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WHAT MAKES A PRESIDENT? THE SUCCESSION DEBATE REVISITED

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About Development Dialogues

Development Dialogues is a joint initiative of Isandla Institute and the Open Society Foundation for South Africa. The aim of the public dialogue series is to create a space for critical reflection and dialogue among key development stakeholders in South Africa. In doing so, the organisers seek to make a (rather modest) contribution to enhancing the quality of debate in the development sector. Through *Development Dialogues*, Isandla Institute and the Open Society Foundation intend to bring about creative and constructive multi-stakeholder meeting opportunities that push stakeholders to think beyond the confines of their immediate interests and theoretical paradigms.

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In thinking about today's topic, I was reminded of something that came up at a TAC workshop. One of the key messages put forward was that if a political leader is not a good leader on HIV/AIDS then they are actually not a good political leader. This made me think, and I came up with four points with regard to political leadership.

When you talk about HIV/AIDS, you are talking about delivery to a society experiencing serious social distress, basically a social crisis. So, a president has to be able to provide leadership in that regard.

The second feature is the ability to mobilise society. And as we know with HIV/AIDS, our political leadership at various levels has not done well in mobilising society behind a common goal. Beyond HIV/AIDS, the crises we face in society have to be addressed. How are we to mobilise as a citizenry to tackle and, hopefully, defeat the challenges that face us?

A third feature raised for me was accountability. Throughout the HIV/AIDS struggle of the last eight to 12 years accountability has been a major issue. The government defies a court ruling to roll out anti-retroviral drugs in prisons and other decisions that require it to act in a particular way. This suggests that we do not have political leadership that holds itself accountable to society.

The fourth and final point has to do with the essence and meaning of democracy. Those in South Africa who subscribe to the Marxist school of thought will see this as the class content of democracy.

These are the four features that I would like to open the discussion with, when considering the

key features that should define political leadership. The question is posed in a context in which, after 13 years of democracy, what we have in South Africa is something very different from what many of us thought and dreamed about and were working for, particularly in the 1990s. What we have is a liberal democracy, with a constitutional framework that is positive for human rights, whether first or second generation rights, the protection of private property, a multi-party democratic system, elections and all of that. For me it is very far from what we should have achieved, which is a revolutionary democracy, with an imprint of the majority of the people. This imprint should not just be in terms of numbers, because that reduces us to

If a political leader is not a good leader on HIV/AIDS then they are actually not a good political leader.

racial identity. It should be an imprint in terms of class strata in society, so that we would possibly see a revolutionary process.

In terms of the succession, what we have now is a debate shaped by a report released in 1999 by the Centre for Development Enterprise. That report was released just before President Mbeki ascended to power. Then the main concern was what would happen after Mandela, and the only critique put forward of President Mbeki was a concern about Africanisation. Apart from that, they were saying he must show Cosatu and the community and the rest of the working class that business has to lead society, that he had to be a



president for business and relate to international markets and all that.

What we are now seeing is the entrenchment of the kind of perspectives that the report was pushing for. At that point, capital was perhaps less bold, less sure of the direction the country was going to take and through the CDE played an ideological role to push forward the perspectives that should frame the debate on political leadership. In my view that perspective is now the dominant paradigm, and the one that informs social and political commentary and the tone of content we read in the newspapers on a daily basis.

For me, this limits the extent to which ordinary people can have a clear and good relationship with the political process. The liberal democratic framework, as celebrated as it is, is quite apathetic to popular empowerment and popular democracy. So the debate on the political direction of the country is happening in a context where there is no real possibility for popular participation or for popular perspective to have a significant influence on the debate.

In talking about the next president, one is not talking about a Jacob Zuma or a Thabo Mbeki *per se*. They are important. They would play particular roles, as did Mandela and presidents in other countries at various stages of their histories. But to look at it in those terms limits democracy to individuals. Given the entrenched democratic framework that we have, we are pushed into a terrain of personalities when we talk about political leadership. We are not pushed into the terrain Venezuela is experimenting with where they are talking about a product democracy where basically all products of society have a stake.

Essentially that form of democracy goes back to a question we are avoiding in South Africa – the question of how the majority of people experience their class identity and the extent to which they have an influence in the political process.

This form of succession battle by its nature takes out collective and popular participation in political discussion. Popular participation is limited to *imbizos*, which are really one directional instead of an emotional dialogue characterised by real engagement, and there are no real powers given to *imbizos*. Thus popular participation is limited to elections, whether at a local government level or at a national or provincial parliament level. There is no thinking about issues such as the right of recall that constituencies can subject their representatives in Parliament to, for example.

What the CDE was calling for in 1999 was a strong presidential centre, with the capacity to drive an economic programme, push the state in a particular direction and discipline populist forces. As a result of this kind of perspective, we have seen an excessive presidentialism, which is the point the SACP made in its document last year. This excessive presidentialism is characterised by extreme deference to the office and to a particular individual, but it limits the space for critical debate within government, within the ANC and elsewhere.

The Jacob Zuma movement has begun to take away some of that excessive presidentialism. I do not necessarily agree with everything that is said or done by those who support Jacob Zuma for the presidency. But there are other issues brought to the surface by the Jacob Zuma movement that have a serious bearing on the political direction of the country. How does the office of the president re-





late to institutions of the state? Do we attack them when they seem to be acting against a particular individual? Do we praise them when they make favourable judgements? How does the executive, and in particular the office of the president, relate to other institutions of the state? These are essential questions in any liberal democracy and are not to be dismissed. It is about entrenching democracy through having checks and balances.

Given these initial thoughts, there are seven values we need to consider when we think about what kind of political leadership we need from the president.

The first relates to the question of corruption. At the ANC National General Council in 2000 President Mbeki launched quite a serious political attack on corruption within the ANC and within government. But, truthfully speaking, it seems that since that speech in Port Elizabeth we are sliding more deeply toward corruption. The question I am asking is, what more could the political leadership have done to put forward a particular moral message? There are some comrades, for example, who think that if some of the Rivonia trialists, and people like Chris Hani, were around, there would be a different moral force acting on all of us which would have so much weight that people would fear to be seen as corrupt. That moral force does not seem to be there with President Mbeki. In fact, throughout our leadership, in relation to corruption, I struggle to see a moral weight. That is just one element in the fight against corruption. There are other elements and the president has to be commended for what he has put in place in terms of systems, structures and even the action that has been taken to act against corruption. But for me

moral weight is quite important. And, regrettably, I find it lacking throughout the entire pool of leadership in our movement.

The second value in my view has to do with the word progressive, and basic principles in relation to race, gender equality, homophobia and xenophobia. We do not see political leadership – and even Mandela failed here – being activist in support of progressive values. We fail to support the notion that progressive democratic values are not for sale. We have a political leadership that fails to recognise that despite the Constitution, we have a society that is essentially socially conservative. Whether it is Afrikaner Christians thinking about gay rights, whether it is a Kenneth Meshoe mobilising a forceful constituency against gay rights or whether it is a Wilfred Napier mobilising Catholics against the right of women to terminate their pregnancy when they choose to do so. We are failing to see a political leadership that educates a socially conservative society about progressive values. That is a serious threat to our current democratic framework, in as much as I criticise it for its liberalism.

The third value goes back to the democratic state. We may want to believe that we have a democracy, but in my view that democracy has not really checked the ethos and tenets of the state. This relates in particular to the forces that act through and on the state. Those who work for Cosatu will say that they follow the most democratic procedure in making submissions to Parliament, but that decisions are taken elsewhere – whether on golf courses or elsewhere. When the ANC, as a progressive movement, got into political power it did lead some initial changes, but it has





not yet succeeded in transforming the state into a democracy where popular forces can act directly on and through the state sufficiently. Instead, we have an unelected elite acting very powerfully, very directly through and on the state. How is a new president going to address this? I think that is a major question. And again, amongst the candidates, I do not see any suggestion or indication of how they are going to lead a democratic and transformed state.

The next value has to do with the class-consciousness of our democracy. I think it has been implied in what I have said already.

The fifth point relates to the important and necessary task of transforming the institutions of state, not in racial terms only, but in terms of the values that drive those institutions, and how they are empowered to reconstruct society. It is about the relationship between the executive and those institutions, but also what the executive does to drive a progressive transformation of those institutions.

The next issue is gender. Again, there is no serious critical understanding of gender relations or the extent to which women are oppressed in South Africa and how that oppression is fuelled by unemployment and underdevelopment, reflecting itself in a crisis of violence in households and communities. We do have campaigns against violence. We do have progressive laws. But those laws have essentially produced representative gender equality, where an elite few have been able to access positions of power. Yet, the conditions that produce gender oppression have not been addressed. What we need is a political voice right

at the centre of the leadership of the country that is able to roll back the socially conservative nature of our society, in particular around gender relations.

The last point has been made several times – that we need a pro-poor and pro-worker president. That is very important, because if you look at what has happened over the last 10 years – the profits reported on the JSE on a daily basis and the income of workers versus the income of employers – poor and working people have not benefited. The ANC has correctly passed a policy to provide free basic services, water and electricity and so on. But Khayelitsha subsidises electricity in Constantia. How can this be justified in a democracy?

What we need is radically different political leadership. But this is only a dream. We are not going to get it over the next nine months. However, it is useful to go back to these benchmarks, perhaps in the hope of re-igniting debate and mobilising ANC supporters who have been alienated from the party. The State of the Nation Report by the HSRC shows that the ANC has been the biggest loser of votes since 1994 and that the biggest party in this country is now the abstention party. We cannot afford to have a democracy in which society is alienated from the democratic process, and where the democratic process is apathetic to the majority of the people. I am putting forward these values as a dream, in the hope that there is a spark somewhere in our society to take us back to a progressive ANC and to the kind of revolutionary process that is absent in our society. ■



The question is what makes a good president. Frankly, I do not know because I am not even sure such a thing exists.

When we interrogate the question, we are talking about two things. Firstly, the idea of a good head of state or a good president is actually a construct. Secondly, the reality of a particular head of state or president is a product of many things - a product of our social structure, a product of our political structures, a product of the nature of our state, a product of the nature of ideological contestation within society and many other factors. I think of a head of state at those two levels – as a construct and as a product.

As a construct, it is a construct with regard to expectations that we as citizens and others have about what constitutes good qualities of a president or head of state. When a particular individual depends on political and electoral systems to be elected president of a country, there are qualities that that person possesses which determine success or failure. The extent to which those qualities approximate to the expectations of citizens is an indication of prospects for success. And the extent to which those qualities are hostile to those expectations is an indication of the prospects of failure.

When we construct this idea of what a good president is we create a generic set of qualities that must approximate the qualities of the individual we have in mind, particularly when there is a contest between different candidates. At the level of a head of state or president being successful and being a product, let us narrow it down to ANC succession. There is an internal dimension. As in all political parties, political elites in the ANC

will try to predetermine the direction and outcome of a leadership race. Whoever is elected president of the party is a product of the interaction between formal processes, or what we may call democratic processes, non-formal processes and hidden hierarchies. All these interact to produce a particular outcome.

The head of state is also a product of a country's political culture. In our case, we have a political culture that has been in construction for at least 350 years, but we do not have a common political culture because of our history. In fact, just in passing, we have a situation where the numerical majority are the cultural minority. And that impacts on the nature and the content of our political culture.

It is safer to focus on a narrow political culture – the political culture of the ANC. When we talk about what constitutes a good president, effectively we are talking about what constitutes a good president of the ANC. For the foreseeable future, the ANC will remain dominant in the political landscape, so the question of what makes a good president is a lower order pressure compared to the question of what makes a good ANC president. The political culture within the ANC produces that individual. How the political culture of the ANC interacts with the political culture of the country is less of a factor. The decision ultimately is left to 3 000 people who are the delegates at a national conference of the ANC.

When we look at what makes a president, it tends to be in ways that position the incumbent in contra-distinction to the notion of a good president. For instance, currently the succession battle is amongst other things fought on the basis





of a process of creating an 'other'. So when you have debates about Jacob Zuma and Thabo Mbeki, supporters of Zuma try to create a candidate who is seen in contra-distinction to Mbeki. And those who support Mbeki do the same. Thus when people say Mbeki is distant, aloof, intellectually dismissive, an alienating figure, and that power has become too centralised around him, they are saying that when you create an 'other' in contra-distinction to Mbeki, you have the qualities that make a good president. And when people say that under a Zuma presidency good governance will suffer, the economy will collapse and corruption will be a dominant feature of political and economic life, they are creating an 'other' with qualities they think makes a good president.

This process has become a very important part of what I call the battle for mind share. It is a very important and significant battle between the camps of the protagonists in the succession race. When you think of what makes a good president, we tend to think of Nelson Mandela. Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki gave us contrasting styles of leadership. Nelson Mandela is a public leader. Thabo Mbeki is an administrative, policy or technocratic leader. And when people invoke Nelson Mandela they are creating an 'other'. They are saying the next president should not be a policy, administrative, technocratic leader, but should, in the same way Mandela was, be a public leader.

The debate about HIV and crime highlights this quite well, because there was a call for empathy; an empathy that we are still waiting for. A few years ago during a radio interview about HIV and AIDS, I made the comment that maybe it was time for us to outsource compassion. If we outsource

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compassion we might have the results that you want from the current presidency.

These are some of the ways in which we construct ideas about what constitutes a good president. You have been promised that I will tell you who the next president is going to be. Well, I do not know. But I do not think we are talking about one succession battle here, we are talking about two succession battles. The December conference will end the first phase, or the first stage, of the succession battle. And when the list process in 2009 is launched, that will launch the second stage of the succession battle. In other words, those parties that lose the battle in December may regroup and decide that there is a battle to be fought during the list process in 2009, with the result that whoever is elected president of the ANC in December may not be the person who is elected president of the country in 2009. That is why I think we are talking about two succession battles, not one.

There are so many scenarios that make it difficult to say who the next ANC president will be. In my view, at this stage, there are only five candidates – Mbeki himself, Zuma, Kgalema Motlanthe (who we can call the stealth candidate), Tokyo Sexwale and Cyril Ramaphosa.

You have the scenario in which Zuma and Mbeki go head to head, which I do not think is the preferred scenario of the ANC. That will be highly



bruising and divisive and there will be blood on the carpets, the windows and the walls – all over the place – at that conference. That race also poses certain dangers to the incumbent, because he is building a legacy and that legacy may turn out to be a house of cards if he is defeated in a

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presidential race in December. So going head to head with Jacob Zuma would be a serious mistake for Thabo Mbeki.

I think Jacob Zuma needs Thabo Mbeki in the race, because one of the reasons Zuma is so popular amongst those who support him is simply because he is not Mbeki. Therefore he needs Thabo Mbeki in this race and if I am right about a creation of an 'other' his prospects for success would be quite high.

Then we have another scenario: Thabo Mbeki is a candidate but anoints someone to run for the position of deputy president of the ANC. The idea being that whoever is elected deputy president of the ANC will become head of state in 2009. So you have Thabo Mbeki as president of the ANC and the deputy president of the party elected head of state in 2009. The idea here, of course, is that Thabo Mbeki would retain some control, not only over the party but also over the state by having someone he has anointed as head of state. The reality, however, is that much more power resides

in the state than it does in the party. And if that is the idea, it might not work out that neatly.

Then you have what I call the compromise candidate scenarios. There are two of them. You have a situation where there is a stalemate between the key camps, but one camp is uncertain about the balance of forces. So uncertain that it enters into a settlement with the opposing camp and presents what looks like a stalemate with two compromise candidates. One camp settles for the presidency of the party and the other camp settles for the presidency of the country. Obviously, the party that settles for the presidency of the party would be doing so because of its uncertainty about the balance of forces, thus avoiding the risk of a complete defeat.

The most likely scenario is that you have a genuine stalemate. And in the event of a genuine stalemate, people like Tokyo Sexwale and Cyril Ramaphosa will become key factors in the evolving succession battle. Now if we had direct presidential elections, I would argue without any fear of contradiction that such an election would be won by Cyril Ramaphosa. However, we are not going to have a direct presidential election. Therefore issues of pedigree and political credentials and one's history of struggle and involvement in the ANC might be more decisive, in which case someone like Tokyo Sexwale might have a slight edge. A variation on that theme is that both camps may settle for a compromise candidate who they would want to use as a Trojan horse that would continue with their agenda and with their platform as head of state.

That is how I see it. But I think anyone who tells you with certainty who the next president is going to be is either a fool or is misreading the variables.

There are also some myths that can be dispelled.





There is a myth that a person elected deputy president of the ANC at one national conference automatically becomes president of the party at the next conference. And this is a view that has been pushed by some in the ANC Youth League (ANCYL). There is no historical evidence to support that.

The second myth is that the ANCYL are king makers and are going to be king makers this time. As far as I know the ANCYL was formed in 1944 and in 1949 they made a decisive intervention in the election of Moroka. But between 1949 and 1969 at the Morogoro conference, which king did they make? Between 1969 and the democratic breakthrough, Oliver Tambo was in power. He was not made by the Youth League. Nelson Mandela was not made by the Youth League. Yes, Thabo Mbeki was. But the argument that the Youth League are king makers is not supported by history.

We must also bear in mind that not everyone who supports Mbeki is anti-Zuma. Just as not everyone who supports Zuma is anti-Mbeki. That is another important variable. Also, some of the tensions that we see in the succession battle pre-date the succession battle itself and the post-1994 period. I think we all agree that these tensions are not completely about personalities. There is an element of ideological tension, and there is an element of political tension. This leads me to the point that explanations for the succession battle are not reducible to single explanations so there is no neat explanation.

On the issue of gender, I am certain that the next president of the ANC will not be a woman for two reasons. Thabo Mbeki made the proposal that the ANC should consider a woman as its president. Objectively, there is nothing wrong with the idea,

but in the subjective conditions of the succession battle he poisoned the idea of a woman president because it was seen as an attempt to disqualify Zuma, who the last time that I checked was not a woman. The second reason is that the Women's League unfortunately has not acted in a

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manner that advances gender equality in the succession debate. In fact they have become quite entrenched and embedded with dominant factional male political interests in the ANC. And that is one of the problems. We are faced with a challenge here, because ours is a democratic patriarchal state. For me, 'democratic' and 'patriarchal' are contradictions in terms, but to the extent that ours is a patriarchal state, one would have thought the Women's League would have been much more sensitive to the issue of gender in how it engages with the succession debate.

In my view, the balance of support and the balance of power will shift several times during the evolution of the succession battle. And most importantly, those of us who are analysts, journalists and so on must remember in our engagement with key actors in the succession battle that all members of the ANC, including Mbeki and Zuma, have partial access to the total reality of the succession battle. And that partial access determines the tactical and strategic choices they make in how they are going to participate in the succession battle. ■



AFTER THE INPUTS, THE FLOOR WAS OPEN FOR QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS. ISSUES THAT WERE RAISED INCLUDED:

- The history of the ANC indicates that the core issues of policy and the substance of the transformation of society should be more important in deciding leadership, rather than personalities and side issues like HIV/AIDS and Zimbabwe.
- Given that the succession battle is being fought by people supporting the same narrow class and economic interests, what prospects are there for the class struggle to be advanced within the ANC?
- A stalemate historically allows for the same leadership to keep a hold on power, rather than a new one. In light of this, how could a stalemate present alternative directions for the ANC?
- How is the succession battle played out through the state and state delivery?
- If one looks at South Africa in a regional context, one wonders whether democracy is under threat.
- More attention needs to be given to the issue of ethnicity and the role it plays in our political culture.
- What is the role of formations within the tripartite alliance in the succession battle?

IN RESPONSE THE SPEAKERS MADE SOME CONCLUDING COMMENTS:

Mazibuko Jara

Some of the discussions point to the fact that the succession debate is the current site of struggle. I think it has to be an ongoing site of struggle

beyond the election in December, as well as the election in 2009. What I hear Aubrey saying is that there is a whole range of factors that can change at any time. I like that because it means there are possibilities for ordinary people to perhaps become a factor over time. Right now they are not a factor. I am not saying the ANC conference will produce a pro-poor president. We will not have that debate in any significant way, which is a reflection of the restrictions of our democratic framework. I realise that voice is not going to come through exactly because of the reasons that Aubrey's putting forward in terms of the kind of interests which drive the struggle for political power. As South Africans, if we are to have an ongoing debate about this, we have to see it as a site of struggle. Perhaps I am talking narrowly in terms of trade unions and communists seeing everything as a site of struggle, but it is an important democratic tendency that has to be entrenched much more in our society. As ordinary people we have kept far too quiet for far too long in this regard.

I agree that the question of the political leadership of the country must have to do with substantial issues, which have to do with the content and the direction of the country. I would put both Zimbabwe and HIV/AIDS as issues belonging to that. Let me explain why. You see part of the reason President Mbeki is not able to deal with Zimbabwe is that the very forces that have captured the Zimbabwean state are the forces he has unleashed in South Africa through black economic empowerment. Basically, there is a parasitic capitalist class that depends on the state to survive. That is the crisis in Zimbabwe. The President cannot deal with it and then be able to





play an appropriate political role. So it is not just about shouting from the rooftops as the media and the alliance partners want him to, but it is actually about the essence of democratic values and our own democratic system and what we actually do to build a particular kind of democracy in our own country. For me, the prevarication that we continue to see on Zimbabwe suggests that democratic values can be for sale if particular class interests position themselves in the way they are beginning to do. So for me it is quite an important principled issue, not because of media populism.

Similarly on HIV/AIDS, the argument is simply about the democratic state we want to build, as well as building an efficient public health system. HIV/AIDS is a tragedy and a crisis, but it is also an opportunity for political leadership to actually address the crisis. We are not seeing these issues coming through in the debate, and I do not think we can belittle them. There are broader questions – economic policy questions, international relations issues and so on, which are important. But with HIV/AIDS we would basically see an entire generation wiped out. Not only that, but there are serious economic and social impacts on communities. In fact if you go to Khayelitsha, if you go to rural villages, people are rotting because there is no public health system and because there is no political leadership on HIV/AIDS. If we look at the generation that is dying, it is those between 19 and 34, the people who should be taking this country forward. What does that say for where we are taking the country?

On the role of the tripartite alliance, the official positions of the Communist Party and Cosatu have been that the ANC succession is an

ANC matter but of course what we have seen on the streets is at variance with that. What has happened over Mbeki's presidency is that because many forces have become alienated and disillusioned, they have been forced to review and challenge ANC political culture. Previously, there would not have been direct involvement by the SACP and Cosatu in ANC electoral questions. So we are seeing a change. Whether people agree in their support for Zuma or support for Mbeki is a different matter, but across the board there is a change in that political tradition. Some voices continue to say it is an ANC matter. But the fact that the Cosatu congress adopts a resolution that implies a much more direct involvement by Cosatu in ANC political discussions and leadership questions shows that the extent of the alienation has become quite serious during the Mbeki presidency.

On the issue of ethnicity and race and how it comes up in our political culture, particularly of the ANC, one of the tragedies of our democracy has been the absence of political education. Mandela spoke of reconciliation and there was widespread concern that he was bending over too much. But there was never a serious political engagement of society to actually put forward a principled non-racial position. Then there is populist appeal saying that we should go back to respect African traditional culture. In the absence of radical, political education of society by the ANC and government, you have ethnic identity being used by various forces to make competing claims on the state. And of course the tribal questions have come up in ANC conferences and also much more starkly during the Jacob Zuma period. And



again there has been no progressive voice in our society saying that we should move forward on a principled non-racial basis.

Aubrey Matshiqi

A manufactured stalemate and a genuine stalemate can have the same result – consolidating the status quo. So a stalemate does not have to be either genuine or manufactured to produce such an outcome. I have argued also that the capacity of the ANC to predetermine the outcome of leadership races has been compromised, which means the capacity of the ANC to manage the succession battle itself has been seriously compromised. To the extent that Mazibuko was talking about a centre previously, I have also argued that there is no centre to speak of at the moment, beyond the formal structures.

The argument I would advance is that the strongest and most likely scenario, barring the conviction of Jacob Zuma, is that Jacob Zuma emerges at the front of that leadership race, depending on whether Thabo Mbeki is part of that race. That is the most likely scenario. The second most likely scenario is the one we are talking about now, the compromise candidate scenario. There is always the possibility of course that there are names we are not looking at. When the nomination process starts we will get more names. Notwithstanding that, for me the five candidates we have been talking about will remain the top five candidates. And in that context if there were to be a compromise candidate scenario, the beneficiaries are likely to be Kgalema Motlanthe, Tokyo Sexwale or Cyril Ramaphosa. I have spoken of Motlanthe as a stealth candidate. I think he is the man to watch

because no one spends much time looking at him. In a situation where things begin to spiral out of control, if he maintains his composure, he may be the beneficiary.

I have said that the succession issue is not reducible to a single factor, which means in any discussion there are many causes we would not be able to anticipate. One of them is that some of the antipathies and loyalties that we see in the evolution of the succession battle are antipathies and loyalties that pre-exist the democratic breakthrough and therefore predate the succession battle. Some of these antipathies and loyalties found their origins in the conditions of exile, conditions of underground and so on. Secondly, the fact that the relationship between the ANC and the state has changed is also a fact in how the succession battle is likely to evolve – not only this time, but also in future elections. Another factor is that politics, particularly if you are an ANC member, is now not only about accessing power. Political power is no longer an end in itself. Political power has become a means towards the achievement of narrow economic goals. And that is one of the drivers of the succession battle. But we must avoid the attempt of trying to reduce the succession battle to a single driver, because it cannot be explained in terms of a single driver. There are so many drivers. Of course, we can argue about the degree to which each driver is significant in shaping the direction of the battle.

There are three important qualities that we did not talk about. The first is that whoever is president in future must promote the recognition of cultural diversity. This links up with how we manage the issues of race and ethnicity both within





and outside the ANC. The liberation struggle was about undermining apartheid constructions of difference, which means therefore that our struggle now is to construct spaces of sameness. And whoever is the leader must co-ordinate action that enables the ANC to lead the process of democratising cultural diversity. Secondly, we are confronted with the question of whether we are sliding towards a dictatorship. The answer is that we are not, in the classical sense of dictatorship. But whoever is elected leader of the ANC and head of state in future must prevent a slide toward what I call authoritarianism. I always argue that one does not have to live in an authoritarian country to be subjected to authoritarianism. It is quite possible to be subjected to authoritarianism in a democratic society and I am seeing signs of that when you look at the culture of debate and responses to that debate in this country. And another important quality is sensitivity to the idea of an agenda of radical pragmatism. That kind of radical pragmatism is about we how redefine and reconstruct debates about the state.

This takes me back to the question that was posed about how debates about the state will be given effect during the succession battle. We have already seen there is an emergent conceptual rupture within the alliance – with the ANC on one side and Cosatu and the SACP on the other – about the nature and role of the post-apartheid South African state. My view is that we cannot accuse this post-apartheid South African state of being neo-liberal, because it is not a pure neo-liberal state. Nor is it a pure developmental state. There is an element of hybridity in its nature.

On the issue of Zimbabwe neither quiet diplomacy nor any other form of diplomacy were likely to yield results, if the desired outcome was for Robert Mugabe either to change direction or pack his bags and go. Which means therefore that whatever external actors do must be done in support of rising levels of resistance within Zimbabwe itself. The problem, however, is that you have people who say our government must make tough statements so that Mugabe can change. That is not going to happen. The government's attitude that 'if we shout at Mugabe he won't change' is also wrong. My view is that we must delink the idea of making statements of concern about what is going on in Zimbabwe to particular outcomes. Our government does not have to express concern about what is going on in Zimbabwe only if the result is going to be a change in the conduct of Robert Mugabe. They must make statements of concern about what is going on in Zimbabwe because we are one of the countries that are expected to show moral leadership in the world. This is the role we must continue playing.

To the question about what the rank and file think, the short answer is that you will see also the evolution of the succession battle within the working class itself. Within the working class itself we are going to see a separation of class interest and political interest. What I am interested in over the next few months is to see how that separation between class and political interest will play itself out during the succession battle. ■





WHAT MAKES A PRESIDENT? THE SUCCESSION DEBATE REVISITED

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