
**From Thabo Mbeki to Jakob Zuma
What Will the New Vision
for South Africa Be?**

Thierry Vircoulon

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Introduction

On April 22, 2009 South Africa held its fourth general election since its transition to democracy in 1994. 23 million voters went to the polls and, from a choice of 26 parties, put their trust once again in the African National Congress (ANC). Just as in 1999 and 2004, the ANC was returned to power with a comfortable majority, this time taking 65.9% of the vote. A snappy and calm comment on the results of the polls could be “*business as usual in South Africa*”. However, the ANC’s continuing success at the polls fails to conceal numerous changes in South Africa, all of which represent significant challenges for Jacob Zuma’s new government.

The 2009 Election or Silent Change

South Africa: A Flawless Electoral Democracy

The 2009 election passed without incident. The era of political violence is well and truly over and the professionalism of South Africa's electoral institutions has been borne out once again.

The parties spent approximately 400 million rand¹, and electoral logistics were a success with 19,726 voting stations and roughly 200,000 election officials. There were also several notable advances: as a result of a judicial appeal by the Democratic Alliance and the Freedom Front², expatriates could vote in South African diplomatic representations for the first time³. Within South African borders, voters had the right to vote outside of their constituency⁴ for the first time. Furthermore, electoral campaigning appeared for the first time on South African televisions in the form of commercial breaks, though these commercials were far less aggressive than their North American equivalents.

Problems registered during these elections were minor. Some polling stations were short of ballots because of voting outside of constituencies, and violent incidents were rare. Only a few constituencies in the north of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) Province - namely the Inkatha strongholds⁵ - stand out because of their need for special security. The police and the South African army were able to respond thanks to a well-polished security plan specifically designed for such

¹ Figures contained in this article are given in local currency. At the time of writing, the exchange rate was fluctuating between 10 and 11 rand to the euro.

² Before now, only certain categories of expatriate professionals - notably government employees - had the right to vote in South African representations abroad. In March 2009, the Constitutional Court opened the vote to all South Africans living overseas already registered on the electoral roll.

³ The expatriate vote is often a contentious issue between the party in power and the opposition, insofar as the Diaspora is more easily won over by the opposition. Few African governments accept electoral participation outside of national territory, and the ANC is no exception to this rule.

⁴ In the South African electoral system, the election of national and provincial representatives takes place at the same time. The voters therefore elected both the national and the provincial government simultaneously with two ballots, but only one poll.

⁵ See Annex.

events. Even though these zones were considered ‘no-go’ areas for the ANC in 1999, this time the party in power was able to campaign there. The only registered acts of violence were the murder of a Congress of the People (COPE)⁶ town councilor during the electoral night at Port Elisabeth, and the murder of ANC activists two days later in the north of KZN. And while this political violence is regrettable, it is incomparable with previous levels of instability.

The Independent Electoral Commission (IEC)⁷ took only three days to announce the official results and was given a ‘satisfactory mark’ by both South African voters - 67% of citizens put their trust in it - and some 200 foreign observers (mostly Africans) for whom the IEC is a model. In addition to its overall smooth running of the elections, its professionalism paved the way for a massive wave of first-time voter registrations prior to the election – 2.5 million more than in 2004. This renewal of electoral interest was underlined on Election Day with a participation rate of 77.3%, 11 percent higher than in 2004.

Leaving aside the new “technical capacities” mentioned above, this powerful voter mobilization is the result of campaigning on unfamiliar issues such as the change of president, the possibility of a constitutional revision, and the service delivery crisis. The first issue refers to Thabo Mbeki’s succession by the controversial Jacob Zuma and the promise of change that he represented for the black majority. Jacob Zuma became the ANC candidate following a ferocious power struggle within the ANC that resulted in the destitution of Thabo Mbeki and the dropping of charges against Jacob Zuma by the prosecutor shortly before the elections⁸. His run for president left no one indifferent: not those loyal to Thabo Mbeki (some of whom preceded the purge and hurriedly left the ANC to set up a rival party), not the townships (who identified with this “Zulu boy” who had succeeded in carving out a place for himself in the party aristocracy), and definitely not the white community (who were concerned by his populism and vague attempts at constitutional reform). Some of his remarks suggested that he does not appreciate either the independence of the judiciary or the abolition of the death penalty. As a result, the two-thirds threshold of parliamentary seats needed for a constitutional revision was established as the target figure for the ANC and the counter-objective for the opposition. The former President and Nobel prize-winner Frederick W. De Klerk even emerged from his isolation during the campaign to defend the South African constitution.

⁶ See Annex.

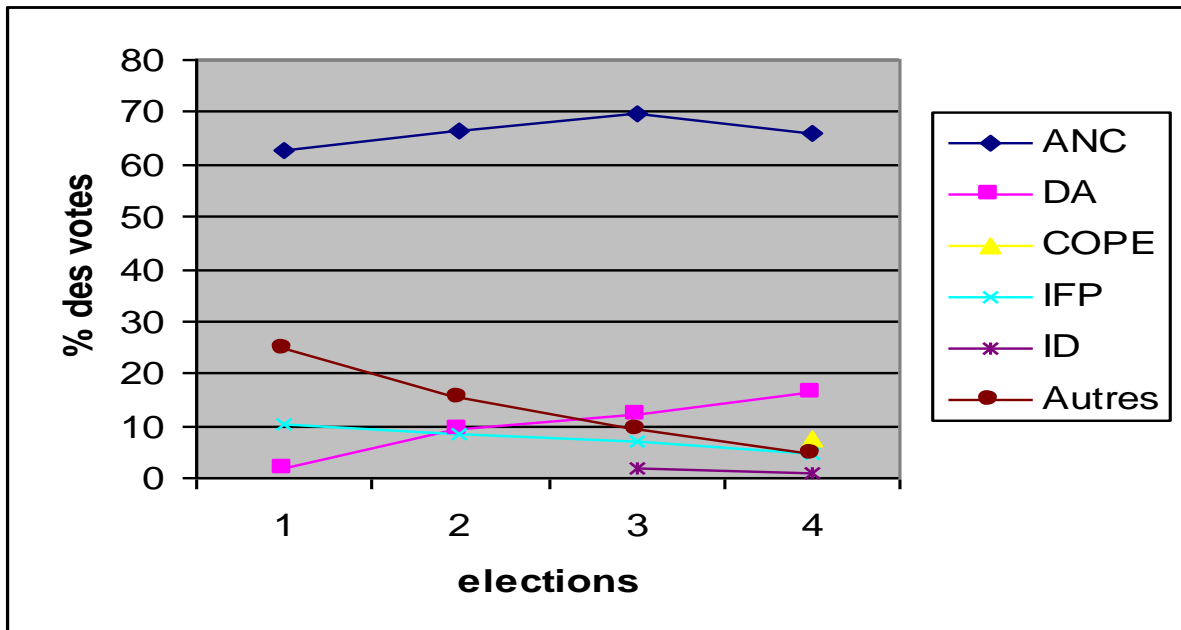
⁷ See <http://www.elections.org.za/NPEPWStaticReports/Default.aspx>.

⁸ “The High Price of Political Solutions.” *Contretemps*. 27 April 2009. “He Has Four Wives and He Faced 783 Counts of Corruption.” *Daily Mail*. 29 March 2009.

Change and Continuity of a One Party Democracy

The 2009 election revealed a less monopolistic South African democracy complete with a renewal of its political powers, but that nevertheless remains eminently racist.

Table 1. Elections 1994-2009: The ANC, a Weakening Supremacy



Source: Independent Electoral Commission

With 65.9% of the vote, the ANC was still three parliamentary districts short of the two-thirds parliamentary majority – and this despite a well-oiled electoral machine and a considerable financial advantage. The entire cost of the ANC campaign has been estimated at 200 million rand. Thanks to the ANC's overwhelming domination of previous elections, it was able to claim the lion's share of public financing available for political parties. Of the 88 million rand distributed by the IEC, the ANC received 61% while the Democratic Alliance received only 10.5% and the COPE, as a newcomer, received nothing.⁹

The ANC's vote contracted with a national decline of 3.79%, with notable losses of 10 points in the three provinces of Western Cape, Eastern Cape and Free State. On the other hand, in KwaZulu-Natal, the ANC vote rose to 15.97%. This gain can be largely attributed to a kind of identity vote for the "local boy". These electoral

⁹ In South Africa, public financing of political parties is proportional to their representation in Parliament.

gains in Zulu country put an end to Inkatha's stranglehold on the rural north of KZN. Now Inkatha is defending the last of its strongholds, which for a long time were "no-go" areas for activists from other parties. In the Jozini district on the border with Swaziland, Inkatha received 74% of the vote in 2004 and the ANC 21%. This year however, the two parties were equal. This election marks the full swing of KwaZulu-Natal into the orbit of the ANC, with Inkatha now only a shadow of the party it once was.

Electoral gains in KZN have been counterbalanced by losses in other provinces, in particular in Eastern Cape. A traditional ANC stronghold, the majority of the party's influential families with Xhosa origins (e.g. the Sisulus, the Tambos, and the Mbekis, etc.) have their roots in this province. Hence the electoral decline recorded there is especially revealing and doubtless the subject of much thought at political headquarters. This regression, from which COPE benefited, was particularly pronounced in urban areas - in Nelson Mandela Bay municipality, the ANC share of the vote slipped from 70% to 50%. It also highlights the Zulu/Xhosa division, the influence of the Thabo Mbeki "faithful", and the working class dissatisfaction which seeps out from a province which for a number of years now has been both the poorest in the country and, in governance terms, the most dysfunctional, with deteriorating public education and health services, recurring corruption cases, and internal political rivalries.

Table 2. Results for the ANC by Province.

Provinces	Score 2004 (%)	Score 2009 (%)	Differential
Eastern Cape	79,27	68,82	- 10,45
Free State	81,78	71,10	-10,68
Gauteng	68,4	64,04	-4,36
KZN*	46,98	62,95	+15,97
Limpopo	89,18	84,88	-4,3
Mpumalanga	86,3	85,55	-0,75
North West	80,71	72,89	-7,82
Northern Cape	68,83	60,75	-8,08
Western Cape	45,25	31,55	- 13,7

*: KwaZulu Natal Province.

Source: Independent Electoral Commission

In 2009, for many South Africans outside KwaZulu Natal, a vote for the ANC is by and large a loyalty vote. After 15 years of ANC government the list of disappointments is long: unemployment, corruption, HIV/AIDS, deteriorating public services, and the energy crisis. Moreover there was no shortage of popular protest movements during the electoral campaign, whether by the Landless People's

Movement (LPM) brandishing the slogan “no land, no house, no vote”, or by the taxi drivers opposing reform of the urban public transport system, or by medical personnel, to name just a few such movements. On Election Day itself, a protest was organized in Alexandra, a large Johannesburg township. In the first week after the election, it was the turn of Khayelitsha – another large township, this time in Cape Town – to protest against the housing shortage. With the campaign in full swing, the ANC answered these populist pressures for a “better life for all”¹⁰ with an escalation of promises and a resolutely populist approach. Jacob Zuma took his campaign to the people in order to establish himself as the leader of the black working class majority, focusing his program on the social problems of the black majority (i.e., unemployment, land reform, education, health care, and crime) and meeting the poorest factions of the ANC electorate on visits to townships and deprived rural areas.

It was more than just the image of a popular charismatic leader – in other words, the antithesis of Mbeki – that brought Jacob Zuma to power; his comfortable majority was assured through loyalty to the party of the anti-apartheid struggle. At the polling stations, there was no shortage of declarations of loyalty: “I am an ANC man till the day I die”, “I don’t care who the candidate is as long as he is ANC”, “I’m voting for Mandela”, etc.¹¹ As such, even the left intelligentsia - which still harbors a considerable amount of resentment towards the ANC and has been publicly criticizing the party for several years now - acknowledges that it is still not considering a split. This intelligentsia is also a faction of the electorate with historical associations. Prior to each new election period, the Congress of South African Trade (COSATU)¹² and the communist party always wrestle with the idea of breaking away from the ANC. This then strengthens their commitment to remain at its side during the electoral campaign. Despite their virulent criticism, civil society organizations do not identify themselves with any party other than that of Nelson Mandela.¹³ This love-hate relationship of the COSATU-SACP-ANC¹⁴ alliance is like that of an old couple who frequently argues but is unable to separate.

The Opposition: A Transition from the Old to the New

The new opposition currently emerging is bearing witness to the silent death throes of the former opposition. The 2009 election clearly indicates that a page is being turned. After 15 years of democracy,

¹⁰ “A better life for all” has been the ANC’s electoral slogan since 1994.

¹¹ Interviews with the author, South Africa, Cape Town, 22 April 2009.

¹² See Annex.

¹³ Zackie Achmat, a South African activist well-known for his struggle against the government’s HIV/AIDS policy, dismissed this contradiction by signing an article in the *Mail & Guardian* a few days prior to polling day. In the article he listed the mistakes made by the ANC and concluded that he would vote for the new Freedom Party.

¹⁴ The South African Communist Party. See Annex.

the political remains of the apartheid era – the Inkatha, United Democratic Movement (UDM), Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), and Azanian People's Organization (AZAPO)¹⁵ – are seeing their voter base erode. Unable to adapt to the new political situation, it was only electoral inertia that allowed these parties to survive. After the deliberate sabotage of the “New” National Party in 2004¹⁶, it is now the turn of the other political relics to be progressively wiped off the political landscape. The Inkatha vote fell from 7% to 4.55% between 2004 and 2009 and the UDM is in a state of free fall (3.42% in 1999, 2.28% in 2004, and 0.92% in 2009). Even though Mangosuthu Buthelezi is 81 and has led the Inkatha for 34 years, he has not designated a successor and is still holding on to the reins of his party. This movement was never able to break with its Zulu party image in spite of an election campaign with national ambitions. The political heritage of apartheid definitively favors the new opposition.

Meanwhile, other opposition parties are experiencing a period of growth. The Democratic Alliance led by Helen Zille has made undeniable electoral progress, and the latest opposition formation, COPE, has achieved a very respectable count considering its recent emergence. By increasing its share of the vote from 12.5% to 16.66% between 2004 and 2009, the Democratic Alliance confirms its status as the official opposition party. In its first election showing, the COPE managed 7.42% of the vote, meaning it is ranked third at the national level and represents the second power within the opposition.

Between 2004 and 2009, the Democratic Alliance gained around one million voters. This confirms not only the Democratic Alliance's status as the official opposition party in parliament, but also its stranglehold over Western Cape Province. The atypical results in this part of the country - the Democratic Alliance won 51.4% of the vote against 31.5% for the ANC - confirmed its status as a rebel province.¹⁷ This comes from the unusual ethnic composition of the province, where colored South Africans are in a majority and account for 53% of the electorate. But this strength is also the Alliance's weakness, as this growth occurred mainly in Western Cape Province. Like KZN was for the Inkatha a few years ago, Western Cape Province is a guaranteed stronghold, but, as was also the case with KZN, it is a natural political barrier difficult to overcome. Furthermore, this progress was achieved at the expense of other opposition parties. The Democratic Alliance is confirming its reputation as a cannibalistic party which “eats up” other opposition parties. First it was the turn of the National Party, whose Afrikaner voters were drawn into the Democratic Alliance. The Independent Democrats were next when their colored constituency left them in favor of the Alliance. The ANC has also lost ground within the colored community. The half-hearted attempts by the ANC candidate at

¹⁵ See Annex.

¹⁶ The main Afrikaner political grouping.

¹⁷ The provincial and the local administration of Cape Town are in the hands of the opposition, at least until the 2011 local elections.

a constitutional revision generated an effective counter-mobilization in favor of the Democratic Alliance by giving the impression that a “*particular*” South Africa was at stake. For the minorities, any infringement on the 1994 constitution calls into question the foundations of the peaceful coexistence of the different racial groups. After ANC attacks on the power of the judiciary that implied its opposition to a “*government of judges*” – a criticism aimed at the independence of the Constitutional Court – the Democratic Alliance immediately hardened the tone of its campaign to “*Stop Zuma*”. However, by positioning itself as defender of South Africa’s constitutional democracy – often to the accompaniment of personal attacks that did not play well in a black majority still sensitive to them - it simultaneously alienated the few black voters who might otherwise have supported the Alliance. As Western Cape is the only province where the minority – the colored and white population - is in the majority, the Democratic Alliance consolidated its hold there.

A recent creation - detractors would even say a last-minute creation - COPE managed a perceptible and not unnoticed breakthrough. Created by a triumvirate of former ANC leaders - Mluleki George, former deputy defense minister, Mbhazima Shilowa, former premier of Gauteng Province, and Mosiuoa Lekota, former defense minister - COPE is the product of the internal struggle between the inner circles of Thabo Mbeki and Jacob Zuma¹⁸. COPE first appeared in December 2008, not long after the removal of Thabo Mbeki in September 2008. Those close to the former president were quick to join¹⁹, even if he himself denied being the mastermind behind this initiative. A splinter party from the ANC, it hardly even had time to establish a field presence, notably in townships, nor did it have extensive financial means. Its campaign budget, made up solely of private donations, is estimated at not more than 20 million rand, 10 times less than the ANC budget. Comparing COPE’s results with its resources, it has made a promising start by attracting 1.2 million voters. Even though it is only the second national opposition party, in 4 out of the 9 provinces (Eastern Cape, Limpopo, North West, and Northern Cape) it is actually the main opposition party. Strikingly the ULM at its first election in 1999 only managed 3.42% of the vote and was the main opposition party in just two provinces, Eastern Cape and Limpopo. In the four provinces cited earlier, the cacophony of unsatisfied voices made themselves heard in favor of COPE rather than the Democratic Alliance.²⁰ This underscores the ability of this new arrival on the South African political scene to seduce black voters disappointed by the ANC.

¹⁸ In Northern Cape, a fair share of the ANC provincial general staff/office went over to COPE.

¹⁹ Amongst them were the businessman Saki Macozoma, the former vice president Phumzile Mlambo-Ngucka, the trade unionist and businessman Philip Dexter, and the former presidential advisor Smuts Ngonyama.

²⁰ An example of this is in Eastern Cape where the ANC lost 10 points. COPE achieved 13.67% of the votes, and the Democratic Alliance only 9.9%.

Continued Voting Along Racial Lines

The new opposition has emerged and settled into a racially unchanged electoral landscape. In 2009, as in 2004 and 1999, blacks on the whole voted for the ANC while the minorities continued to resolutely vote for the opposition. Cape Town serves as a prime example of this. There, the black townships, such as Philippi, Khayelitsha, and Nyanga, recorded a return rate for the ANC of around 80%, while in the mixed race townships, such as Grassy Park, Lavender Hill, Lotus River, and Mitchell's Plain, and in the white districts of Wynberg, Claremont, Observatory, and Kenilworth, Democratic Alliance return rates were almost identical. During the campaign, South African pollsters looked into a possible 'Obama effect' among the South African electorate. However, the idea that the election of a colored US president could convince the white or colored South African voters to vote for the ANC has been disproven by the ballot boxes. The persistence of voting along racial lines is a constant referred to by former president Kgalema Motlanthe during his traditional post-election speech in Durban, "*the voting patterns in this year's national poll disturbingly reflected our old divided past; which only goes to show that more work still needs to be done to de-racialise our society in all its essentials*".

The most durable feature of South African democracy is to be found in the very strong correlation between the racial composition of the electorate and voting, not in the prevalence of political shifting and repositioning. As the 2009 elections prove, political division along racial lines continues despite all attempts at moving beyond race.

In addition, South Africa has an electoral history attesting to the progressive end of its one-party democracy:

- 1994 elections – creation of the new South Africa
- 1999 elections – a policy shift by the ANC
- 2004 elections – domination by Thabo Mbeki and his party
- 2009 elections – the beginnings of a shift: a change in leadership and cracks in ANC domination
- 2014 elections - a possible challenge?

Zuma's Government Faced with a Changing South Africa

Increasing Popular Frustration

Despite the success of his electoral campaign, Jacob Zuma has not enjoyed the traditional “grace period”. As was previously pointed out, social pressure did not relent during or after his campaign. Post-apartheid social protest movements are intensifying with time. Zuma’s government must confront structural governance problems exacerbated by the impact of the global economic recession. In 2008 South Africa was not immediately affected by the recession because of weak exposure to financial turbulence in U.S. markets. Nevertheless, it is suffering from the fallout of the world economic crisis as an exporter. The fall in demand worldwide has severely impacted an export-oriented South African industrial sector: 17,000 job losses were announced in only the car industry. The miners’ trade union is anticipating between 20,000 and 50,000 layoffs this year; 10,000 layoffs were announced at Anglo Platinum alone, and Pamodzi Gold, which operates four gold mines, is the first mining company to fall victim to the crisis and is currently in bankruptcy proceedings²¹. Around 60,000 jobs were lost between June 2008 and February 2009. The global crisis is exacerbating pre-existing large-scale structural unemployment in South Africa. In the first trimester of 2009, unemployment levels rose from 21.9% to 23.5% of the active population.

Besides unemployment, the inability of public authorities to meet the considerable social needs of the country also feeds popular frustration. In South Africa this is called the “service delivery” crisis. In townships and rural areas the most basic social needs, housing, health care, and education, are not met through lack of both expertise and financing. In Human Development Index terms, South Africa dropped

²¹ The first mining company to collapse, Pamodzi Gold, is the focus of interest from both South African mining groups and Chinese investors. A financial rescue package from the China-Africa Development Fund has been called for by the leadership of Pamodzi Gold.

from 89th place in 1998 to 125th in 2008²². Housing policy is a prime example of the crisis: 2.6 million social housing units have been built since 1994 but nevertheless demand continues to grow along with squatter camps - more than 200 have been recorded in Gauteng Province. Despite an ambitious policy of subsidized housing²³, the housing deficit is estimated at around 2.4 million. Any improvement in the thematic of badly-housed people is impossible to envision in the short- or even medium-term. A growing population stream, driven by a combination of demographic trends, the search for work, and immigration, is draining into towns strained by the urbanization of poverty. Between 1996 and 2001, South African towns have grown by 10%.

Regarding health care and education, quality rather than quantity is the main problem. Desegregation of the education system has been accompanied by wealth-based selection by schools and pupils, and by a general decline in the quality of education. The same can be seen in the public health sector where the lack of medical personnel is being felt and the quality of care is also falling. At the same time, HIV/AIDS and TB continue to weigh on the South African population with 5.5 million HIV positive cases recorded.

As for unemployment, the influx of a Zimbabwean labor force ready to work for less than the minimum wage and popular dissatisfaction over the social performance of the authorities created a festering social context which led to xenophobic violence last year²⁴. In 2008 around 2,000 protests against the "service delivery" crisis were recorded. Considering the most recent protests, it is unlikely that COSATU could "manage" for long periods the social unhappiness of the masses which sometimes erupts without warning. Since the election, several sectors of the South African civil service, including municipality employees and medical personnel, have begun protest actions with a view to obtaining salary increases. The workers building the infrastructure for the World Cup have fallen in behind, as have taxi drivers opposing one of the flagship government projects: the new public transport system called the "Bus Rapid Transit System". Social tension has even spread to the army. A demonstration by soldiers unhappy with their salaries turned into a clash with police in Pretoria in August and led to the suspension of several thousand of them²⁵. This absence of a honeymoon period for the ANC and its electorate is coupled with a rise in power by the political opposition.

²² In South Africa, 4.2 million out of a population of 49 million live on less than 1\$ a day. All analyses indicate an increase in inequality at the same time as a rise in social benefits recipients.

²³ 20% of the population receive social housing, while the number of those living in 'shacks' went down from 16% to 14.4% in the period 1994 to 2007.

²⁴ In 2008 foreigners were the targets of violence in some townships, leading to the death of around 60 people.

²⁵ In South Africa, the army has a right to unionize but not to strike. These clashes between the police and the military portrayed an extremely poor image of South Africa and were accompanied by insubordination rumours. The Council of South African Churches offered to mediate between the government and the military trade unionists.

Rise in Internal and External Opposition

With people already thinking about the 2011 local elections, the political configuration is becoming less favorable for the ANC, who are moving from a situation of total domination to simple domination.

A Three- or Two-Party Democracy

The Democratic Alliance is firmly rooted in the Western Cape Province and has settled into the institutional role of the official opposition party. But, despite its growth, it is struggling to break down the racial barrier and become something other than just the political movement of the white, colored, and Indian minorities. Penned in by the racial borders of the South African psyche, the Democratic Alliance runs a strong risk of remaining confined to Western Cape's borders. On the other hand, COPE has confirmed its potential. Currently it is the only party able to chase votes on ANC electoral territory - in other words, the votes of the black majority. Therefore, any real potential for growth is to be found with COPE. This potential makes it a dangerous rival for the party in power. However, a question still hangs over its viability. A newcomer to South African politics, COPE is faced with the challenge of institutionalization: the need to structure itself, consolidate its finances, and develop a sustainable field presence. It is here where it suffered from post-electoral turmoil: the rebellion of the Eastern Cape branch, which took sides against Mosiuoa Lekota, revealed a battle of egos between Mbhazima Shilowa and Mosiuoa Lekota²⁶. Some of COPE's members are also the object of canvassing by the ANC. As a consequence, the party's cohesion has already been tested. If it manages to overcome the triple challenge of organization, financing, and internal coherence, the COPE could upset the South African political equation and be the political alternative for disenchanting blacks. Instead of a one-on-one between the ANC and the Democratic Alliance, South African democracy would see a black opposition position itself to the right of the ANC.

Continuing Internal Divisions

The end of "*Thabocracy*" does not mean the end of internal ANC divisions. The election of a charismatic president has in no way reduced the tensions either between the different ANC tendencies or within the COSATU/SACP/ANC tripartite alliance.

²⁶ Mbhazima Shilowa and Mosiuoa Lekota are both former ANC leaders with different backgrounds. A former trade unionist, Mbhazima Shilowa was a COSATU leader before being nominated as premier of Gauteng Province by Thabo Mbeki. In that position he is successfully managing one of the richest and most difficult provinces of the country. Mosiuoa Lekota comes from the ranks of internal opposition to apartheid (the United Democratic Front), and was appointed premier of his home province of Free State in 1994. Since then he has also been successively senator and defence minister.

Thabo Mbeki's inner circle no longer poses a threat to the new president. Those who remain in the ANC have either sworn allegiance to the new master at Luthuli House²⁷ or splintered away from the party to form COPE. The "Mbeki succession" represents less of a problem than the continuing rivalries typically found within the ANC at the provincial level. These internal quarrels lead to destabilizing competition within the provincial governments, and are frankly self-destructive as the ANC crisis in Western Cape Province illustrates. Deep internal tensions plague the provincial branch and have resulted in the expulsion of the premier²⁸, Ebrahim Rasool, by a rival faction. The ensuing chaos caused by this internal bickering prevented the party from designating a candidate for the post of premier and the by-election was lost. In Eastern Cape, party leadership is at stake in the struggle between the rival factions of Mcebisi Jonas, provincial finance minister, and Phumulo Masualle, provincial health minister. Because of internecine struggles, both North West and Free State have dysfunctional ANC leaderships and on a number of occasions senior party officials have had to step in to promote reconciliation. Free State, for example, has had five premiers, one of whom, Mosiuoa Lekota, was elected in 1994 but was never able to finish his mandate at the head of this quarrelsome province. On top of these intra-ANC challenges, tense exchanges with the left wing of the alliance continue.

Within the alliance, COSATU and SACP continue to make their differences felt and to remind the new president that they weighed in strongly in his favor during the struggle with Thabo Mbeki. By posturing as a "protector of jobs" in the face of the crisis, COSATU favors an interventionist economic policy with internal market protection and a simplified "developmental state". The main trade union regularly brings up the overcomplexity of the country's administrative structure and proposes the elimination of provinces. COSATU also brandishes the specter of the 1973 and 1976 popular movements which saw a revolt emerge from the rank and file and take the ANC leadership by surprise. COSATU does not hesitate to bring the party to task in order to exert pressure on the ANC, publicly accusing it of endemic corruption and of becoming a "*comprador bourgeoisie*". As Zwelinzima Vavi, the secretary general of COSATU put it, "*the tender is the new enemy of our movement, not the Congress of the People or Helen Zille's Democratic Alliance. It is crass materialism which is the most formidable enemy that we must confront and defeat*²⁹". At the same time, SACP maintains its right to criticize, in spite of having ministers in Jacob Zuma's cabinet. One example of this is SACP's call for a reduction in government agencies. These agencies have proliferated and now number around 120; the government has also

²⁷ The name of the building in Johannesburg where the ANC headquarters are located.

²⁸ The governor of the province is called the premier.

²⁹ "Greed will destroy the ANC." *Sunday Times*. South Africa, 23 August 2009.

announced the creation of a Border Management Agency. SACP and COSATU, unlike the ANC, believe that the alliance creates the policies and that the government simply implements them.

The First Steps of Jacob Zuma's Policies

With an electorate which has gone from a period of doubt to one of protest, with the beginnings of a black opposition, and with a policy of harassment from the left-wing of the alliance, the margin for maneuver available to Jacob Zuma would seem limited. Confronted by slow but consistent growth in the opposition, the ANC is pondering the fate of the Inkatha. The lesson from this party at the head of KwaZulu Natal for 10 years is that above all, a party needs to improve people's situations. It was significant that Jacob Zuma made his first public appearance in Eastern Cape even before being officially sworn in as president. Eastern Cape is one of the country's poorest provinces and is bearing the brunt of the economic crisis. It is also sensitive to alarmism from the COPE. It is here, a now disputed ANC stronghold, where the new president reiterated his commitment to revive the economy and improve public services, implicitly signaling that for him, unlike his predecessor, internal problems are a priority³⁰.

Revival of the South African Economy

In line with international actions, the South African authorities devised a 787 billion rand infrastructure spending program, while the central bank slightly relaxed its monetary policy. As a consequence of this stimulus package, the budget deficit is expected to increase from 4% to 7%. Included within this program is:

- Construction of new power plants: faced with a serious energy crisis, it is imperative that South Africa makes energy investments and increases its electricity production capacity. Expansion of its stock of coal-fired power plants is planned through the construction of a 100 billion rand super power plant in Limpopo Province³¹ and of other plants in Mpumalanga at a cost of 140 billion, in addition to the development of nuclear power.

³⁰ Jacob Zuma will not be a 'diplomat president' like Thabo Mbeki. Fittingly, his two first official visits have been to African countries, namely Angola and Zimbabwe. The first was entirely devoted to reconciliation and economic relations, and the second, mediation on the Global Political Agreement implementation.

³¹ On its completion in 2015, the Medupi power plant at Lephalale should be the fourth biggest coal-fired power plant in the world.

- Construction of a new airport in Durban and the improvement of existing airports by 2010: Acsa the public company responsible for airports has a 16 billion rand development plan for airport infrastructure.
- Recapitalization of numerous public sector firms experiencing financial difficulties: Denel, the public arms company, received a 3.5 billion rand injection from the government and stabilized its losses from 307 billion rand in 2007 to 242 billion rand in 2008; the Land Bank, now under the guardianship of the finance ministry, has also benefited from state financial support.
- Emergency aid for ailing industrial enterprises, with 6 billion rand from the Industrial Development Corporation, and employment subsidies. The community public works plan should create 4 million jobs between now and 2014 and 2.4 billion rand have been set aside for development and continued learning.
- Regeneration of secondary towns: the state intends to invest in the revitalization of towns in rural areas to stop rural flight to big cities. The Gyani municipality in Limpopo Province will be the first to test this plan.

Putting an End to State Inefficiency

Social service provision to the poor is stagnating and, in certain cases, even regressing. Far from being a white complaint, this grievance comes from the townships, where rumblings of social frustration can easily turn violent, as the xenophobic attacks in 2008 serve to illustrate. The South African state gives the impression of being a seriously sick machine, with decreasing productivity and crippling corruption. The considerable degradation of public services – especially social services – the energy crisis, the dysfunction of the Home Affairs Department, and the losses by the Land Bank all attest to an ailing public sector. The energy crisis, which the country has been experiencing for the past two years, stems from a lack of capacity investments ten years ago. This crisis has taken on a most harmful form for the economy; mines and factories have had to suspend their activities; which has highlighted in a glaringly obvious way the mistakes of ANC governance. After the discovery of the financial losses by the Land Bank, the guardianship of this bank passed from the agriculture ministry to the finance ministry and several judicial enquiries began. Great Britain introduced a visa obligation for South African citizens following an increase in corruption cases in the South African Home Affairs Department.

Besides this, there are a whole series of reports on corruption in the public arena: the Pillay Report on the management of Eastern Cape³², the Donen Report on Oilgate³³, and so on.

Jacob Zuma promised to curb the deterioration of public services. He advocated for the dismissal of incompetent civil servants, centralization, and evaluation. The new president has already begun concentrating the levers of power in Union Buildings³⁴; a planning commission and an evaluation commission have been created within the presidency and have been entrusted to two political heavyweights, Trevor Manuel and Comins Chabaane. While the former should guarantee coherent government policy, the latter should play a major role in defining, financing, and correcting public policy. Elsewhere, misguided actions observed in the administration - such as absenteeism and embezzlements - will no longer be tolerated and strict instructions to that effect have been given to the government. To set an example, the defense minister, who was caught by the media in a luxury hotel in KZN, has been severely reprimanded by the president.

However, it is not clear whether the new government will be able to question policies which are structural failures, nor if it has sufficient legitimacy to lead the battle against corruption. For example, the ANC cannot afford the political price of a change of course on the subject of land reform, even though it has not led to a black agricultural business and has had a negative impact on agricultural productivity in several regions. The agricultural minister has even begun repossessing some farms which were redistributed and subsequently abandoned³⁵. In the ANC electoral program, the goal of land redistribution remains unchanged and as unrealistic as ever, even though the mistakes of this policy are known: the absence of financial and technical support for the emerging farmers, the exorbitant cost of "willing seller, willing buyer", and mismanagement of the Land Bank. Moreover, because of the legal saga involving an Indian businessman prior to Zuma's election, corruption scandals involving the ANC in KZN are the focus of renewed attention; Jacob Zuma's corridors of power and his inner circle face close scrutiny. For instance, S'bu Ndebele, in his role as provincial minister, is accused of having granted public contracts without going through the official bidding process. Incidents such as this one significantly reduce the

³² The Pillay Report, compiled during Thabo Mbeki's presidency, focuses on corruption in the provincial government of Eastern Cape. It uncovered the deviant practices of the provincial administration and implicated several powerful provincial political figures.

³³ The Donen Report was put together during Thabo Mbeki's presidency and concerns the implication of important ANC figures in the UN in Iraq 'oil for food' scandal. This report reveals the payment of bribes in exchange for the contract for supplies to Iraq.

³⁴ Headquarters of the South African government in Pretoria.

³⁵ See N. Andrew. *Reforming South Africa's Land System: The Conflict That Refuses to Go Away*. Paris, Ifri, E-notes, December 2008.

legitimacy of the government's anticorruption efforts. Unlike electoral campaign promises, there does not seem to be a magic solution to put an end once and for all to the South African state shortcomings which have now taken on structural proportions.

Conclusion

Contrary to the expectations of some and the fears of others, Jacob Zuma has taken neither the socialist nor the anticonstitutionalist path heralded during his election campaign. Far from steering a course to the left and transforming himself into a South African Lula or Evo Morales, Jacob Zuma is taking good care to promote wealth redistribution in this period of recession and has selected a balanced government. Apart from his inner circle, there are also distinguished representatives from SACP and COSATU, such as Blade Nzimade, Jeremy Cronin, Ebrahim Patel, and Rob Davies. In addition, there are a good number of Thabo Mbeki ministers re-elected for a third term as well, amongst them Lindiwe Sisulu, Trevor Manuel, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, Marthinus van Schalkwyk, Jeff Radebe, and Membathisi Mdladlana. In the economic sector Zuma's prudence is evident and key posts remain in the hands of pro-business incumbents. Trevor Manuel, who is highly appreciated by the business community, made way for Pravin Gordhan, the former revenue service commissioner, and the central bank governor, Tito Mboweni, was replaced by Gill Marcus, another well-regarded figure within business circles. From this point of view, Jacob Zuma seems to be following in the footsteps of Thabo Mbeki. He is relying on self-neutralization of his political adversaries within the alliance, co-opting the best elements from the left wing, confirming the *entente cordiale* with the Afrikaners, and using the black populism of Julius Malema as a release valve for the working class community. All these actions are designed to rule the centre and reassure the outside³⁶.

However, while the task of the previous South African government was to reconcile social development with economic growth, the current government's task is to combat the economic crisis and find realistic answers to the country's structural problems. It might end up being undone by its own social promises; financial resources to speed up land reform, create a national health insurance system, and assure free public schooling in 60% of the country's schools need to be found - and all this in a country where social security beneficiaries are increasing and the number of contributors

³⁶ A few days after Jacob Zuma's election, Matthews Phosa, the extremely efficient ANC treasurer, was dispatched to London to meet with Gordon Brown's advisors and the British business community by way of appeasement.

remains constant³⁷. The biggest danger for Zuma's government is to be caught between the devil and the deep blue sea, between COSATU and COPE - in other words, between black criticism from both the left and the right. In this unprecedented situation there is the risk that Zuma might give in to demagogic tendencies. These tendencies have clear time and legal parameters. The time limit is the 2010 soccer World Cup on which South Africa's international reputation is riding. Taking into account Zuma's accession to power and his long and controversial judicial history, he will always be suspected of harboring ambitions to control the justice system and his actions in this area will be closely scrutinized. It is fundamental that this does not become his defining mistake, as HIV/AIDS was for Thabo Mbeki.

³⁷ The number of social security beneficiaries has risen from 5.8 to 12 million between 2000 and 2008, whilst the number of contributors has remained stable at 4 million.

ANNEX

South African Political Organizations

Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU)	<p>Formed in 1985, COSATU is the biggest South African trade union federation. It participated in the struggle against apartheid on the side of the ANC through socialist obedience, and forms part of the government tripartite alliance. Some members became ministers in 1994, and COSATU played a large role in developing the Reconstruction and Development Programme, the main policy of Nelson Mandela's government. Pushed aside by Thabo Mbeki, who pursued a liberal economic agenda, COSATU became the main political force to oppose him and supported Jacob Zuma. After Zuma's victory, COSATU obtained several posts in the government, notably in the ministry of economic development, but continues to be critical of the ANC.</p>
United Democratic Movement (UDM)	<p>Although created after apartheid (1997), the United Democratic Movement is still heir to this political regime through its two founding fathers, Bantu Holomisa and Roelf Meyer, who built up their careers under apartheid South Africa and have not been able to change their image since. Roelf Meyer came from the National Party while General Bantlu Holomisa led the Bantustan from the Transkei. The UDM has been considerably weakened by the departure of Roelf Meyer and several of its representatives joined the ranks of the ANC.</p>
South African Communist Party (SACP)	<p>SACP is one of the oldest parties in South Africa. Banned in 1950, it was authorized again in 1990. Members played a key role in the covert activities of the ANC in exile. Reputed to be a party of intellectuals, SACP has provided some of the ANC's finest cadres, such as Govan Mbeki - the father of Thabo - Joe Slovo, and Chris Hani. Since the era of the anti-apartheid struggle, SACP has maintained an almost fusional relationship with the ANC. Making up the alliance alongside COSATU and the ANC, SACP always obtains ministerial posts and, despite speculations and rumors of autonomy, its members are elected on the ANC lists. During</p>

	tensions between Jacob Zuma and Thabo Mbeki, the SACP took up the cause of the former.
Freedom Front Plus	This party is the successor to the Freedom Front of General Constand Viljoen. From the Afrikaner extreme right party circles, this formation endorses the defense of Afrikaner interests and has seen its share of the vote reduced from 2.2% to 0.83% between 1994 and 2009. Jacob Zuma appointed its leader, Pieter Mulder, as deputy agriculture minister.
Democratic Alliance	Heir of the Democratic Party, this movement has made remarkable progress despite a leadership handover. Tony Leon ceded his place to Helen Zille in 2007 after successfully reconciling his party's traditional electorate - English-speaking whites - with a new electorate - Afrikaners. This allowed the Democratic Alliance to increase their number of representatives from 10 in 1994 to 50 in 2009, thereby becoming the official opposition. Its political policies tend towards economic liberalism and strict constitutionalism.
Inkatha Freedom Party	Created in the 1970s as a defense movement and a movement for the promotion of Zulu culture, the Inkatha of Mangosuthu Buthelezi rapidly became a political force to be reckoned with in apartheid South Africa. Disagreeing with the ANC's armed struggle against the Pretoria regime, the Inkatha accepted the Bantustan system. It was handed the leadership of KwaZulu and found itself engaged in a merciless struggle with the ANC in East Rand and Natal. Most violence occurred during clashes between militants from these two parties. After threatening to unravel the negotiations which finally put an end to apartheid, the Inkatha was invited to rejoin the government by Nelson Mandela in 1994 and left only during Thabo Mbeki's second term.
Pan Africanist Congress (PAC)	PAC was founded in 1958 after the breakaway from the ANC by Robert Sobukwe and other members in objection to Nelson Mandela's multiracial policy. Adopting the slogan "Africa for Africans", they rejected the Freedom Charter and reconnected with the pan-African positions of Tom Mboya and Kwame Nkrumah. Outlawed in 1960 after the Sharpeville massacre, PAC was authorized once more in 1990 but refused to abandon its armed struggle and carried out several anti-white killings between 1990 and 1993. In the 1994 elections PAC received only 1.8% of the vote and its followers have continued to diminish ever since.
Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO)	An offshoot of the <i>Black Consciousness</i> , this organization was created in 1978 with a plan to create a black-led socialist state (Azania). Its extremism has always marginalized it within the black electorate and multiple divisions have rendered it largely inoperative as a political party.

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