

PERSPECTIVES

Political analysis and commentary from Southern Africa

THE ANC DIVIDED

SOUTH AFRICAN DEMOCRACY AT A BRINK

Dear Reader

It seems inevitable that 2008 will prove itself to be a definitive year for South Africa's young democracy. Exactly what kind of future trajectory it will deliver is to be seen – the current state of the nation is that of flux.

The year began with the dramatic election of Jacob Zuma as ANC president, was punctuated by the removal of state president Thabo Mbeki from his position, and will end with the launch of a new political party populated with members who defected from the ANC.

The months in between left little time for reflection: they were populated with events whose imprints will remain for years to come, with declarations whose echoes will continue reverberating. In this short year, South Africans awoke more than once to indications that the dream of the peaceful rainbow nation may be farther off than it was in 1994, to signals that their young democracy is on the verge of momentous renewal, and to undecipherable political spectacles unfolding at the pace of daily soap operas. Above all, South Africans awoke to evidence that the stakes of the political game have been significantly raised.

The opaque politics that characterised the ANC as a liberation movement have, in the time of democracy and independent media, transformed into ongoing sagas of 'palace intrigue' that keep the citizens guessing. Since the dramatic election of Jacob Zuma as party president in the Polokwane conference of December 2007, the secrecy that for many years enveloped the internal dynamics of the

ruling party has been interrupted by an initial string of 'redeployments' which were later replaced by highly publicised resignations. The party's failure to register candidates for the December 2008 by-elections confirms that it is consumed by internal battles. It is the genealogy of this crisis that the Zwelethu Jolobe article included in this issue of *Perspectives* traces, uncovering the undercurrents that led to the momentous events of 2008, and which will likely influence political developments in 2009.

But the genealogy of the ANC's crisis is one and the same as that of newly born political party Congress of the People (COPE). Populated by former ANC members, its name coinciding with that of the historic occasion that saw the ANC alongside other political groupings launch the 'Freedom Charter' in 1955, it is clear that COPE's intention is that of constituting the long-hoped for viable alternative to the ANC.

Indeed, with the emergence of COPE, the fierce contestations previously confined to the darkest corners of the ruling party have spilled into the public sphere. As Jolobe observes, the ANC has finally produced its own opposition.

Like in every typical dominant party state, the dynamics of the ruling party can redraw the country's political landscape. With the emergence of COPE, perhaps it is not only the stakes in the game that have shifted, but the game itself.

As the battle to define South Africa's future unfolds, it must be asked: what exactly is at stake? In

the second article included in this issue of *Perspectives*, Suren Pillay critically considers whether the culmination of the ‘Zuma – Mbeki war’ will present a fundamental change for South African politics, and if so how. In his reading, the trajectories born from the crisis in the ANC are primarily about the competing imperatives of development and democracy; the contestation for leadership change about shifting from the Mbeki administration’s focus on technical delivery to a mode of governance that promises to build consensus and listen to the downtrodden.

Whether a shift towards the ‘democratic imperative’ indeed materialises, what is also at stake is South Africa’s political culture. One of the more

disturbing features of 2008 has been the growing use of militant and polarising political discourse, as well as numerous incidents of violence linked to political meetings. While to an extent this trend has been countered by growing civic activism around the protection of the South African constitution, it remains to be seen which impetus will prevail in the long run.

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Biography

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The State of the ANC in 2008

The anatomy of a political crisis

“Et tu, Brute?”

Julius Caesar

2008 was a landmark in the history of the ANC. The major turning point was a Pietermaritzburg High Court judgment delivered on 12 September by Judge Chris Nicholson on a procedural matter in the corruption trial of ANC President Jacob Zuma. Judge Nicholson made inferences that State President (and former ANC President) Thabo Mbeki and senior members of his cabinet had interfered with the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) regarding the decision to prosecute Zuma. Nicholson’s judgment set into motion a chain of events that led to two developments. First, on 19 September, the ANC’s National Executive Committee (NEC) passed a motion of ‘no confidence’ in Mbeki and requested that he tender his resignation. To replace Mbeki, the ANC put Kgalema Motlanthe before the National Assembly. Second, on 08 October, former Defence Minister, Mosiuoa Lekota and his deputy, Mluleki George, both of whom had resigned with Mbeki, announced they were ‘serving divorce papers’ to the ANC leadership due to irreconcilable differences. Lekota, George, and other senior leaders in Mbeki’s administration subsequently held a national convention, whose declaration became the nucleus of a new political party, the Congress of the People (COPE). With COPE being able to register well over

150,000 people in less than a month, and a staged and well-publicised strategy of receiving defected ANC personnel, the ANC leadership has panicked and been unable to devise a coherent strategy to manage the new challenge.

This paper will investigate the roots and significance of this crisis in the ANC. It will argue that the evolution of this crisis should be understood as the coalescing of two parallel political processes in South African politics: the irreconcilable differences the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) had with Mbeki’s administration, and the profound fall-out in South Africa’s ruling political establishment over the spoils of a defence procurement package that led to the rise of a Zuma lobby in the presidential succession race.

The paper will first discuss the central dispute between the SACP/COSATU and the Mbeki grouping that eventually formed COPE. The paper will then discuss the rise of the Zuma lobby, showing how it emerged from the politics of armaments procurement; the manner in which it began to permeate the inner-workings of the ruling political establishment and the state; and how it became ingrained in the conflict between SACP/COSATU and the Mbeki grouping.

The ANC and the SACP: From Camaraderie to Betrayal to Camaraderie

The ANC and the SACP have a long history of association and developed a relationship from as far back as the 1920s. This association has not always been harmonious: some members of the ANC have at times grown wary of the SACP, and given its multiracial membership and ideological outlook, feared that these would unduly influence the direction of the ANC as the premier vehicle for African nationalist expression.

The most significant tensions in this relationship emerged in the 1990s, first in the SACP and then between a dominant grouping in the ANC led by former SACP members and the remaining SACP leadership. The collapse of the Soviet Union produced a profound sense of insecurity in the SACP and a deep need for self-reflection. As part of these developments, a significant number of senior SACP members, notably Thabo Mbeki and Jacob Zuma, abandoned their SACP membership in favour of the ANC.¹ Since SACP members were of the highest intellectual calibre, many were inducted into the new ANC government into strategic state positions, and many others joined the new Black Economic Empowerment (BEE)² project. When these former SACP members became the dominant grouping in the ANC under Mbeki the tensions solidified and manifested institutionally as SACP versus ANC.

Details of the nature of this dispute can be found in a flurry of communications between the SACP, the ANC and COSATU, at the height of the tripartite alliance conflict in 2006. In a special edition of the party's magazine, *Bua Komanisi*, the SACP accused the ANC under Mbeki of betraying the ideals of national liberation, central to which was the achievement of a socialist society. The SACP argued that the central project of Mbeki's administration was to 'drive a process of restoration of capitalist accumulation'.³ The Mbeki administration devised a three-staged project: the building of a strong presidential centre, the modernisation of the ANC into an electoral party, and the creation of a black capitalist class through BEE. This, the SACP argued, was a deviation from the socialist path forged during the days of struggle.

Spearheaded by Mbeki in three articles in his weekly column, *ANC Today*, the ANC's response was

hostile. Mbeki argued that the SACP was driven by an obsession to transform the ANC into a socialist party in order to use it as a vehicle to pursue its own agenda.⁴ But the ANC is not a socialist party and any attempt to transform the ANC in that regard will destroy it. Mbeki repeated the same argument in later papers⁵ and defended black capitalists as a strategic social stratum, necessary for the success of a post-apartheid democratic state and for the sustainability of the multi-class character of the ANC.

COSATU entered the fray on the eve of its 9th National Congress in September 2006. The political resolutions of the COSATU Congress resolved that their members must ensure the activities of ANC structures are dominated by worker issues, must contest for leading positions of the ANC, and must 'reclaim the ownership of the ANC so that it becomes the real instrument of people's power'.⁶ Most importantly, the national congress passed a special resolution on Zuma, identifying the prosecution of Zuma as a political conspiracy, calling 'for the immediate reinstatement of [...] Jacob Zuma to the position of Deputy President of South Africa'.⁷

Based on these resolutions, the COSATU/SACP alliance confirmed their vested interest in who leads the ANC, what policy direction the ANC should develop in pursuance of its mission, and actively campaigned to influence the outcome of the ANC's 52nd national conference (held in December 2007 in Polokwane, Limpopo Province). Having identified their interests in the ANC, they achieved three main tasks. First, they developed a strategic framework based on their current role in the alliance. Second, they identified an ANC leadership which could best pursue its programme. And third, they succeeded in getting all (except Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma) elected as ANC office bearers at the Polokwane Conference.

The significance of their strategy for the consequences of their victory at Polokwane was the interaction this process had with another set of developments *within* Mbeki's administration; developments that centred on the personality of Jacob Zuma and his alleged role in an armaments procurement package.

1 In South African liberation politics, there was a considerable amount of overlap in membership between members of the ANC and SACP.

2 Black Economic Empowerment is a South African government program that aims to redress the inequalities of Apartheid by giving previously disadvantaged groups preferred economic opportunities.

3 *Bua Komanisi*, Special Edition 1, May 2006, p22

4 Thabo Mbeki, 'God save us from the false prophets', *ANC Today*, Vol. 6, No. 24, 23 June 2006 pp4-5 pp6

5 Thabo Mbeki, 'The Communist Assault on the Year 1996', *ANC Today*, Vol. 6, No. 25, 30 June 2006; 'Our 21st century Marxists declare war on black capitalists', *ANC Today*, Vol. 6, No. 28, 21 July 2006

6 COSATU, Resolutions Submitted to the 9th COSATU National Congress, 21 September 2006

7 COSATU, Special Resolution on ANC Deputy President at the 9th COSATU National Congress, 18 September 2006

The Zuma Wars and the Politics of Conspiracy The Arms Deal Fall-Out

In 1998 the South African Parliament approved a South African Defence Review, which set the policy guidelines for a defence procurement package, and whose contracts were signed in 1999 at a cost of R30 billion. The Auditor-General had identified this procurement a high-risk area and subsequently conducted a forensic investigation between the Auditor-General, the Public Protector and the NPA after shortcomings were identified in the process.⁸

In 2002 it was reported that the Directorate of Special Operations⁹ was investigating allegations against Zuma regarding a bribe relating to this arms deal.¹⁰ In 2003, the then National Director of Public Prosecutions, Bulelani Ngcuka, issued a press statement that formed the basis of the political conspiracy theory against Zuma. Ngcuka stated that 'whilst there is a prima facie case of corruption against [Jacob Zuma], [the Scorpions'] prospects of success are not strong enough'.¹¹

Instead Zuma's financial advisor, Schabir Shaik, was charged with corruption. The overview of the state's charge sheet included a breakdown of all payments Shaik made on Zuma's behalf while the latter was the provincial minister for Economic Affairs and Tourism in KwaZulu-Natal, and later as deputy president. The charge alleged that Zuma received R1.1 million from Shaik and his companies between 1995 and 2002. During this time Zuma's duties included promoting the interests of business impartially as a provincial minister and as deputy president of the ANC and later attending national cabinet meetings related to the arms deal.

In response to Ngcuka's statement, Zuma lodged a formal complaint with the Public Protector in regard to the manner in which the investigation was conducted. Zuma argued that as a provincial minister in KwaZulu-Natal, he was marginal to the procurement process, that Ngcuka's announcement on the status of a prosecution against him violated his civil rights, and that this was 'part of a campaign

aimed at destroying [his] reputation and to perpetuate mysterious agendas, rather than to further the course of justice'.¹²

The Public Protector found in favour of Zuma and ruled that he was improperly prejudiced by Ngcuka's statements. While the Public Protector stopped short of making a finding in regard to the claimed impropriety of continuing with a criminal investigation, his conclusions hardened the attitudes of Zuma's supporters who began to see actions of the NPA, and the lack of inclination of Mbeki to protect him, as part of a political conspiracy.

The Dismissal of Zuma

On 02 June 2005, Judge Hillary Squires found Schabir Shaik guilty on two charges of corruption and one charge of fraud. Significantly, the judgement directly implicated Zuma.¹³ Shaik's guilty verdict placed an enormous amount of pressure on the ANC leadership, and following an extended meeting of the ANC National Working Committee (NWC) President Mbeki addressed a joint sitting of the houses of parliament and dismissed Zuma as Deputy President.¹⁴ Zuma was subsequently advised by the new National Director of Public Prosecutions, Vusi Pikoli, that the NPA would be bringing charges against him. The then ANC Secretary General (and now Deputy ANC President and President of South Africa) Kgalema Motlanthe subsequently requested that Zuma withdraw from participating in all ANC structures.¹⁵

Two weeks later, the ANC held its National General Council (NGC) and it was widely expected the NGC would endorse Mbeki's handling of Zuma, given the support the NEC and NWC had given to Mbeki. Motlanthe went as far as '[asking] the [NGC] to accept Zuma's firing as Mbeki's constitutional right, agree not to discuss Zuma's pending trial as it was sub judice, and to mandate the Mbeki controlled NWC to interact with Zuma as it saw fit'.¹⁶

This strategy backfired horribly. The delegates delivered a stunning victory for Zuma when they rejected his request to stand down from all party

8 Joint Investigation Report into the Strategic Defence Procurement Packages, November 2001, submitted to Parliament by the Public Protector, the Auditor-General and the National Director of Public Prosecutions on 14 November 2001 (Joint Report), 7

9 DSO, in South Africa commonly referred to as the 'Scorpions', a special agency set up to investigate organised crime and corruption.

10 Mail and Guardian, 29 November 2002

11 Cited in Special Report on an investigation by the Public Protector of a Complaint by Deputy President J Zuma against the National Director of Public Prosecutions and the National Prosecuting Authority in connection with a Criminal Investigation conducted against him (Public Protector Report). Report No. 26, 28 May 2004, pp 23 Emphasis added.

12 Jacob Zuma, Media Statement by Deputy President Jacob Zuma on Complaint Lodged with the Public Protector, 6 November 2003

13 Hillary Squires, Schabir Shaik Judgment, High Court of South Africa, Durban Division. 31 May 2005, 165

14 Thabo Mbeki, Statement at the joint sitting of parliament on the release of Hon Jacob Zuma from his responsibilities as Deputy President, National Assembly, 14 June 2005

15 Kgalema Motlanthe, Organisational Report Presented to the 52nd Conference of the African National Congress, December 2007

16 Vukani Mde, 'Overwhelming support for Zuma forces president to make concessions', Business Day, 4 July 2005

duties. Zuma would not only continue fully in his role as the deputy president of the organisation, but the NEC also had to find ways of supporting him materially. While the President's decision effectively isolated Zuma within the state political establishment, the NGC not only brought him back into party political contention; it solidified and united a disorganised constituency within the ANC that had always been at the receiving end of an increasingly powerful Mbeki presidency. The disaffected sympathised and rallied around the personality of Zuma as a victim and openly stated that he was their choice to succeed Mbeki as ANC President in 2007.

The storm was yet to subside when Mbeki, in an interview with the SABC television the same night, openly stated that he would not refuse nomination for a third term at the helm of the ruling party. The NGC declared Mbeki and Zuma the frontrunners for the position of president in the run-up to the December 2007 Polokwane congress.

The Corruption Trial

Zuma's corruption trial got to a start in September 2006 but soon suffered a hitch: the state, after a year, was still not ready to prosecute, and, through its chief Scorpions investigator, Johan Du Plooy, applied for a postponement, arguing that they needed more time for further investigation. In response to this, Zuma's legal team launched a counter application for the matter to be struck off the court roll. The significance of these events was that it was the first time Zuma revealed the alleged political nature of his prosecution.

Zuma argued that the investigation by the Scorpions into his alleged involvement in the arms deal was designed solely to destroy his reputation and political role-playing ability in the ANC succession competition.¹⁷ He stated that from when he assumed his duties as South Africa's deputy president, he had been touted as a potential presidential candidate after the completion of Mbeki's second term and many people within Mbeki's administration sought to prevent that. In this regard, the charges were 'fuelled by a conspiracy' to prevent him from succeeding Mbeki.¹⁸ He fingered ex-Director of Public Prosecutions Ngcuka as chief conspirator and also accused Thabo Mbeki, indirectly, as accomplice.¹⁹ Ngcuka denied the existence of any conspiracy, stating that these were all mere rumours 'started and fuelled

by Zuma and his supporters in an attempt to deflect [attention] from the seriousness of the charges which he is facing'.²⁰

On 20 September 2006, Judge Heribert Msimang struck the case off the court roll. Thousands of Zuma supporters who had gathered outside the court in support of Zuma erupted into cheers and jubilation. Msimang said that Zuma had suffered prejudice which 'closely resembled punishment that should be handed to a convicted person' and said that the decision to prosecute Zuma was 'anchored' in unsound principles.²¹

It was clear is that two factions had emerged with vested interests in the ANC succession competition. At the centre of the dispute was the allegation that one faction, led by Mbeki, was blocking the ascension of another faction, led by Zuma, using the criminal justice system as an instrument. During a subsequent political dispute between and within South Africa's intelligence services – also referred to as the 'ANC hoax e-mail saga' – it became even clearer the groups could no longer coexist in one organisation.

These events and the growing factionalism in the ANC had a profound impact on the party as it prepared for the December 2007 Polokwane Conference. The candidate nomination process publicly exposed two contending factions, and two competing lists, one led by Mbeki and one by Zuma. Both groups lobbied extensively in ANC branches for support of these lists, with the active participation of members of the NEC.

The Polokwane Conference and Beyond

The Mbeki grouping suffered a significant defeat at the Polokwane conference. Not only were they completely removed from the senior executive bodies of the ANC; the purge extended to the public service, both at the national, provincial and local levels. The significance of the dispute between the SACP/COSATU and Mbeki, and the Zuma Wars, began to take its toll. After Polokwane, the Zuma corruption trial continued to be the arena of struggle but with one difference: Zuma and the SACP/COSATU controlled the ANC. It took the Nicholson judgment for the Zuma lobby and their allies in the SACP/COSATU to deliver the final 'coup de grace': the recall and resignation of Mbeki as State President. Not only did this event signify that there could

17 Jacob Zuma, Answering Affidavit, Case No.: CC358/2005, 18

18 Ibid., 20

19 Ibid., 33-34

20 Bulelani Ngcuka, Affidavit, Case No.: CC358/2005, 3

21 Judge Heribert Msimang, Judgment, Case No.: CC358/2005

be no reconciliation between the two groups, but most importantly, it was a realisation for the Mbeki supporters that the only way in which they could regroup and recover their political influence in South Africa was by completely withdrawing from the ANC and forming a new political organisation – which is now known as the Congress of the People (COPE).

As COPE is yet to be officially launched at the time of writing and thus to define its policies, it is difficult to assess the real impact it will have on the party system. But from this analysis, one can reach four main conclusions about its likely direction.

First, the Mbeki grouping who forms part of its inner core will simply apply the project they had for the ANC into the formation of the new political organisation. From this perspective, COPE will become the modern and urban-based electoral party the ANC would have evolved into had Mbeki won a third term as ANC president. Mbeki's attempt to steer the ANC away from the grip of the SACP and COSATU will be realised through COPE; it has not aligned itself with a left political alliance, which could give it a considerable amount of flexibility.

Second, the majority of COPE members come from the ANC. This is a strength, in that they have a history in political activism. However, it is also

an important weakness; organisationally, they will struggle to construct an identity outside of the ANC family which will have negative implications in terms of voter preferences during elections; i.e. voters may see it as another variation of the ANC.

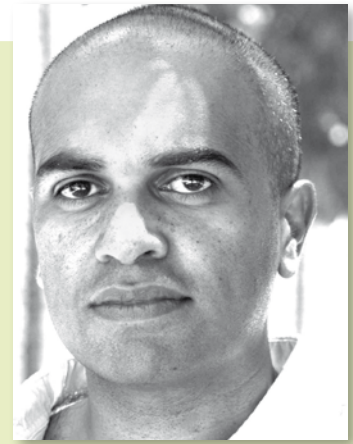
Third, because COPE's leaders have close ties to the Mbeki administration, their ideas are nothing new in South African politics and thus do not necessarily serve as an alternative. While the organisation is new, its political leaders were at the helm of South African politics for over a decade and were thus, in part, responsible for the very shortcomings that they accuse the ANC of committing under Zuma. Their most significant challenge will be finding a way to break-free from the chains of the Mbeki legacy.

Finally, flowing from this, COPE's success at the polls is dependent on their ability to break completely from the ANC. In this regard, their elections manifesto will be the key variable. As of writing, COPE has not introduced any new policy ideas into the South African public discourse, apart from the need for electoral reform. Unless they do this, they would have simply turned the world upside down but failed to change it. Nonetheless, COPE does represent a crisis in the ANC; for the first time since 1994, the ANC has created its own opposition party.

Biography

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The ANC as Government

Contesting leadership between democracy and development

The South African political landscape is altering with dramatic speed and fluidity, as all that appeared rock solid suddenly dissolves into rapidly shifting sands. The changing of the presidency and the formation of a new political party by leading elements of the African National Congress has occurred with surprising haste. Yet sudden as these events may appear, they are the boiling point of processes that have been brewing over the last decade, and are best understood in the context of the transformation of governance in post-Apartheid South Africa.

It is instructive that the fracture in the leadership of the ANC in 2008 has cohered around two individuals who are said to have distinctly different styles of leadership: the one all-knowing expert with centralising tendencies, and the other, a humble man of the people who has not had much formal education, but is consultative and accessible. Whether these are accurate characterisations of either individual or not, it could be argued that the Thabo Mbeki-Jacob Zuma polarisation tears along the perforated line that marks the distinction between development and democracy in South Africa, with the two main protagonists as symbolic stand-ins in a postcolonial drama.

Governance in South Africa has contended with two main legacies. The first is the legacy of

the exclusion of the majority of those who resided in it from the political community of citizens. Transforming all who lived in it into full legal citizens defines its 'democratic imperative'. The second legacy it confronts is the effects of economic exclusion and marginalisation, which impoverished the majority of its residents at the gain of its few citizens. Improving the basic conditions of life for the majority therefore defines the state's 'developmental imperative'. The relationship between representing 'the will of the people' – the democratic imperative – and making 'a better life for all' – the developmental imperative – is however not a seamless one.

Viewed from this vantage point, the polarisation between Thabo Mbeki and Jacob Zuma is centrally also about the future of the 'tripartite alliance' of the ANC, the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). It is no secret that Mr Zuma's political 'tsunami', as a candidate to challenge Mr Mbeki for the leadership of the ANC, was fanned by very vocal and influential elements within the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). The tension between Luthuli House (the headquarters of the ANC) and the Union Buildings (the seat of executive presidential power) marks a shift in state-party relations in South Africa at

the heart of which is the difference between the ANC as a liberation movement and the ANC as a political party. Both Mr Mbeki and Mr Zuma as individuals also have their behaviour determined by the structural positions that they occupy, one as a head of state, and the other as the new head of a party that still thinks itself rhetorically a liberation movement. Between the habits of the old and the challenges of the new, each claiming to uphold the 'traditions' of the ANC and the tripartite alliance, something had to give.

The ANC, as a ruling party, is having to deal with its legacy as a broad nationalist, anti-Apartheid movement of resistance, as it had to find its feet as a party of 'governance' in a post-Cold War world. Confronted by its developmental imperatives under the leadership of Thabo Mbeki, the ANC-in-government sought to refine its ability to carry out its mandate, understood as the capacity of the State to 'deliver' those public goods which were denied to the majority, in the context of a globalized world. The emphasis was on creating an efficient administrative machinery through various tiers of government, at national, provincial and local government under the leadership of the presidency. An important move in this regard was the swelling of the Presidency itself, under Mr Mbeki, creating a much larger, more powerful presidential bureaucracy than the one former President Mandela presided over – even though it must be said there was much continuity between policy between the Mandela and Mbeki presidencies in many respects. Under Mr Mbeki's presidency, governance was however understood as 'delivery', and whether as an intended or unintended consequence the way this was understood has transformed the practice of politics in South Africa, and might have put it at odds with the democratic deficit that the state inherited from the Apartheid legacy.

The elements of a popular revolt against Mr Mbeki by his own party brings to the fore the exclusionary effects that the governance style of the executive authority of the state created amongst many. Whether their feelings are justified or not, in politics perceptions matter. The relation between the Presidency and Parliament itself was also cause for concern amongst some who lamented the diminished role of parliament in the day-to-day shaping of public policy. What both the presidency and the parliamentary understanding of governance tended to share, however, was an understanding of how to govern: the domain of the 'political' was transformed into a technical challenge to be

efficiently addressed by technocratic expertise. I am referring here to technocracy, as 'the administrative and political domination of a society by a state elite and allied institutions that seeks to impose a single, exclusive policy paradigm based on the application of instrumentally rational techniques' (Centeno 1993: 314).

The general ethos of governance, of addressing developmental challenges as technical issues to be solved by 'efficient' technical solutions means that the state assumes it has both the plan and the capacity to effect these policy objectives. The politics of policy, that there is a 'politics' of policy, tends to recede in the imagination of those who are compelled to think in terms of efficiency only. And often along with that, their willingness to listen to contesting views on how and what should be done.

The 'people' provide or embody the 'problems', by articulating them through appropriate discourses, whilst the government provides the 'solutions', transforming the raw data of the people's complaints into rationally worked out 'plans'. Senior members of the ruling ANC hinted at their unease with the trend under Mbeki's rule prior to the recent rupture within the leadership of the ANC, which has marked a breaking of collective silence. Many see this breaking of silence as a generally necessary and welcome development for democracy in the country. In an interview some years ago, which he later apologised for, ANC National Executive Committee member, and Deputy General Secretary of the South African Communist Party, Jeremy Cronin, lamented that '[t]he structures of the bureaucracy remain hostile to public participation and pressure [...] Increasingly policy is formed by directors general of government departments and their senior management, or even worse still, by external and very often private sector consultants from the EU or North America or whatever. So lots of policy is formed in this way' (Sheehan 2002: 3).

The more the ANC as political party understood its role in government in this way, as technical and guided by experts, the more a chasm opened between the State on the one hand, and the Party leadership and the alliance on the other. The former sought to implement rationally devised policies, while the latter felt increasingly left out of the making of policy itself. Economic policy, for example, has been a particularly contentious area for obvious reasons, given levels of unemployment, inequality and poverty. South African economic policy after Apartheid

has been through two major policy frameworks thus far: a Keynesian inspired redistributive policy, known as the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), adopted after 1994, which was controversially replaced by the Growth, Employment and Redistribution program (GEAR) in 1996. GEAR focused less on equalisation measures and more on macro-economic strategies, involving fiscal discipline and trade liberalisation, in order to emphasise growth rather than redistribution. Some critics have argued, perhaps a bit too simplistically, that GEAR was a 'sell-out', or 'steep forgetting curve' but perhaps also more correctly that it contained elements of a home-grown structural adjustment program, containing all the key options favoured by the 'Washington consensus', which bring with them pernicious social effects on the poor (Bond 1999: 16). In his capacity as Deputy President, Thabo Mbeki is said to have provided the political leadership for the development of GEAR, which partly was an attempt to assure corporate interests that the government was sincere in its commitment to 'free market' economics in order to attract direct foreign investment.

President Mbeki put a wedge between the alliance partners and the Presidency very early on, to the growing unhappiness of leftist elements in the ANC, as well as the SACP and COSATU. Whether this had to do with his own ideological preferences, or whether it is a structural logic that will be forced on any future head of state, regarding policy making in general, we will see in the manner in which presidents in the post-Mbeki period will deal with this tension.

We saw the justification for the recall of President Mbeki as a move undertaken to restore the democratic traditions of the ANC and to rebuild the alliance. With Mr Mbeki's removal, we might say that the pendulum of power has swung from the Union Buildings to Luthuli House, from the State to the Party. The expectation for some is that with the removal of Mr Mbeki, a new style of leadership will bring a new style of governance, one that is more open to a politics of policy where options can be more openly debated, contested and changed. The argument goes that President Mbeki did not encourage open debate nor contestation, and deepened a divide between the 'state' and the 'people'. Indeed they might point to the fact that other than the 'Presidential Imbizo's', in practice, the most regular communication from Mr Mbeki was through his weekly letter penned for the ANC web-site, and distributed through an electronic mailing list. Given the main historical constituency

of the ANC, which is largely poor and significantly rural, it is surely significant, his detractors might say, that the President chose this medium, to which only a minority within a small middle class has access to communicate most regularly and consistently to the 'nation', as it were.

On the other hand of course, is the figure of Jacob Zuma. He has been disparaging of intellectualism, seemingly engages ordinary and diverse groups of South Africans with ease, and is known by his trademark song, '*Umshini Wami*' ('Bring me my machine gun'). Cumulatively, Mr Zuma embodies through his own disposition a populist tendency that contrasts strongly with Mr Mbeki's elitist intellectualism. For some of his supporters in the tripartite alliance, in the figure of Mr Zuma, they have symbolically found a way to reverse the manner in which policy is made in post-Apartheid South Africa, through a 'bottom-up' conception of the relationship between development and democracy, in other words, through the rule of the 'ordinary man'.

Recourse to the 'traditions' of the ANC and the alliance is more accurately therefore about the struggle to determine the 'traditions' in the years ahead rather than preserve a past. Whether in fact the ANC will ever be able to conduct itself along these lines again now that it is a political party is an open question. The ANC as a liberation movement, has forged certain traditions which it claims are an integral part of its identity as a party: collective leadership, supposed absence of careerism, democratic centralism, and grassroots driven mandates. The overall organisational aim is the creation of a single united identity, the overall organisational effect is the strength of the clenched fist rather than the dangling fingers of an open hand. These are great assets in a liberation movement, but an entirely different story for a political party in a constitutional democracy operating within a developmental state. What makes for successful political manoeuvring in a liberation movement facing repression comes across as conspiratorial, secretive, and sometimes outright corrupt in the context of a liberal democracy.

The leaders of the new political party, the Congress of the People (COPE), are disaffected members of the ANC who have seized precisely on this point by making the equal and transparent application of the 'rule of law' central to the reason for the formation of a new party to 'protect democratic values'.

Besides the Presidency itself, it is also true

that parliamentary portfolio's by their very nature individualise political power and policy making. Ministers are responsible for their portfolios, and accountable to the constitution, to parliament, and to the party. Individuals will inevitably 'interpret' mandates in their own ways, and many different interest groups will try to influence the thinking of an individual minister, in proper and improper ways. This, we might say, is the new normal. It incidentally also makes access to political power increasingly coveted by those who seek to benefit financially, and improperly, from their connection to political patronage in the context of Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) processes.

What we need to think about more carefully is how political power and influence is exercised in post-Apartheid South Africa, and what workable, legitimate and authorised forms this takes in a parliamentary liberal democracy, with all its flaws. It means accepting that certain expectations and practices are out of synchronicity with the new relations of power that have been set in motion since 1994. The tripartite alliance may have been a formidable arrangement

as an oppositional unity, but to expect that it can be anything more than symbolic in the future might be a misplaced hope. The extent to which the SACP and COSATU, as independent organisations, with their own agendas and interests, can influence the ANC as governing party, has shifted dramatically.

What the SACP and COSATU, and factions within the ANC will need to think about carefully, is whether this current 'success', of removing what they saw as the obstacle to their inability to influence political power, will actually solve their problem. Understood as a tension between democracy and development in the ways in which governance is undertaken, the problem exceeds individual dispositions, and signals a structural tension that might find recurrence, as political leaders will feel the pressure of the global economic and political forces, of local pressures, including business and the new black elites, to make policy that reflects a myriad of contending interests. It is this tension that the ANC will have to contend with in the coming years, in addition to having to contend with a new opposition party, the Congress of the People, that has emerged from its own ranks.

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