

# Theory of Organisation

## *Decade of the Cadre*

**Nathi Mthethwa, Umrabulo, 1st Quarter 2013**

As the ANC enters the Decade of the Cadre, it needs to locate the challenge of cadreship development within a coherent theory of revolutionary organisation.

The ANC 53rd National Conference resolved to make the next decade, a period of focus on cadre development.

The Conference further resolved that the *“ANC and the Alliance should, collectively and individually, pay urgent and systematic attention to the task of developing a contingent of cadres who have attributes that accord with the tasks of the national democratic revolution in the second phase”*.

The unfolding National Democratic Revolution has gone through many phases in its development. At one point it brings to the

The main content of the National Democratic Revolution is the liberation of Africans in particular and blacks in general from political and socio-economic bondage. It means uplifting the quality of life of all South Africans, especially the poor, the majority of whom are African and female. At the same time it has the effect of liberating the white community from the false ideology of racial superiority and the insecurity attached to oppressing others.

It is about the resolution of the national question, which is at the inter section of economic exploitation and patriarchal power relations. The consequence of this was the transfer of political power into the hands of the democratic majority, as witnessed in the 1994 breakthrough.

The path hitherto traversed has been long and bitter, and yet we need to periodically pause to critically assess our strength and weaknesses. We shall do so within our mass formations, tapping on our organisational experiences especially during the struggle for liberation, in the current epoch, whilst at the helm of the democratic state. Even before we do so, let us once more equip ourselves with a scientific understanding of what organisation is, and all the elements that constitute it.

At the height of the struggle for liberation, this insight on organisation was passed by the African National Congress to the younger generation through the South African Youth Congress (SAYCO). SAYCO's living organisational experience and the broader Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) at the time will assist in ensuring that this input is not just another academic offering. Our understanding will be tempered by our own experience from the university of mass struggle. This contribution is enriched by the perspective of the Vietnamese revolutionary Le Duan on Organisation and Cadreship.

## **ORGANISATION: AN INDISPENSABLE WEAPON FOR VICTORY**

The history of society demonstrates quite clearly that humankind have always survived because they have always engaged in productive activity. From primitive societies to date, there has always been interaction between humans and nature. As society develops, human beings enter into definite relations with nature, which is defined primarily in productive activity meant to prolong life, to produce food, to build shelter, to make clothing for the human race and to address many other necessities.

Once a human engages in productive activity definite relations arise between them and the others who are also engaged in production. Productive activity itself becomes a mode or organisation of production. So, from the very earliest forms of society the human race has been part of an organisation in one form or another. Society itself presupposes forms of organisation in the existence of humans depending on the level of development of that particular society. Primitive communal society was mainly characterised by a mode of production wherein the means of production were owned communally.

Organisation is therefore at the heart of the very existence of humanity. The interaction between humans and nature is not always a harmonious relationship. At worst this interaction releases earthquakes, floods, diseases, dry seasons and so on. In the face of such problems, human beings cooperate with others to confront these problems and thus lay a basis for their survival. In confronting these problems, humankind does so not as part of an amorphous mass, but an organised

entity of people conscious to achieve a particular objective. Thus an organisation becomes central not only to their interaction with nature, but also in their relationship with their fellow humans.

The most important weapon available to human beings in charting an existence for themselves is organisation. A strong organisation releases a potential strength in each person and the strength of each person makes the strength of an organisation. This conclusion has not been arrived at by deduction of a sum total of simple experiences as mere events. It has been arrived at from concrete historical conditions attending to the existence of humans, their relationship with nature on the one hand, and their interaction and relationship with their fellow humans on the other. Without organisation, any group of people will be defenceless and are bound to fail in trying to address any social, political or economic problem. This is the lesson left to us by the march of history.

In their resolve to destroy the system of colonialism of special type, the people of our land resisted it by coming together to form an organisation. For any organisation to succeed in achieving its goals there has to be objective reason for its existence. The other important aspect of organisation is the issue or issues around which it organises those who are potential members. In the South African context it has always been unity of all the oppressed, one organisation uniting them, national consciousness, one national programme, that were the rallying points at the founding conference of the ANC in 1912. Indeed our forebears left us a tradition of an ever present need for the downtrodden majority to build organisation as an effective instrument of struggle. The ANC, for a century, has stubbornly stood at the forefront as the spearhead of the liberation movement and the struggle.

Thus by force of example the formation of the ANC in 1912 brings us back to history's injunction that the guarantor and the essential condition of humanity's victory over any challenge is organisation.

The ANC set about marshalling the collective energies of the people as a foundation stone upon which national unity was forged in the crucible of heroic campaigns over years. As the South African economy was going through phases of development so did the forms of organisation grow and develop.

More and more African people became proletarianised in the burgeoning gold and diamond urban centres. In the later years the super-exploited section of the working class began to form their own trade associations and trade unions to give expression to their determination to fight the owners of capital and the mines for better pay and working conditions. These were the origins of the trade union movement in South Africa. Socialist ideas were brought to this country by militant

white workers from Europe who had already acquired experience in trade union organisation and in struggle against capitalist exploitation. Thus another foundation of organisation emerged, characterised by the spread of socialist ideas, particularly among the black working class in the later years of the development of democratic organisation.

The Communist Party of South Africa was then formed as a vanguard political party of the working class.

## **WHAT OF CADRESHIP AND LEADERSHIP IN AN ORGANISATION?**

Leadership is essential and key to the existence of any organisation. Leadership is constituted by a collective of cadres drawn from the most committed, disciplined and politically advanced sections of the people. A leader is a prototype cadre of any organisation, especially a revolutionary one. A leader is also a cadre of the people. They primarily serve the masses and are given a popular mandate by them. It is primarily important therefore to understand that intrinsic to the nature of leadership is that the masses must of necessity have confidence in their leadership. If the masses have no confidence in their leadership, the leadership cannot lead. True cadres never aspire or have an uncontrollable lust to lead. The main motivation for true leaders is to serve the movement and the masses at any level. To this extent the late Vietnamese leader Ho Chi Minh said *“be true to the Party and loyal to the people, fulfil any tasks, overcome any difficulty and defeat an enemy”*.

A leader must always demonstrate the readiness to be the last to retreat and the first to the offensive. Selflessness and service must inform the overall quality of leadership.

Leadership in the organisation develops and matures in the trials and tribulations of the struggle itself; it is never born nor does it emerge from nowhere. The very hard experiences of struggle produce cadreship and leadership which in turn develop qualities of creativity, imagination and the ability to seize the initiative. The leadership emerges from the people, it learns to articulate and champions the aspirations, demands, fears and hopes of the people. Leadership leads by force of example; it learns from the masses, and then teaches them.

Leadership and cadreship have a direct relationship with a cadre policy that expresses in concrete terms the general political line of any movement and cadre development, which includes political education and deployment of its cadres.

If a leader is a prototype cadre, it follows therefore that a cadre is a prototype member in a revolutionary organisation. There is a dialectical interrelation between

cadres and a revolutionary movement of the masses. A cadre's life is lived within the framework of multi-faceted relationships. It is these relations that make a cadre a cadre. In these relationships, a cadre is at the same time the cause and effect. A cadre cannot be conceived outside of an organisation, for a cadre is an element of an organisation.

A cadre lives in a definite organisation. They make an organisation a living organism. On the other hand, after an organisation has become a quantity existing in its own right and has struck deep roots in life, organisation in its turn has a decisive effect on people. It determines who will do what, what position and function they should hold in apparatus of activity. It defines beforehand the direction and objective of human beings' actions. It directs people and obliges them to act one way instead of another. Organisation in its activity, brings forth in people definite characteristics and qualities.

A cadre is somebody who is prepared to learn, learn more and learn forever. As the Chinese proverb goes *"live as if you are going to die tomorrow and learn as if you are going to live forever"*.

Cadres need to learn not only through books but also in practical life. In our work, in summing up the effectiveness of our work, we must engage in frequent self-criticism and criticism. Without learning from struggle and tapping on humanity's experience in life, book knowledge is worthless.

The essential duty of cadreship and leadership is to agitate for the political consciousness of the people, to mobilise, and continuously organise people as a conscious force to seize and maintain political power.

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## ANC wants reliable cadres, says Mantashe

**SAPA, News24, Johannesburg, 24 May 2013**

Bloemfontein - The ruling party wants reliable cadres to take South Africa into the future, said ANC Secretary General Gwede Mantashe on Friday.

"There is a difference between a member and a cadre, you have to go through a process to become a cadre," Mantashe told ANC members at a memorial lecture for the late Moses Kotane.

"You must be reliable... This year, it's the beginning of the decade of the cadre."

Mantashe said a party could not produce a cadre that was competent, disciplined, committed and contentious with only one lecture a year.

He told members they could not become cadres if they had the attitude of what was in it for them.

"You are not a cadre who could take the country and party forward."

He said a person who could not differentiate between resources of a municipality and what was his was also not welcome.

"Yours is the salary, that's all," he said to huge approval of the members.

Mantashe said the party wanted community leaders who would get involved during community protests. Destroying a school to get a road was wrong.

Referring to Moses Kotane, Mantashe said future cadres would be measured against the values lived by Kotane, a former general secretary of the Communist Party in South Africa.

Kotane died in Russia and was buried at the Novodevichy Cemetery in Moscow in 1978.

Mantashe said Kotane believed in non-racialism and despised white supremacy.

"The enemy of the liberation movement was not the white people. It was the domination by white people that was the enemy."

He said Kotane also believed in unity and was committed to hard work to the course of the people.

"One outstanding quality of Kotane, he was incorruptible," said Mantashe.

The ANC secretary general said Kotane was a man who would never let you down, do something behind your back or deceive a person.

- SAPA

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**From:** <http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/Politics/ANC-wants-reliable-cadres-says-Mantashe-20130524>

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## Mobilising to fight the scourge of violence against women and children

Blade Nzimande, General Secretary

Excerpts:

The latest public and media exposition of a series of grotesque incidents of rape, epitomized by the rape and murder of Anene Booysens in Bredasdorp, has further underlined one of the most serious challenges facing South African society...

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Much as the struggle to defeat violence against women and children has a moral dimension, but it cannot be won simply on this front. It will in the end be won in **organized struggles, led by the working class**, for the radical transformation of our socio-economic terrain. But even this struggle on its own will not succeed, unless premised on **the organization of women** as part of the overall struggle for radical socio-economic transformation.

In order to deal with this scourge it is important that the struggle against violence against women and children becomes an everyday people's struggles rather than something that is periodically highlighted when cases like those of Anene hit the media...

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In the light of the above, particular responsibility rests with the **voting district (VD)-based branches of the SACP**. These structures are closest to the households in our various communities, and the SACP is deliberately restructuring itself to get closer to our communities. **We also expect our branch cadres to actively participate in all the sectoral structures at local level**, and also ensure that the issue of women's struggles and dignity is placed at the centre of the activities of these structures. This is in fact the vanguard role that the SACP branch can play at local level.

It is also of absolute importance that we incorporate a strong component on women's struggles, patriarchy and transformation of gender relations into all of our political education activities. Dedicated pamphlets and guidelines must be developed to be studied and used by our own cadre. This will serve a double purpose of empowering our own cadres and well as educating them as some are not themselves innocent on these matters, as well as to develop a commissariat capable of educating communities broadly.

The history of the struggles against women's oppression as well as our own history of the struggle against apartheid tells us that this is a struggle that will be won through **hard work on the ground amongst our communities**. And it is only a principled co-operation between mobilized communities and state organs that will ultimately defeat the scourge of all forms of violence in our society, including violence against women.

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From: <http://www.sacp.org.za/main.php?ID=3865#redpen>

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**South African Communist Party, 2 June 2013 (parts)**

## **SACP Central Committee Media Statement**

The SACP Central Committee met in Johannesburg over the weekend 31st May – 2 June, 2013. The secretariat political report focused on the challenges confronting the trade union movement and the National Development Plan. There were also presentations and discussion on agrarian transformation and rural development; a presentation from the inter-departmental team on the development of an integrated urban development framework; resolutions on taking forward the financial sector campaign; and a presentation made by the leadership of the ANC elections team on the broad strategic campaigning approach to the 2014 elections.

### **Hands off COSATU**

The persisting global capitalist crisis, slowing growth, slackening demand for our commodity exports and falling profits have inevitably produced an intensified offensive against organised labour in our country. The internal challenges within COSATU need to be set against these external factors. The capitalist offensive has been particularly focused on the mining sector and on the National Union of Mineworkers – the largest affiliate of COSATU. In the platinum sector specifically, the mining houses brazenly undermined collective bargaining agreements and opened the way to vigilante unionism. The demagogic and coercive mobilisation by these vigilante forces has, in turn, exposed tens of thousands of workers to mass retrenchments – exactly the downsizing pretext the bosses have been seeking to provoke. The vigilante killing of mineworkers, including many NUM members and shopstewards continues. Senior members of the CC were not able to attend the final day of the CC because, as NUM leaders, they were burying another NUM shopsteward, another martyr.

We urge government to be more proactive in dealing with this situation. It has to consistently defend the collective bargaining system and the legislation that underpins it. The daily security of communities in the informal settlements around the mines, and the failure to provide effective housing has also been a seed-bed for vigilante networks.

It is against this background that the SACP calls for unity and the closing of ranks within COSATU itself. The flouting of one of the core founding principles of the federation, namely one industry one union; the poaching of members; the cultivation of personality cults; the undermining of collective leadership and of working class democracy, are all practices that play into the hands of the class offensive against the working class. These practices must be unambiguously condemned and eliminated.

The SACP noted with concern reports this past week that COSATU's investment arm Kopano Ke Matla has been stripped by the Financial Services Board of its licence to manage pension funds for workers. We call on COSATU and its affiliates to reclaim transparent worker control over the billions of rands of worker retirement funds and over the various union investment arms – many of which have been outsourced to big capital and effectively privatised.

The SACP reaffirms its commitment to non-interference in the internal affairs of the federation. COSATU leaders who happen to be members of the SACP do not conduct themselves within COSATU on the basis of an SACP mandate, nor are the details of internal COSATU matters discussed within Party forums. We reaffirm all of this in the context of a sustained campaign to portray the Party as a disruptive force fanning factionalism within COSATU – it is a campaign led by those who are themselves precisely involved in daily and brazen factional support for one or another personality or grouping within the federation. The SACP says: Hands off COSATU! The SACP says respect the collective leadership of the federation and its affiliates.

The SACP reaffirms the critical importance of trade union independence, we need a militant, and robust trade union movement – not a conveyor belt for Alliance partners, or for the ANC-led government. Militant union independence, however, should not be confused with a liberal notion of sustained anti-governmental opposition. Our objective as socialist formations must be to collectively build and assert working class power in all sites of power, and not limit our strategic objectives to simply being watch-dogs, “civil society” voices supposedly “speaking truth to power”.

## **The ANC-alliance 2014 election campaign**

The CC pledged its full support to the ANC-led election campaign. The SACP will, as in the past, actively contribute to the content of the campaign itself, underlining the importance of connecting campaigns around the social and economic struggles of the working and poor with the election campaign itself. The SACP will also contribute actively to the development of the election manifesto, and to ensuring maximum Alliance unity as the mainstay for an overwhelming ANC election victory.

**Issued by the SACP Central Committee**

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