



ANC TODAY

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Conversations with the President



THE WAR AGAINST COVID-19

OUR FOREMOST PRIORITY REMAINS TO SAVE LIVES

WE OFTEN TAKE our healthy and robust democracy for granted. Yet it is probably our greatest asset in our momentous struggle to overcome the coronavirus pandemic.

We have among the most politically-engaged citizenry in the world. A poll in 2018 by the Pew Research Center shows South Africans are strongly inclined to take political

action about issues they feel most strongly about, such as health care, education, freedom of speech and corruption.

The poll confirms much that we already know about ourselves. We enjoy nothing more than robust engagement with our government and among ourselves on the burning issues of the day. We have an active civil society ever ready to safeguard our fundamental freedoms and rights.

One of the triumphs of our democracy is that every South African believes the Constitution protects them and that the courts are a fair and impartial arbiter of their interests.

I got thinking on these matters during a recent visit to the Eastern Cape to assess the province's coronavirus state of readiness.

I was asked by a journalist whether I was concerned at the pending litigation

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CONVERSATIONS WITH THE PRESIDENT

President Ramaphosa addresses members of the Eastern Cape Provincial Command Council



tion challenging certain provisions of the Disaster Management Act. This law is the basis for all the regulations promulgated under the national state of disaster we declared to combat coronavirus.

Since the start of this crisis, a number of people have exercised their right to approach the courts. The lockdown regulations were challenged in the very first week of the lockdown by a private citizen from Mpumalanga who wanted an exemption from the travel prohibition to attend a funeral.

In the 7 weeks that have followed, there have been legal challenges from a number of individuals, religious bodies, political parties, NGOs and from business organisations against one measure or more of the lockdown provisions they were unhappy with. Some have succeeded in their legal challenges and some have not. Some, who had approached the courts on the basis of the urgency of their cases, had their urgency arguments dismissed and others have found other avenues for the relief they sought. Others have subsequently withdrawn their appli-

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Our every decision
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”

cations following engagement with government.

While we would prefer to avoid the need for any legal action against government, we should accept that citizens who are unhappy with whatever action that government has decided on implementing have a right to approach our courts for any form of relief they seek. This is a normal tenet of a constitutional democracy and a perfectly acceptable practice in a country founded on the rule of law.

We have checks and balances in place to ensure that every aspect of governance is able to withstand constitutional scrutiny. Where we are found wanting, we will be held to account by our courts and, above all, by our citizens. Besides our courts, our Chapter 9 institutions exist to advance the rights of citizens, as do the bodies tasked with oversight over the law enforcement agencies.

As I told the journalist, every South African has a right to approach the courts and even I, as President, could never stand in the way of anybody exercising that right.

There has been, and will continue to be, robust and strident critique of a number of aspects of our national response to coronavirus, from the data modelling and projections, to the economic effects of the lockdown, to the regulations. As government, we have neither called for such critique to be tempered or for it to be silenced.

To the contrary, criticism, where it is constructive, helps us to adapt and to move with agility in response to changing circumstances and condi-

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tions. It enriches public debate and gives us all a broader understanding of the issues at play.

We have consistently maintained that we rely on scientific, economic and empirical data when it comes to making decisions and formulating regulations around our coronavirus response. To the greatest extent possible under these challenging circumstances, we aim for consultation and engagement. We want all South Africans to be part of this national effort. The voices of ordinary citizens must continue to be heard at a time as critical as this.

The coronavirus pandemic and the measures we have taken to combat it have taken a heavy toll on our people. It has caused huge disruption and hardship. Although we can point to the progress we have made in delaying the transmission of the

virus, there is still a long way to go. The weeks and months ahead will be difficult and will demand much more from our people.

The pandemic will therefore continue to place an enormous strain on our society and our institutions. Even as we gradually open up the economy, the impact on people's material conditions will be severe. For as long as this is the case, the potential for conflict, discord and dissatisfaction will remain.

As we navigate these turbulent waters, our Constitution is our most important guide and our most valued protection. Our robust democracy provides the strength and the resilience we need to overcome this deep crisis.

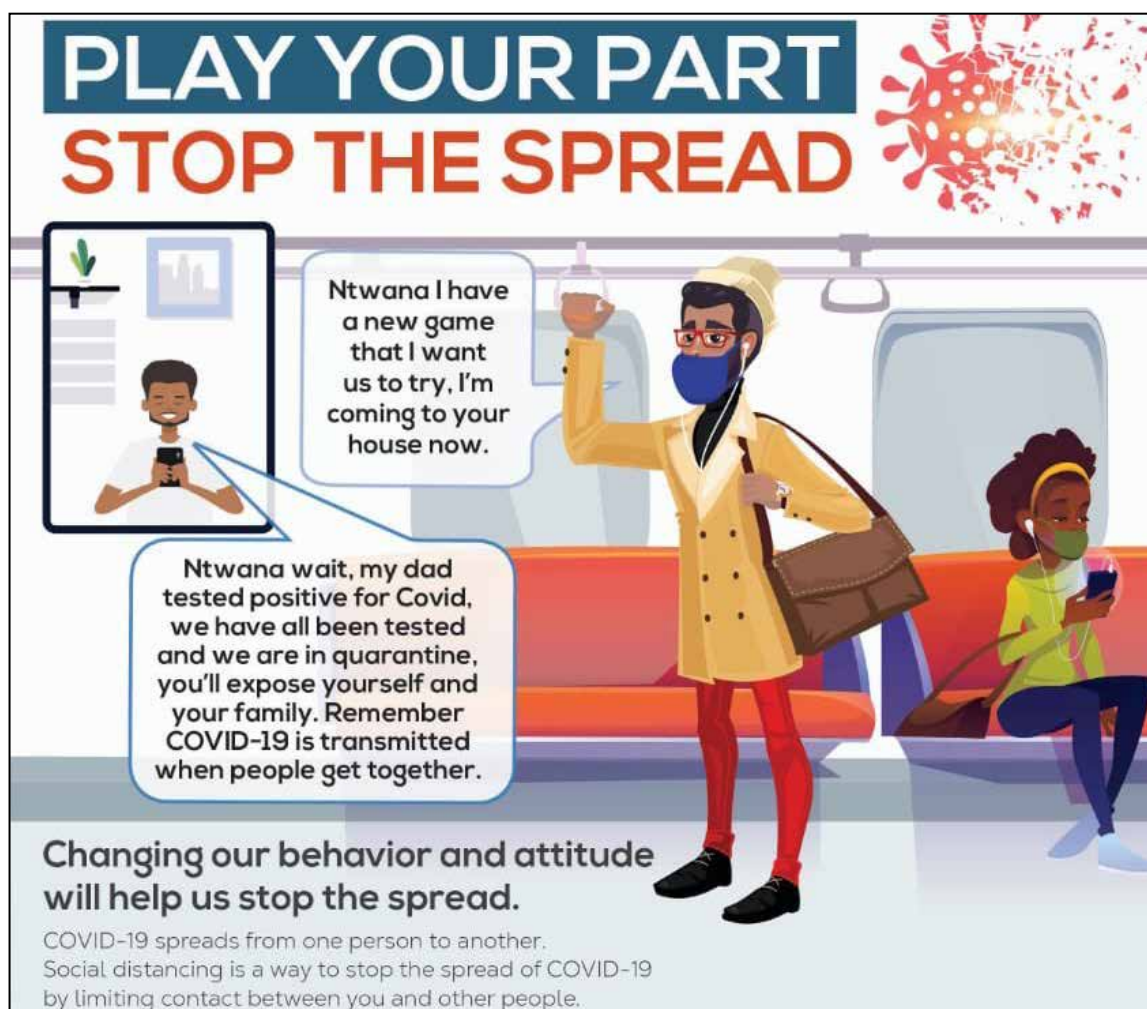
Just as government appreciates that most court applicants are motivated by the common good, so too should

we recognise that the decisions taken by government are made in good faith and are meant to advance, and not to harm, the interests of South Africans.

Our foremost priority remains to save lives. Our every decision is informed by the need to advance the rights to life and dignity as set out in our Constitution.

We will continue to welcome different – even dissenting – viewpoints around our national coronavirus response. All viewpoints aid us and help us to work better and smarter.

The exercise of the fundamental freedoms of expression, association and speech is a barometer of the good health of our democracy. But much more than that, these rights are essential to the success of our national and collective struggle to overcome the coronavirus.



THE WAR AGAINST COVID-19

FREEDOM AND EQUALITY – THE BIRTHMARK OF A BETTER FUTURE

**EXCERPTS FROM A POLITICAL LECTURE BY ANC SECRETARY GENERAL ELIAS ACE MAGASHULE
TO THE LEADERSHIP OF THE ANC YOUTH LEAGUE TSHWANE REGION ON THE
SIGNIFICANCE OF SOLIDARITY AND INTERNATIONALISM AND THE ROLE OF THE CUBAN
REVOLUTION IN OUR STRUGGLE AGAINST IMPERIALISM AND COLONIALISM**

15 May 2020

PART OF THE strategy and tactics of our national liberation movement, the ANC, is to analyse the balance of forces at the turn of each and every historical period, and to determine how they influence the pace and direction of our struggle for the emancipation of our people. The ANC has always understood our struggle to be part of the wider struggle by our people to make the world a better place to live in.

Today we use the opportunity of this platform to share ideas about the significance of human solidarity and internationalism and the role of the Cuban revolution in the history of our struggle against imperialism and colonialism. We do so because the question of human solidarity and internationalism is more than ever becoming important in the current trajectory of our struggle, as we work towards the building of a just and a peaceful world order.

The reality is that if the progressive world of the community of nations is not together, the weak shall be swallowed by the strength of the powerful. Therefore, solidarity and internationalism must be an essential quality of each and every progressive nation of the world and all revolutionaries.

The question of solidarity and interna-



tionalism is of profound importance in the current realities of the dominant world of imperialism and neo-colonialism. This question is about the future of the overwhelming majority of the suffering people of the world, it is about their common aspirations, their being, their history, present and future.

A century ago, just as the people of the world were celebrating the end of the First World War, which culminated in the signing of the peace treaty of Versailles in 1919, our mother earth was visited by a catastrophic pandemic called the Spanish Flu - one of the deadliest pandemics which anni-

hilated nearly half the population of the human race.

The deteriorating socio-economic conditions caused by the First World War became the breeding ground for the spread of the pandemic. This was mainly as a result of the upheavals and mass movements of people from one place to the other, overcrowding in the war camps and prisons, overcrowding in hospitals, malnutrition and other related diseases which weakened immune systems amongst the millions of people, and by thousands and thousands of soldiers returning to their respective countries, carrying the disease at the end of the war.

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As if history is repeating itself, today, as the world community of nations is celebrating the centenary of the end of the First World War, our mother earth is again confronted by yet another deadly pandemic called the coronavirus or COVID-19. The difficult situation we are subjected to by this deadly pandemic is part of the history humanity witnessed before, which saw millions and millions of the people of the world succumbing to pandemics such as the Plague of Justinian (Bubonic), the Black death, the great plague of London, the great plague of Marseille, the epidemic of Polio, Cholera, Malaria, HIV/AIDS, Ebola and many others.

This is part of the living realities of who we are, that we are able to see the world as it unfolds its complex essence, that we are indeed part of our mother nature, because ours is the struggle to change it, to transform it into a true home for all. This is the essence of the struggle for the liberation of humanity, the struggle towards the achievement of our better future.

In the mist of this disastrous pandemic, which is inflicting so much pain onto the people of the world, we are encouraged by the relentless efforts

amongst the international community to help the weak and those who are mostly affected. These are the great feats of solidarity and internationalism the future of humanity stand for, and that we should always try to emulate.

The true meaning of solidarity and internationalism is to understand the suffering of others and of being true human beings. Our long held view is the world-wide slogan that states: ***“an injury to one is an injury to all.”***

As the people of our country mark 26 years of the anniversary of the birth of our freedom and democracy, we continue to appreciate what human solidarity and internationalism have in store for us. We use the occasion to convey our gratitude to all throughout the progressive world, to all of our friends, brothers and sisters across the frontiers of our mother earth, and indeed, we are grateful of your contribution to the cause of the struggle for the liberation of our people.

Amongst many of the selfless people of the world, who inspired our determination to defeat the monstrous system of the apartheid colonialism, and who continue to inspire us today, are the peace loving people of the Repub-

lic of Cuba, a great nation which has today become the cradle of the future world of solidarity and internationalism.

In the whole history of the struggle of the people of the world, Cuba is the only nation which paid back its moral debt to the victims of imperialism and colonialism. The Cuban revolution paid the moral debt not because it was involved in the enslavement, oppression or exploitation of the people, but because of its gratitude to those nations whose people were enslaved by the colonial powers.

Cuba has been there in the forefront assisting many countries during difficulties when some of them were confronted by calamities such as earthquakes, volcanoes, hurricanes, pandemics, floods, and many others. Throughout its history we have seen her sending its medical doctors and other expertise to countries such as Nepal, Pakistan, Sri-Lanka, Indonesia, Armenia, Iran, China, Bolivia, Salvador, Nicaragua, Equator, Mexico, Haiti, Jamaica, Peru, Honduras, Chile, Liberia, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Mozambique, East Timor, Italy, South Africa and many others during difficult times of need. Even today, at the wake

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of the disastrous COVID-19, the Cuban medical brigade, the 'Army of the White Gowns', have been deployed in more than twenty three countries of the world to fulfill its humanitarian mission of combating the outbreak of the pandemic.

Presently more than seven thousand and five hundred and seventy nine students (7, 579) are completing their studies in Cuba in the medical sciences, of which two thousand seven hundred and sixty six (2 766) are from our country South Africa. Their major specialty is in the primary health care services, which will make them to work in the rural areas and some of the most poverty stricken areas throughout our country.

The ANC national conference supported the initiative of the Fidel and Mandela scholarship programme which was launched immediately after our democratic breakthrough, to send young South Africans to Cuba to study as medical doctors. We have impressed on our government to ensure that this historic initiative of our two iconic leaders is safeguarded.

We want this important programme to be escalated to the higher levels by ensuring that more and more students are sent to Cuba to study as medical doctors and in other specialties. Our country needs more doctors and Cuba is the only destiny to give us the necessary help we need.

This is what this small heroic Island from the Caribbean continues to contribute towards the fulfillment of the

wishes and aspirations of humanity. This is what this small Island with meager resources can contribute the determination of humanity to achieve a better world.

In this regard, we are making a call to the USA Administration, under the leadership of President Donald Trump, to lift the decades of economic blockade imposed on the people of Cuba. The economic blockade should be condemned as a crime against humanity.

On behalf of the leadership and the membership of the African National Congress, and on behalf of the people of our country, we convey our heartfelt condolences to the many people in the world, who lost their loved once during these trying times, and wish those of our people in hospitals and in health care centers a speedy recovery. Our hearts and minds are with them and we are confident that through our common determination we shall conquer.

From the deep bottom of my heart I wish to take this opportunity to thank the leadership and the membership of the ANC Youth in our capital city, Tshwane, for making sure that this lecture becomes a success. We call on you to continue to be the true ambassadors of our national liberation movement during this difficult period of the pandemic of the COVID 19.

COVID-19

STOP THE SPREAD

Wear a CLOTH face mask when in public



Practice Social Distancing and Wash your Hands regularly



Protect Yourself.

Defend Each Other:

Let's Do it Together.

#Khawuleza

#BeTheRenewal



Dear Mr President

THE African continent will commemorate Africa Day under unique circumstances in the wake of the global pandemic which has brought most of the world to a standstill.

Africa Day is traced back to 1958 when African nations established Africa Liberation Day to commemorate our independence from European colonialism. South Africa was the last country to unshackle herself from the clutches of European bondage in 1994 while Ghana was the first to gain independence in March 1957 under the leadership of Kwame Nkrumah. While the African National Congress could not formally attend the Conference of African States in 1958 as it was prevented by the ruling apartheid government, a memorandum was sent to the conference on behalf of the ANC.

Following the demise of apartheid, South Africa became part of the Organisation of African Union (OAU) in 1994.

Whereas the day is celebrated by showcasing the splendour of African cultural heritage, the celebrations will be muted this year as a result of Covid-19 and the resultant lockdowns



By Pule Mabe

which forbid large gatherings. However, technology allows the significant day to be commemorated virtually. One of the biggest events set to take place on Africa Day is the Africa Day Benefit Concert At Home, which will be hosted by actor Idris Elba and will feature artists such as Angelique Kidjo, Burna Boy and AKA and many others and will be streamed live.

As the world and Africa wages a war against the coronavirus, the proceeds of the concert will go towards supporting those who are affected by the virus. Elba, who portrayed our icon Nelson Mandela in his biopic, was himself diagnosed with Covid-19

in April and has since recovered. In January 2017, the African union launched the continent-wide public health agency, the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), which was established to help African member states to respond to public health emergencies. This has proven visionary in the wake of the novel coronavirus as it is distinctively positioned to protect the health of the continent. The Africa CDC has highly qualified epidemiologists ready to monitor for disease threats across the continent. They are responsible for surveillance, analysis, investigations and reporting trends and anomalies.

Mr President, Africa may have overcome colonialism but the effects of centuries under the yoke of imperialism have left scars that remain with us to this day. Despite the riches and favourable climate, the continent is blighted by underdevelopment and disproportionate burden of diseases such as malaria and yellow fever. The coronavirus has also placed a huge economic hurdle on the path of building a prosperous Africa.

The South African government responded to the pestilence by instituting a national lockdown to contain the spread of the coronavirus. The lockdown came at a huge cost as it ham-



pered and limited economic activity. South Africans understood that the protection of lives took precedence over anything else. It has been two months since movement was restricted and there are murmurings of discontent among some sectors of our population.

Those who would like to see the country return to normal have turned a deaf ear to the scientific evidence at hand, which is that there is no going back to life as we knew it.

The coronavirus has irreversibly changed our routine and it would be foolhardy to pretend otherwise.

Those who want the lockdown to be seized without any mechanisms in place to halt the virus, are simply toying with the lives of our people. The need to maintain social distancing and the wearing of masks are the new normal which we cannot afford to neglect now and in the near future. The virus has proven to be resilient and until a vaccine is found, all of us remain susceptible to infection.

Mr President, ours is a loud and noisy democracy where freedom of speech is guaranteed by the constitution. The government is guided by the best scientific minds to map the path of the

virus which those who would like to see us regress do not acknowledge. The government made it clear that the protection of lives superseded anything else while taking measures to limit economic devastation. It was in this spirit that massive relief measures were undertaken to cushion the blow to the poor and small and big businesses. As the lockdown is eased in phases, it is vital for our people to remain vigilant and continue to adhere to the hygiene protocols that seek to protect their lives and those of their fellow humans.

Social distancing is the new norm, as is washing our hands regularly and avoiding close human contact.

We cannot simply lift the lockdown and allow large gatherings and events while the coronavirus gathers pace on its path of destruction. We cannot allow lives to be lost to the virus while we know steps that can be taken to limit its spread. We cannot afford to be reckless and reverse the gains we have made in mitigating the effects of the coronavirus.

Mr President, the government has considered the re-opening the schools to ensure that the academic year is not lost. The return of the grade 7 and 12 pupils to school next

month has been met with understandable anxiety by the parent and other stakeholders. The measured re-opening will afford the crucial education sector to adjust to the new realities and acclimatise the pupils and the teachers to the new protocols. The protection of children is a right guaranteed in the constitution and it is the responsibility of every South African to ensure that children are protected. From home to school as well as public places, the children should be protected and taught the need to keep physical distance and to wash their hands and wear protective equipment and to avoid touching their faces.

It is often said that the children are the future and this is truer today than yesterday. Africa is blessed with a young population which augurs well for the future of the continent.

These are the minds that need to be developed to take the continent to the next level.

Yours sincerely,

Pule Mabe

National Spokesperson and Head of the Department of Information and Publicity

THE WAR AGAINST COVID-19

ANC buttress the government and multilateral institutions, the paradox of noise and criticism for COVID-19 lockdown regulations – A POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE

By Tshilidzi Munyai

THE MEETING of the African National Congress (ANC) Study

Group coincided with the opening of the 73rd Session of the World Health Assembly which saw a number of world leaders pledge their full support to the fight against the devastating novel coronavirus pandemic. South Africa's remarkable measures in the battle against COVID-19 are being recognized in many global multilateral institutions, at both the United Nations and the World Health Organisations.

Our co-BRICS strategic partner, Chinese President Xi Jinping also addressed this World Health Assembly, further pledging support to African countries towards prevention, detection and treatment interventions. These are significant milestones as they will build Africa's capabilities to respond to this pandemic.

The ANC has demonstrated that there are three effective weapons in the fight against COVID-19. These are political leadership and will, science and technology as well as public participation. We welcome our ANC's National Executive Committee political leadership collective and the



work of the study group through sub-committees, which is effectively done with leadership leading from the front, with scientists providing evidence that influences policy decisions and most importantly, inclusive citizen engagement and stakeholder participation.

The Study Group has had an opportunity to reflect on our government's efforts to protect our people against this invisible enemy. We commend the government's transparency and the respect with which the people of South Africa have acknowledged the government's response.

The Study Group further noted threats by the USA's intent to halt funding to the World Health Organisation (WHO). This is of major concern particularly because this pandemic needs all hands on deck. The fight against

the contagious virus that is devastating humanity needs support from around the world, especially from those with the financial muscle necessary to build prevention and treatment capabilities.

We viewed the allegation that characterises WHO as China-centric regrettable. It person-

alises what ought to be a collaborative global response. We view this as a continuation of the trade war between the largest and second-largest economies in the world, much to the risk of growth and development of countries of the Global South. In this context, we reaffirm our political position of South-South cooperation so that cooperation and solidarity of the developing nations and regions should be better coordinated at African Union, G20 and other multilateral platforms

To this end, we commend and support the work effected by the Head of the World Health Organisation, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, who continues to build a global alliance against COVID-19 that relies on science and partnership with social partners and

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communities. We urge the WHO to fast-track the work they have been doing across the world to champion universal health coverage. Here in South Africa, we are on course to legislate the National Health Insurance as a comprehensive and long-term commitment to universal access to quality healthcare.

Desperate scientist, the paradox of noise and criticism to representative democracy

On the noise and criticism we have seen and heard in the media about the government's handling of the response to the epidemic, the Study Group believes that the Ministry of Health, the National Command Council and indeed Cabinet have been transparent and participatory. They have consistently tried to rally all South Africans, including scientists, behind the response.

Against this backdrop, we voice our concern and disappointment by the unprecedented attack on the country response to COVID-19 and by extension, on an attack against ANC-led government. Even more concerning is that this onslaught is led by senior members of the Ministerial Advisory Council (MAC): Dr. Glenda Gray, Dr. Ian Sanne, Dr. Harry Moultrie, Dr. Mac Mendelson and Dr. Shabir Madhi. These scientists are part of a critical committee that advises the government on evidence-based methods of containing the spread of the virus.

They are full members of a large, balanced and diverse committee.

As seasoned scientists, they should know well that one view or approach does not always prevail. Such are subjected to peer review and critical scrutiny. In fact, it is well known in the public service that the adviser's job is to give fearless advice and bureaucrats must implement the decisions. Those elected to make policy decisions are expected to balance evidence (advice) and make decisions against which the public can hold them accountable. It is disappointing therefore that such senior scientists who work in a collective can launch such a vicious public attack against the President only because their models or approaches do not prevail in a committee. This is foreign to the conventions that these scientists are accustomed to in the daily grind of their own craft.

We caution our government to put tight regulation to control the foreign donor-funded NGOs based in South Africa, whose agenda is not aligned

with our National Democratic Revolution. Their proximity and access to the public health data and financial dominance pose threats and danger to the sovereignty of our country. As the ANC, our political lens at the nexus is *"fund and control"* which we are unashamedly diametrically opposed to. No one should take advantage of desperate South Africa financial need during COVID-19.

While South Africa is grappling with tough strategic and tactical political and economic policy choices under the lockdown regulation, no neo-liberal right-wing conservative ideas shall see the light of the moon because we are a disciplined force of the left, unashamedly biased to the working class and the poor.

We don't respect dissenters who cry foul seeking public sympathy to influence government policy direction in the pretext of science. We as the ANC embrace science and technology to advance our society and advice to combat COVID-19. However, such must be constructive and progressive, done in a manner that does not erode public confidence in our urgent response, both in parliament as a site and terra of struggle and as legislative oversight body, including to the Medical Research Council that Dr. Glenda Gray leads as the President and CEO.

Tshilidzi Munyai is Chairperson of the African National Congress Study Group on Health, Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, Cape Town.

The ANC has demonstrated
that there are **three**
effective weapons in
the fight against Covid-19.





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STAY HOME
SAVE SOUTH AFRICA

“We must expect infections to rise as more people return to work...The demands on our clinics and hospitals will also grow...We must prepare for this reality and adapt to it.”

- From the Desk of President Cyril Ramaphosa
11 May 2020

ANC VETERANS LEAGUE MOURNS THE UNTIMELY DEATH OF COMRADE LAURENCE DWORKIN

THE ANC Veterans League is saddened by the untimely death of comrade Laurence Dworkin who succumbed to COVID-19 on the 18th of May 2020.

Laurence Dworkin, who died at age 65, joined the ANC Internal Video Unit during the most oppressive days of apartheid in 1985.

He took the risk of meeting with Cde Ismael Coovadia, who was responsible for the ANC propaganda in London. This is where he was given an amount of 43,000 British Pounds to establish an ANC underground Video Unit.

The ANC underground Video Unit was responsible for filming the violent attacks by the apartheid security forces, police and soldiers against the South African society.

Laurence founded the Video News Services with Rapiitse Montsho, Brian Telly and Nyana Molete who joined later. Together with Afravision, which was



Comrade Laurence Dworkin

based in London, the Unit distributed video footage of the apartheid atrocities during the most oppressive and violent years of the apartheid regime to the World News Agencies and the anti-apartheid organisations.

They documented the relentless and

courageous struggles of the South African society against the most atrocious system of apartheid.

The Video News Service was a clandestine unit of the ANC, which worked closely with the United Democratic Front, COSATU and all other liberation forces in the country.

Laurence was an unassuming person, highly principled and committed to the struggle against apartheid. He led with humility and steadfastness.

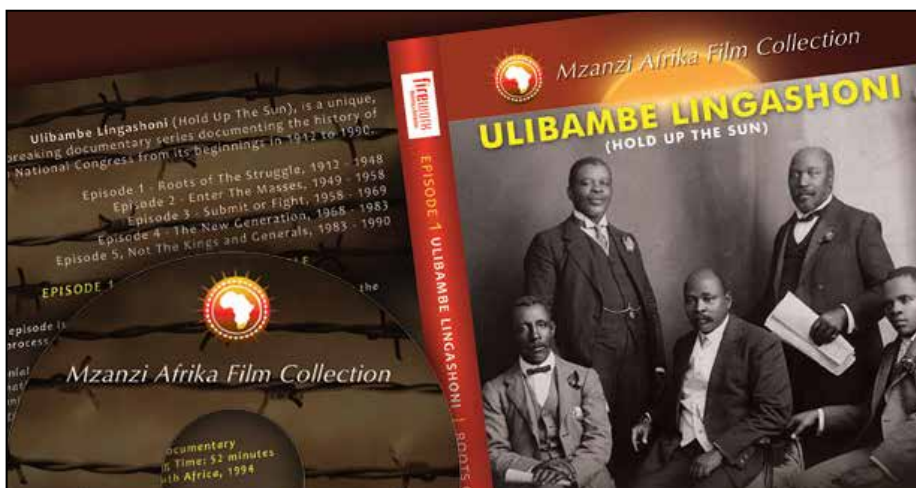
He led our team that did the last interview with President Oliver Tambo before he had a stroke in Lusaka. The in-depth archive material that VNS collected over the years contributed to the documentary film of the ANC, **uLibambe Lingashoni**. The Unit will dearly miss him.

It is sad, said Cde Ismael Coovadia, that Laurence passed on without us documenting the important role he played in establishing an ANC internal and underground video unit that exposed the apartheid atrocities. He added that the video materials which were sent to them helped the ANC to mobilise the international community to support the struggle against apartheid.

Comrade Laurence is our unsung hero and his selfless contribution will always be remembered.

The ANC Veterans League conveys its deepest condolences to his family and friends.

May His Soul Rest in Internal Peace.



PERSPECTIVE

THE FACE OF COVID-19, JUST LIKE POVERTY, IS A WOMAN

(PART 2)

By Precious Banda

The article seeks to demonstrate how pandemics have a general effect to exacerbate the pre-existing inequalities and argues that even with COVID-19, it will surely amplify the gender inequality in the world including in South Africa.

SOCIAL DIMENSION

The Khayelitsha case exposed social challenges where one woman had been stigmatised and, whilst in hospital, her landlord evicted her through a voice note, citing how she placed the landlord's family at risk. Such stigmatisation led to another young woman from Nyanga, who was mistaken for the Khayelitsha victim and was harassed and had to go on social media to explain that she is Covid-19 negative. Stigmatisation by communities is not a new phenomenon as it was seen during the HIV/Aids pandemic, where women were insulted and called names as having caught the virus supposedly due to promiscuity. Others were declared to have been possessed and advised to undergo initiation so they could be traditional healers. Activists, organisations and government should be doing a lot of work to ensure effective public education during this time to avoid similar narratives about COVID-19.

The Minister of Police announced the alarming numbers of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) cases of women having been abused during this lockdown period. A lot of people were shocked and they forgot that the COVID-19 outbreak happened at a time when we were already in a war against GBV. It is a war that goes on year in and year out, where mainly women are



dying in the hands of men, women being violated and dehumanised daily. The government and society must address the safety of victims of GBV and child abuse in the context of a lockdown in which victims are forced into closer and more confined spaces with their abusers.

Members of the LGBTQIA+ Community are also locked down in homes and places with people who are homophobic and continue to stigmatise them. Without a lockdown, they can go to school, work, and visit places that are conducive and less tense. But because of the lockdown, they will have to be in homes and among communities with people that are homophobic and have no regard for other people's sexual choices and preferences. We need an integrated women, children and LGBTQIA+ concrete approach to sexual and gender abuse now, given the nature of domestic violence in SA.

Social workers should be finding smart ways of providing support for girls, women and household marred by domestic violence. The GBV call centre must not only be publicised alone but interactive initiatives like the GBV robot must be taught in all public media and social networks so that women and children are taught to detect elements of abuse through the

GBV robot. The GBV call centre must be expanded and also linked with police so that callers are automatically given case numbers that police can follow up.

EDUCATION DIMENSION

The COVID-19 outbreak compels all children to find means to learn from home. What does that mean for the working class children? Some of their parents cannot read or write because we still struggle with adult literacy. Many stay with grandparents, particularly grandmothers. A smart cell phone with online facilities might seem like an easy gadget to own but not for rural parents and children where even if one is owned, the digital divide still prevents universal connectivity. Moreover in cases where they have a smart phone and connectivity, it is not sophisticated enough to receive worksheets from school via WhatsApp and the cost of data bundles are a serious challenge.

Ever since schools closed due to the outbreak of the covid-19, our messaging has been to encourage online learning and the Department of Education has been sharing links to sites where learners can get study material. We are aware of the fact that it is difficult for a child who

PERSPECTIVE



**School feeding schemes:
For some of the learners,
the meal at school is the
only guaranteed meal that
they have.**

”

stays in an overcrowded home to study and pay attention uninterrupted. We are further aware that data bundles are a luxury to poor people as they stay in villages and areas where free Wi-Fi does not exist. With all the online facilities of study being made available, it means we are systematically excluding them. By the time schools are open, they will be behind compared to their counterparts who had access to data. The lockdown is a necessary intervention to flatten the curve of COVID-19 and its impact is viciously harder on the working class and lower middle classes. This calls for the government and society to challenge data and network companies to contribute towards the learning of the poor by availing free data bundles to each number on their network so that parents and home assistants can access school work. Multi-Choice platform must also offer all DStv channels and extra educational resources for free during the lockdown.

The other group we need to think about are learners who benefit from feeding schemes in schools. For some of these learners, the meal at school is the only guaranteed meal that they have. Meals at home are usually uncertain because parents are unemployed or underemployed.

With this entire burden, the girl child is likely to be subjected to house chores at home instead of doing school work. Let's all ensure we give the necessary support to the labouring girl child in our neighbourhood by checking up on them and guiding them to do schoolwork through phone calls and WhatsApps. During the lockdown, all little acts of caring count. We must be the girl child's keeper so that she excels with her schoolwork.

We must introduce the smart learning from primary and secondary schools and not only for times like these. Interventions through online classes during the Covid19 pandemic that ignore the real conditions and lived experiences of the majority of South African children not only denies working class children the right to equal education but also strengthens capitalist social reproduction. This requires the Department of Postal and Telecommunication Services to invest and expedite the roll out of the SA Connect programme, which they or National Treasury recently un- or underfunded. It also entails the achievement of data must fall, which the Competition Commission has started, but must become a major programme to enable closing the digital divide between urban and rural and between the wealthy and working class.

CONCLUSION

What is glaring, and is confirmed by the COVID-19 pandemic, is that where such a pandemic hits an unequal society and environment, women will be the ones to be heavily burdened. The health, labour, social and economic implications suffered are particularly severe based on the location and positioning of women, and in particularly black working class and poor women in society. Never before has the case for gender and social transformation been more urgent than now. Gender equality is a product of social, political and economic transformation; it is therefore not achievable without fundamental transformation of the mode of production and its ideological and political superstructure.

We must all adhere to the regulations

that have been put in place and stay at home to reduce and cut the spread of COVID-19. As the economic conditions get harsher on the majority poor women in our fight against COVID-19, we cannot afford to have increased infections. Let us use water and soap which we can afford. Let us wash our hands and clean our environments. The hotel and hospitality industry is called upon to donate soap and shampoos which they are not using to working class communities that cannot afford. Each industry must give something to the fight against COVID-19. The people must give themselves up by adhering to all regulations and being patriotic.

While it is difficult for urban and rural working class families to practice physical distance, let us stay home. Inequality in society makes the lockdown particularly harsh for huge families staying in small houses. It is better than being outside and contacting people as it puts our very families and poor communities at risk. Let us be safe as we continue to confront patriarchy and capitalism during this pandemic.

With all decisions that are still to be made in the fight against Covid19, we must firstly consider the poor and working-class women and interrogate what will be the implications of our decisions on the state of these women.

In our fight against this dangerous virus, we must not leave behind the marginalised groupings in society. We must fight patriarchy, GBV and COVID-19 until we win. Everything for the revolution and nothing against it!

Precious Banda is Convenor of the ANC Women's League Young Women Desk.

Q & A

Q & A

By Amanda Tshemese

IN THE SPOTLIGHT: **Sasekani Manzini****1. Who is Sasekani Manzini?**

I am an African woman and a mother who was born in a village called Madras in Bushbukridge, Mpumalanga. I learned through the Durban University of Technology (DUT) and University of Johannesburg (UJ), my alma maters. I learned through the ANC Youth League, the ANC mother body and through the well of wisdom that is to be found in the community of my village, including through many other social interactions.

My hatred of poverty and underdevelopment drove me to join the ANCYL and the ANC as a vehicle to wage struggles to build a better life for all. I served and was elected the first female Provincial Secretary of the ANCYL in Mpumalanga. I have since served, among other portfolios, as a Member of the Mpumalanga Executive Council responsible for Public Works Roads and Transport and currently in Health.

2. You're one of the youngest MEC member in the country. How has the journey been as MEC of health especially during these testing times?

The journey of expanding public quality health care and making sure poor South Africans have access to the best health facilities has been a difficult but fulfilling one. There are many challenges in the sector which range from backlogs in health infrastructure to a shortage of nurses and doctors. However, as a positive person, I do not bury myself in challenges but look for opportunities everywhere. That is why I am an ardent campaigner of the National Health Insurance (NHI) because it is the only solution to our health care challenges. The COVID-19 came at



*Comrade Sasekani Manzini is
MEC for Health,
Mpumalanga Province*

the worst time but through the leadership of the ANC government, we seem to be sailing through the rough seas and we are still alive, and in these testing times life alone is enough.

3. In terms of workers' rights protection, how do you think SA is doing as compared to the rest of the world?

As an activist, I believe workers rights are human rights, so they are part of the non-negotiables I believe in. It is a known fact that South Africa has one of the best constitutions in the world largely because it guarantees, among others, workers' rights. When compared to other parts of the world, South Africa's workers rights are amongst the best, that is why South African

workers can go on protected strikes; they can bargain for their wage and fight against unfair dismissals. Women workers have maternity leave and most workers are consulted by their employers on any changes relating to their working conditions.

4. What would you say is the relevance of unions currently?

Unions are very relevant and continue wage workers struggles and protect workers from exploitation in many forms. It is common cause that in South Africa, there are still employers who do not meet the minimum standards prescribed by the labour relations Act. So, it is the work of unions to make sure that these minimum standards which protect employees or their members are met. Some employers still refuse to pay the minimum wage prescribed by the progressive ANC government. Some still deny women their maternity leave. This is a clear case for the continued existence of unions..

5. What do you think needs to be improved from now on in order to make lives of the workers even better?

A lot needs to change to improve the lives of the working class in South Africa. We need to change the way in which capital and the means of production are owned and controlled in South Africa. We need to reduce the levels of income inequality and do away with the current unsustainable and unjust system wherein a few own wealth equal to that of the bottom half. We need to increase the participation of the workers, the youth and women in the mainstream economy.. We need

to make sure that the economy grows, but that it doesn't grow for the elite but grows to benefit all through, for example, the creation of jobs and empowerment of the workers.

6. We are marking workers month at a difficult time in our country and the world. What would you like to say to our essential workers, our doctors, nurses, petrol attendants, cashiers, taxi drivers and others?

The first thing I need to say is to offer my sincere gratitude to all for carrying the world through these difficult times. Thank you once more, and kindly preserve your patriotism and love for humankind.. Siyabonga! My second message is an appeal to ordinary South Africans to treat these important people who we often disregard with the highest level of respect because we have all seen that the world is incomplete without them.

7. How is the ANC in Mpumalanga assisting government to fight COVID-19 and helping those needy families with food during these testing times?

The ANC as a people's movement that is always amongst the people especially when they go through difficult times, is doing all in it's ability to ensure that our people have all the necessities they need through these difficult times.. Structures of the ANC are making sure that our people receive the information required to acquire resources, like applying for food parcels provided by SASSA, applying for UIF for those who were working and so on. So, there is a number of interventions led by different structures of the ANC even though they are not sufficient because the poverty levels in our country is too high and extremely concerning. The poverty levels exposed by COVID-19 require us to think and do things different post the crisis.

8. What's your motto?

Never bury your head in a crisis, always look for opportunities. Never complain, always provide solutions.

**"LOVE IN THE TIME OF COVID-19,
A COMMUNITY POEM FOR HEALTHCARE
WORKERS AND OTHER FRONTLINERS"**

You spoke calming words to me
as I slipped into sleep
And yours were the first eyes I saw
as I came out from under the fog
Wingless angels dressed in scrubs,
footfall on our steps,
a tap on the window,
a neighbor's wave,
a newly-sewn mask tossed
(in a plastic bag), to the front
of the door: "run it through the washer
first," she calls, waves, and departs.

Earth angels, haloes shining bright,
working with this virus in the air!
We will not despair
You support us
You surround us
Because of you, the world
will get brighter,
socially un-distancing.

Bless the arms that hold you today.
We're all joining hands,
guests on this planet,
across many lands.
We are forever grateful
to the warriors who save lives.

Time to recognize the real heroes,
brilliant shadows, as we've never
seen before. God calls us
to opportunity, it is for each
of us to claim. Our neighbor
is our brother, is our sister,
is our keeper, is our healer.
As soldiers, you stand tall,
ready for the next patient who calls.
Your love and care exemplify
heroism without compare.

Without you, our country would be
facing an even larger catastrophe.

Doctors and nurses and other
frontliners, with help to give.
Some deliver goods,
some clean and scrub,

stock the shelves, and work so hard
so we can stay in our space.

You can do it, you can make it,
single mom working two shifts,
exhausted nursing home staff
fighting against depression
and confusion. Dementia.

Dressing up in silly costumes,
dancing down the halls,
Holding ipads high
so loved ones can see,
their elderly parent
who are unable to communicate,
reassuring them
that everything will be okay.

Smiling faces,
heads pounding,
tirelessly ensuring
the outside world
stays 'outside'
and residents stay safe.

For the inner strength,
courage and compassion
with which you serve,
our eternal devotion, you so deserve.

For all your efforts,
may you be blessed
a thousand fold.

Where we are,
the tired ghosts of fearful uncertainty
welcome the laughter
that champions the heart,
for the speed of love turns out
to be the speed of light.

A gentle reminder:
Be safe. Be well.
Be kind. Which is to say,
shelter in safety and love.

Everybody's home
and nobody's alone.

By Aileen Cassinetta, Poet Laureate

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

23–28 May 2020

Source: SA History Online (www.sahistory.org.za)



23 May 1926 Joe Slovo born

Joe Slovo (1926-1995), the former South African Communist Party (SACP) and African National Congress (ANC) leader and Minister of Housing, was born in Lithuania. From 1950s Slovo became a victim of repressive legislations, including banned under the Suppression of Communism Act of 1951, forcing him and others to continue political work underground. In 1963 Slovo skipped the country to work on African National Congress and South African Communist Party external missions. He was elected as General Secretary of the SCP in 1984, and a year later at the ANC Kabwe conference as the first white member of the NEC. He returned to South Africa after the unbanning of the ANC and SACP in 1990, served as part of the ANC negotiations team, and drafted the ANC discussion document on the so-called “*sunset clauses*.” After the first democratic elections in 1994, Slovo became an ANC Member of Parliament and Minister of Housing in the Government of National Unity.

23 May 1993

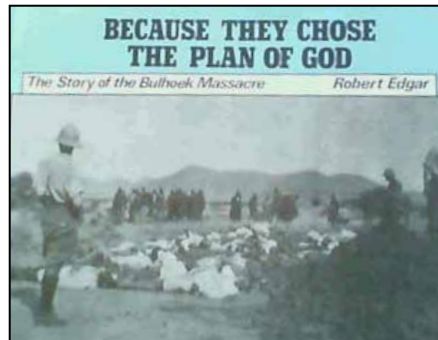
South Africa joins the OAU



After the first fully democratic elections, South Africa was officially admitted as 53rd member of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) at a summit, held in Tunis, Tunisia. The South Africa delegation was led by the Foreign Affairs Minister Alfred Nzo, who was applauded after membership was authorised at an OAU Council of Ministers meeting. After joining the OAU, South Africa participated actively in all activities and structures, such as the Secretariat, the Centre for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, the Central Organ, the Council of Ministers and the Annual Summit. The OAU was superseded by the African Union (AU). The inaugural session of the AU was held in Durban, South Africa on July 10, 2002. South Africa currently hosts the Pan African Parliament, the African Risk Capacity Agency, the NEPAD/AU Development Agency, the African Peer Review Mechanism, as well as set to host the space campus of the Pan African University.

24 May 1921

Bulhoek massacre



In 1921, in a battle lasting less than 30 minutes between police and Israelites, followers of prophet Enoch Mgijima, more than 180 people were killed. The battle started after police issued an ultimatum demanding that the Israelites evacuate land they were squatting on and warned that if they failed to comply, their leader would be arrested and their homes demolished. Soon afterwards a group of around 500 white-robed men, armed with sticks and spears, challenged the machine guns of an 800-strong police force sent by Jan Smuts to remove the Israelites who had settled at the holy village of Ntabelanga, Bulhoek in Queenstown to pray.

24 May 1921

First Comrades Marathon

The first Comrades Marathon was run by Vic Clapham, ex World War One veteran and other 34 runners, who initiated

it as a reunion. Clapham wanted to remember those who had fallen in the war by ultimate testing of body and mind, and triumphing. Sixteen runners completed the 87, 9km (55 mile) race from Pietermaritzburg to Durban. The annual ultra-distance marathon between Pietermaritzburg and Durban, is the world's oldest and largest ultra marathon.

25 May 1922

Young Communist League (YCLSA) formed



The plans for the formation of the Young Communist League (YCL) were laid in 1921 when the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) was established. Youth groups were formed in Johannesburg and Cape Town. In 1922, the YCL played a supportive role during the great white mineworkers' strike when 25,000 white miners downed tools because the Chamber of Mines proposed to dismiss about 2000 of them. In May that year they established a national structure, the YCL. Amongst the founding members were Edward Roux, Sarah Sable and Willie Kalk.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

25 May 2010

South Africa opera tenor Sphiwo Ntshebe passed away



Sphiwo Ntshebe was born in Brighton, Port Elizabeth. He was a great opera singer, whose career ended abruptly when he died of meningitis on 25 May 2010. Ntshebe was only 35 and was only days away from what would have been one of the highlights of his career. Former South African President Nelson Mandela had selected Ntshebe to be one of the performers at the 2010 FIFA World Cup. His sudden death came as a shock to many who knew him. His album *Hope* was released in 2010.

27 May 1973

Award-winning artist Thomas Trevor Motswai born

Thomas Trevor Motswai (known as Tommy) is an award-winning South African artist. He has achieved national and international acclaim. Motswai was born on 27 May 1963, in Soweto, South of Johannesburg. Although he was born deaf, he became a prolific and successful artist who portrayed the world around him on paper with pastels, and later lithographs.

According to Motswai, he liked *"to draw happy people doing ordinary things such as travelling on buses, talking and singing in places I know well, like Soweto."* He attended art classes at FUBA (Federated Union of Black Artists) and the Johannesburg Art Foundation. Motswai's superb visual memory enables him to record details of people, places and events which provide us with the artist's documentary of a period from the early 1980s to the present. His colourful, bold images record the subtleties and humour found within a culturally diverse and economically divided South Africa.

29 May 1935

Writer AP Brink is born



South African novelist, Andre Phillipus Brink (d.2015) was born on 29 May 1935. Brink obtained his Bachelor of Arts degree in Literature at the University of Potchefstroom in 1955. In 1958 he earned his Masters in Literature and in 1959, his Masters in Afrikaans and Dutch literature. In the 1960s, Brink, Ingrid Jonker and Breyten Breytenbach were part of the Afrikaans literary movement, *Die Sestigters* (*"The Sixty-ers"*). The group used literature to speak up against Apartheid and to bring about a European influence to Afrikaans literature. This saw some of Brink and his contemporaries' books being banned

by the Apartheid government. Some of his most notable works include: *A Dry White Season*, *An Act of Terror* and *The Other Side of Silence*.

29 May 2005

Hamilton Naki passed away



Hamilton Naki was a gardener who later became a laboratory assistant without any formal training. He first worked for Robert Goetz, who asked him to assist him in the laboratory instead of gardening. Having started with just assisting with the animals and cleaning cages, Naki later began anesthetizing the animals and assisting with surgeries. When Goetz left, Naki began working with Chris Barnard, the doctor who would perform the first heart transplant in South Africa. Those who have worked with Naki described him as a very talented and skilled for someone who didn't have any formal training. He would often perform amazing surgery work on animals quite effortlessly. After his death, it was claimed that he had assisted Dr Chris Barnard on his first successful heart transplant. The claim was later refuted and subsequently retracted. In 2003 UCT awarded him the degree MMed [honoris causa]. Naki died on 29 May 2005.



*No matter what vision one has of
South Africa, the first thing that
must be done is to destroy racism.*

– Joe Slovo –

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

INTERNATIONAL DAYS

23–28 May 2020

Source: <https://www.un.org>

24 May World Brothers Day

The day celebrates the link between siblings, and the importance of family.

25 May Africa Day

The day celebrates the founding of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) on 25 May 1963 in Addis Ababa. During the first few decades, the focus was on supporting the decolonization process, but after the end of apartheid in Namibia and South Africa, a greater focus was on peace, development and integration. The OAU Charter spelled out the purpose of the Organisation namely:

- To promote the unity and solidarity of the African States;
- To coordinate and intensify their cooperation and efforts to achieve a better life for the peoples of Africa;
- To defend their sovereignty, their territorial integrity and independence;
- To eradicate all forms of colonialism from Africa; and
- To promote international cooperation, having due regard to the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The OAU was officially transformed into the African Union (AU) at a historic launch in July 2002 in Durban, South Africa. It has 55 member states that make up the countries of the African Continent. The AU is guided by its vision of “**An Integrated, Prosperous and Peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena.**”



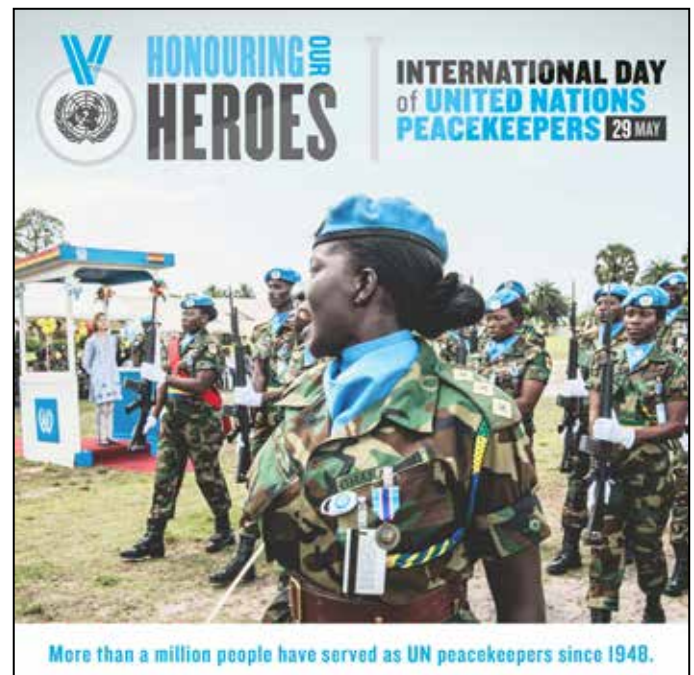
25 May International Day to end Obstetric Fistula

Obstetric fistula is one of the most serious and tragic injuries that can occur during childbirth. It is a hole between the birth canal and the bladder or rectum caused by prolonged, obstructed labour without treatment. The condition typically leaves women incontinent, and as a result they are often shunned by their communities. Sufferers often endure depression, social isolation and deepening poverty. Many women live with the condition for years – or even decades – because they cannot afford to obtain treatment. An estimated 2 million women in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, the Arab region, and Latin America and the Caribbean are living with this injury, and some 50,000 to 100,000 new cases develop each year. Yet fistula is almost entirely preventable. Its persistence is a sign that health systems are failing to meet women’s essential needs. In its resolution A/RES/67/147, the General Assembly calls on the international community to use the International Day to significantly raise awareness and intensify actions towards ending obstetric fistula.

25-29 May World Map Reading Week

Maps play an important role in our world, even with GPS on our phones and cars.

29 May International Day of UN Peace-keepers



The day pays tribute to the over 100,000 UN peacekeepers that are active all over the world today, including the more than 3900 peacekeepers who have lost their lives serving under the UN flag. The theme for this year’s Day is “**Women in Peacekeeping: A Key to Peace**” to help mark the 20th anniversary of the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, Peace and Security.

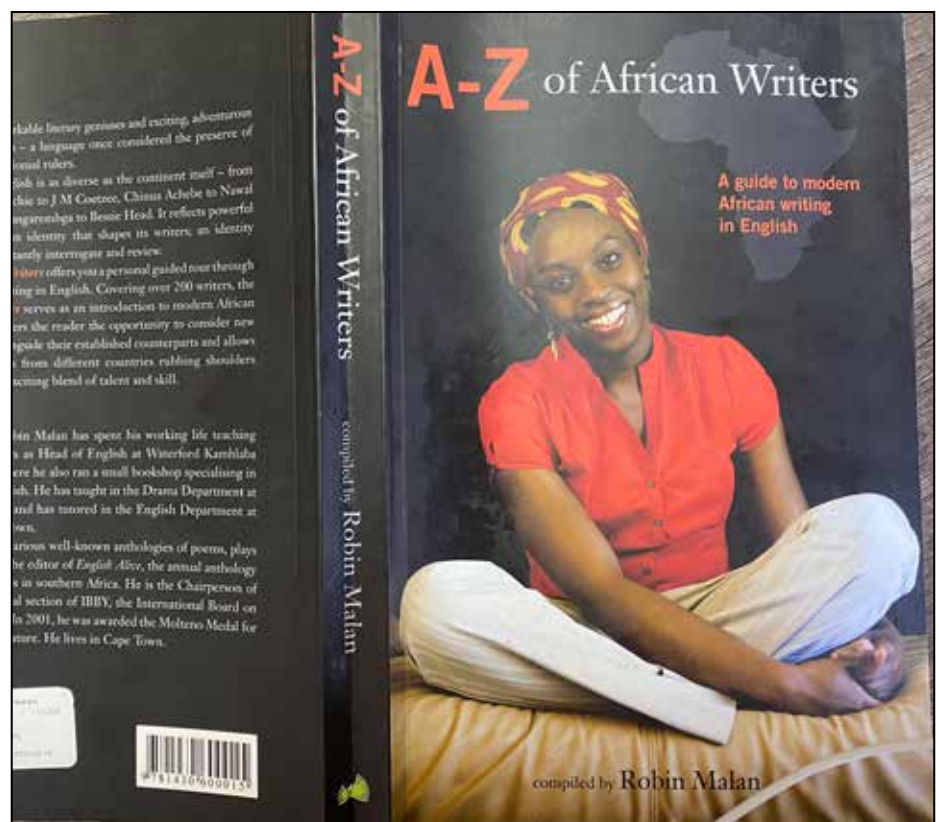
#Lockdown **READING LIST 8**

A-Z OF AFRICAN WRITERS

Compiled by Robin Malan (2009. Shuter) | Reviewed by F  b   Potgieter-Gqubule

THE **A-Z of African Writers. A Guide to modern African writing in English** by former Waterford Khumbula School in Swaziland head of English, who also ran a bookstore, is one of those books that you don't read from beginning to end, but to use as a reference, to look whether your favourite authors are in or who are left out! The author in the introduction explains: *"Of course, I've had to select these writers. There are thousands more."* So the selection focuses on fiction, poetry, children's books, plays and biography, that have been written or translated into English.

So, the book features the 'old guard' – Peter Abrahams, Bessie Head and Chinua Achebe, Ama Ata Aidoo, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Grace Ogot, Jose Craveirinha, Wole Soyinka, Naguib Mahfouz, Thomas Mofolo and Ousmane Sembene, Nawal el Saadawi and Eugene Marais, as well as many of the "younger" generation of authors Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (on cover), Ben Okri, Mia Couto, Lebogang Mashile, Veronique Tadjo, Tsitsi Dangaremba, Yvonne Vera and Leila Aboulela. The list goes on. What makes it very useful as a reference book, apart from being organised alphabetically, it also gives the list of writers by decade of their birth, as well as by country. The spread by decades shows a fair representation across Africa's 'modern era' (20 and 21st century), but the list by countries show the Anglophone focus of the book, and perhaps because the author lives here, the dominance of South African writers. There are also some obvious omissions (as the author said, there are thousands left out!), such as Miriam Tlali from the old guard, as well as the new kids on the



block such as Lauren Beukes, Nnedi Okorafor, HJ Golokai, Angela Makholwa and Leye Adenle, although the latter may be due to the timing of the book (published 11 years ago in 2009).

For each writer, a short biography is given, a list of the author's most important works, an extract from or a striking opening line from a major work by the author and a quote or a critical comment by or about the author and her/his work. This makes for very interesting read. For example, the entry on Achebe, a comment is quoted *"In every English and non-English speaking country on the planet, if you ask a student to name just one African novel, it is most likely to be Things Fall Apart..."* or the

opening lines from Helon Habila's *Measuring Time* (2007) *"They had decided a long time ago to make life hard for their father. He had broke their mothers heart..."* or the critical comment in the entry about Yulisa Amadu Maddy: *"The most completely realized homosexual character yet found in contemporary African literature comes from (his novel) No Past, No Present, No Future (1973)"*.

The **A-Z of African Writers**, despite its limits, is an accurate reflection of the depth and breadth of modern African writing and writers, and the kind of reference work that you keep on picking up, just to read little gems about known and unknown writers.

**Across**

2. Continental institution to coordinate efforts on pandemics and disease
4. Ethiopian emperor and host of the OAU founding conference.
8. First country to gain independence in 1957 and founding member of the OAU.
10. In 2001, the OAU transformed into this institution.
11. Bloc in 60s arguing for national sovereignty first and then incremental integration.
12. Number of independent African states who gathered to form the OAU in 1963.
13. This bloc in the 1960s wanted Africa to move immediately towards a United States of Africa.

Down

1. ANC and PAC present at OAU founding, but when did South Africa join?
3. Host city of the founding conference of the OAU on 25 May 1963 and its headquarters.
5. OAU and AU protocol on Economic Integration.
6. AU Protocol on Gender Equality.
7. Which war gave further impetus to anti-colonial struggles in the 1940s and 50s?
9. Heads of State and Government.

WORD BANK

Ghana

World War Two

Addis Ababa

Selassie

thirty two

ninety ninety four

Casablanca

Monrovia

Abuja Treaty

Maputo Protocol

African CDC

African Union

HOSG



Maximum contributions of 600 words, in an accessible language – any South African language – adequately referenced. We reserve the right to edit articles.

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