.*
- *Improving the capacity of the developmental state; and*
- *Improving financial sustainability and self-sufficiency of the movement.*

In brief, the ANC needs seriously and systematically to embark on organisational renewal in order to maintain, and indeed strengthen, its status and role as a vanguard in this second phase of transition to a national democratic society. This, the ANC needs to do from the point of view of its own self-interest as the leading ‘party’ in government. Further, because in this phase of building a democratic state and society, the ANC is the pre-eminent player, its failures become by design or by default, the failures of the state. Such is the current balance of forces that an ANC that flounders in fact subverts the very social transformation that South Africa needs, to become a National Democratic Society.

A serious turn-around is required. Otherwise, the National Democratic Revolution is in grave danger!