TRIBUTE TO COMRADE JONNY ISSEL
A time-tested revolutionary of our movement

I would first like to express my heartfelt condolences to the Issel family over the loss of their beloved father, comrade John James Issel. Although no one can pretend to fully understand the extent of your pain, I would like you to note that your loss is our loss. Comrade Johnny was part of a broader family called the African National Congress (ANC).

It is no easy thing bearing the pain of losing a father figure in the family. However, the Issel family would know only too well that comrade Johnny’s struggle did not end with the casting of the democratic vote in 1994. His sense of justice was not numbed by the burst of euphoria that accompanied our democratic moment.

I am sure I am echoing the sentiments of many, both in the Western Cape, and across the length and breadth of our country, when I state that, the death of comrade Johnny Issel is a loss to the cause of human freedom.

In real terms comrade Johnny Issel’s life manifested the reality that humanity was meant to be free and that there is nothing in nature forbidding the flower of freedom from blooming in its full glory.

Comrade Johnny thus lived every minute of his life agonising about apartheid conditions and the devastating impact they had on the lives of oppressed South Africans. In pursuit of this vision he laboured hard, from a very young age, to bring about the eradication of apartheid in its totality.

Sparing no effort he went all out galvanising various sections of society, including trade unions, youth, women, religious sectors, the business sector, and many others, to stand up and be counted in the great historical march to liberation. Given this extent of his contribution to a democratic South Africa, it follows that the death of comrade Johnny leaves a void in all of us. It leaves a void in the flowering new nation called South Africa to whose construction he dedicated all his life.

Once again, the icy hand of death has snatched one of our most revered leaders from our midst, leaving us the poorer for it. Comrade Johnny Issel, a time-tested revolutionary of our movement, has passed on, leaving us with the task of realising the dreams he had cherished all his life.

Along with many others of his generation, comrade Johnny has, during his lifetime, done his part, with assiduity. He did his part driven by high ideals as espoused by his movement, the ANC.

Accordingly, the ANC, the vehicle for the expression of his aspirations, provided him with a lifelong frame of reference to make sense of his world. So, central to his vision were the basic tenets that would one day underlie democratic South Africa’s constitution and the values it advocates.
Most of comrade Issel’s generation, including the generation before his, is fading out, succumbing to the unrelenting force of nature. As it is to be expected, this leaves a yawning gap in our lives, and perhaps we should draw solace from the truth that their imprints on the sands of time are forever preserved by the epochal April 1994 Democratic election.

The 1994 moment represented a historical absolution which could be literally seen as history’s ringing endorsement of the vision of comrade Issel and the Mass Democratic Movement. He helped light the way to the democratic future when he, together with others, founded the United Democratic Front (UDF), an organisation that would mobilise the entire society behind the vision of non-racialism.

In some instances a case can be made that decades of exacting struggle have taken a toll on most comrades of these two generations. In much the same way one can also contend that comrade Johnny Issel was worn down by these untiring efforts over the years. His commitment to the struggle for liberation knew no bounds, and many can testify to his varied roles in the struggle.

We have benefited immensely from comrade Issel’s generation, which invariably sacrificed a lifetime of personal benefits to bring about a united, non-racial, non-sexist, just and democratic South Africa.

It is a generation that stands on the shoulders of giants such as: OR Tambo, Walter Sisulu, Helen Joseph, Ray Alexander, Oscar Mpetha and Govan Mbeki, among others. Comrade Issel’s generation had accepted the baton from this earlier generation and, at a great cost to their persons, worked themselves into the ground with no prospect of personal gain.

Not surprisingly, most of comrade Issel’s generation are not as well known today because they had preferred the drudgery of groundwork to aspirations of leadership. In fact, as and when he accepted a position of leadership he did so because his immense experience was called forth at the time.

Coming from an enlightened generation that spoke its mind on all weighty matters without reserve, comrade Johnny pulled no punches when he discerned perversion of our values in the democratic South Africa.

As a representative of the age-old values that underpinned our struggle for years, he could not keep a stiff upper lip in the face of sporadic incidents of greed and corruption by some of the cadres of the movement he loved dearly.

He questioned those who sought to profiteer from a democratic South Africa at the expense of the masses of our people. In the same vein, he lamented the crass materialism and the heartless value system of individualism discernable in some social quarters in post-apartheid South Africa.

To this end he submitted that: “In our market society [today] everyone looks out for himself - and only himself. Nobody is his brother's keeper. Very different from the tenets held and forged during the camaraderie of the ‘80s.”

He went on to state that: “The new values emerging within our nascent democracy are at the opposite pole of those prevalent during the times of the UDF.” As a moral conscience and a veteran of our struggle, comrade Issel’s words echo the abiding perspective in our movement that above all else we should remain seized with the pivotal task of creating a better life for our people.

When incorruptible men and women of comrade Johnny’s calibre do die they leave behind a noticeable gap which is most acutely felt during critical moments of a people’s life. The constructive criticism he offers above is one among many qualities of comrade Johnny Issel that we will all miss in the fullness of time.

We should all take a leaf from comrade Issel’s principled life. This is especially so in the Western Cape, where there is a great need to build unity among our people. Among others, comrade Issel rejected racialism and ethnicity in all their variations, knowing that all such fissures are but an artificial to divide the oppressed.

---

**Afric**

**Africa**

**Africa growth on way back to pre-crisis level |** African economic growth is heading back to pre-crisis growth levels, propelled by strong demand for its resources and increased “South-South” investment, notably from China. Mthuli Ncube, chief economist at the African Development Bank (AfDB) said the world’s poorest continent would see gross domestic product growth of 6,0% this year and, potentially, between 6,2% and 6,5% in 2012. Sub-Saharan countries including Ethiopia, Angola and Rwanda boast some of the world’s fastest-growing economies. A strong rebound led by demand for the continent’s commodities means 2011 is already on course to grow more rapidly than originally expected, following a recovery from the low of just 2,9% growth seen in 2009. China has stepped up its investment in Africa in recent years, largely in the hunt for resources, and has injected badly needed capital into infrastructure. But the Chinese are not alone, with companies from both India and Brazil also more aggressive at pursuing opportunities in Africa than in the past.

---

**President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni visits South Africa |** At the invitation of the President Jacob Zuma, President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda, paid a two day State visit to South Africa. The two Presidents held fruitful discussions and reviewed bilateral, regional and international issues of mutual interest. They also expressed their mutual satisfaction with the strong bonds of friendship between the two countries and emphasized their determination to further strengthen and expand cooperation in amongst others the fields of tourism, arts and culture, education and health.

---

**WEEK IN REVIEW**

---

**President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni visits South Africa |** At the invitation of the President Jacob Zuma, President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda, paid a two day State visit to South Africa. The two Presidents held fruitful discussions and reviewed bilateral, regional and international issues of mutual interest. They also expressed their mutual satisfaction with the strong bonds of friendship between the two countries and emphasized their determination to further strengthen and expand cooperation in amongst others the fields of tourism, arts and culture, education and health.

---

**Africa growth on way back to pre-crisis level |** African economic growth is heading back to pre-crisis growth levels, propelled by strong demand for its resources and increased “South-South” investment, notably from China. Mthuli Ncube, chief economist at the African Development Bank (AfDB) said the world’s poorest continent would see gross domestic product growth of 6,0% this year and, potentially, between 6,2% and 6,5% in 2012. Sub-Saharan countries including Ethiopia, Angola and Rwanda boast some of the world’s fastest-growing economies. A strong rebound led by demand for the continent’s commodities means 2011 is already on course to grow more rapidly than originally expected, following a recovery from the low of just 2,9% growth seen in 2009. China has stepped up its investment in Africa in recent years, largely in the hunt for resources, and has injected badly needed capital into infrastructure. But the Chinese are not alone, with companies from both India and Brazil also more aggressive at pursuing opportunities in Africa than in the past.
Guided by his conscience, comrade Issel rejected greed out of hand, inspired by the historical task of poverty eradication among all our people. He eschewed factionalism as a virulent strain that has the potential to eat away at the vitals of the ANC, not least here in the Western Cape.

At some point in his life he adopted Marxism as the advanced theoretical model not only to explain the wrongs of society but also to guide society out of its difficulties. As an activist he advanced political education among the rank and file of the ANC.

He clearly understood the importance of an informed and independent mind capable of both grasping and dissecting complex social phenomena. In like manner, we should ask ourselves whether we are doing enough to orientate the membership of the ANC to the principles, values and character of the ANC.

We can only live out our values if we know them, understand their meaning and appreciate where they come from and the difficult conditions under which they were conceived. In other words, as a people with a particularly noxious history of racial oppression whose residual smell is still hovering above the democratic South Africa, we cannot take for granted our hard-earned freedom.

At the same time, our own history obliges us to uphold the legacy of comrade Johnny Issel and his generation. It is a legacy that cannot only find expression in glib speeches on odd occasions. It is a legacy that needs to be lived minute by minute through improved social relations, better economic outlook for our people and matured political system to guide our nation to a truly united, non-racial, non-sexist, prosperous and just future.

On this account, let me state clearly that I consider myself privileged to have shared the same time and space with comrade Johnny Issel. I am privileged to have known this Titan of our struggle of whom our nation is proud. His life resonates with the memorable mind of Nikolai Ostrovsky on life:

"Man’s dearest possession is life. It is given to him but once, and he must live it so as to feel no torturing regrets for wasted years, never know the burning shame of a mean and petty past.; so live that, dying, he might say: all my life, all my strength were given to the finest cause in the world - the fight for the liberation of mankind." (~ Nikolai Ostrovsky - How The Steel Was Tempered)

So, during his last hour, comrade Johnny found peace from the fact that all his life, all his strength was given to the finest cause in the world-the fight for the liberation of humankind.

We salute this esteemed member of the Order of Luthuli.

May his soul rest in peace!

>> This is an edited extract of the tribute by Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe at the Memorial Service of the late Comrade Johnny Issel. Kgalema Motlanthe is the Deputy President of the ANC and of the Republic of South Africa
Science and technology find solutions to real problems

Advanced study in disciplines such as science, mathematics and technology is acknowledged worldwide as a key element in building vibrant and sustainable economies and societies. This is true for all countries of the world. Thus far Africa has not fully exploited the opportunities that emerge from committed investment in research and the development of high-level skills in all fields.

As a continent we must do more to promote science, mathematics and technology, however advances in all fields of study should be part of our policy. Africa has not always been at the forefront of research and innovation.

Economic development and future prosperity does not rest on independent and isolated actions and activities, but requires regional interventions and planning. The critical importance of science and technology to regional development is set out in the 2005 NEPAD document: ‘Africa’s Science and Technology Consolidated Plan of Action’ (CPA). NEPAD provided us with the opportunity to plan on a continental scale.

The CPA articulates Africa’s common objectives and commitment to collective action in order to promote science and technology for the socioeconomic transformation of the African continent, and its integration into the global economy.

Africa’s commitment to collaboration in science and technology was highlighted at the 2007 Summit of the African Union Heads of State and Government, where members declared 2007 as the year for building constituencies and champions for science, technology and innovation in Africa.

The study of science and technology is not just beneficial to our doctoral candidates in and of itself - because to be a PhD or an engineer carries a high status. The study of science and technology is primarily about finding solutions to real problems that we face. We need to find ways, for example, of providing better nutrition and health care for our peoples.

For example, what is the number one cause of death in children under 5 in the world today? Airborne or waterborne diseases? Diarrhoea? AIDS? Malnutrition? No. The number one cause of death in children under five is inhaling smoke from indoor cooking fires - over 2 million deaths every year. Here is a practical problem that needs an urgent solution. We are looking to our young scientists to find the simplest and best ideas that can change the world for the better.

Research in science and technology has always thrived in a context of collaboration and competition. It has thrived in a community of critical colleagues and the contribution of an individual researcher has always been greatly enhanced by the support from the community of other researchers and scholars.

In the past African doctoral students tended to study abroad. Traditionally, the “brain drain” has been from the less developed countries to the developed countries. However, other directions of student flow are now emerging, such as mobility within Commonwealth countries and South-South or North-South flows.

01 February 1974: Onkgopotse Abram Tiro, a leader of the South African Students' Organisation (SASO), was killed by a parcel bomb near Gaborone, Botswana. Tiro was completing an application form to continue his studies through the University of South Africa (Unisa) when a student known only as Lawrence handed him a parcel supposedly forwarded by the international University Exchange Programme. As he was opening it, the bomb exploded, killing him instantly.

02 February 1989: P. W. Botha suffered a mild stroke and he announced his intention to resign the National Party presidency while remaining State President. His resignation shocked his colleagues and led to an internal succession process in the party that culminated in the appointment of F. W. de Klerk.

03 February 1988: Fighting between IFP and UDF supporters spilled into central Pietermaritzburg when the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) offices in the town were attacked by a mob armed with pangas and other weapons. Cosatu and the UDF were seen to be challenging IFP's hegemony in KwaZulu-Natal, and their alleged links with the banned ANC made them an obvious target of Inkatha and state covert forces.
In 2010, the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf) published the PhD Study <http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20101015200903623> . Even though the findings of this study cannot be considered as a proxy for the continent, here are some of the findings (the research for the ASSAf study was conducted by Professor Mouton wearing his CREST hat):

- South Africa produced 1 274 and 1 171 PhD graduates in 2007 and 2008 respectively, with up to 29% of these being international graduates, primarily from the rest of the Continent. While these figures may appear significant to some, they are very modest relative to comparable developing countries such as Brazil;
- In 2007, only 12% of doctoral graduates were under 30 years old, with the average age at graduation being 40 years;
- Only a third of all research and instructional staff at universities had PhDs.

And then please note this important finding:

“In terms of job readiness, employers noted lack of i) exposure to international expertise, theories and debates, ii) methodological competence and iii) ‘real world’ relevance as salient weaknesses in the skills and abilities of doctoral graduates.”

This comment about the “job readiness” of our graduates is important to ADA.

Nearly 30% of doctoral graduates in South Africa are international and most of them come from the rest of the continent. We are hoping that South Africa can contribute to minimizing the brain drain out of the continent and become a preferred destination of postgraduate studies and research for African students and academics rather than OECD countries.

One of the ways in which we are encouraging this brain gain is to invest and initiate global research projects such as the Square Kilometre Array, the recently launched ANDI initiative and work at Wits on a multi disciplinary approach to Human Origins and the Paleosciences. A positive result of the African and global links in these projects has been the successful SKA Human Capital Development Programme. 26% of the grants from this programme have gone to researchers from other countries such as Brazil.

Taking the cue from the 2007 Summit of the African Union Heads of State and Government, where members committed to building constituencies and champions for science, technology and innovation in Africa, South Africa has established collaborative research platforms throughout the Continent - initiatives such as the Africa Institute for Mathematical Sciences (AIMS), African Laser Centre (ALC) and the Southern African Network for BioSciences (SANBIO) and the NEPAD Initiative.

The South African government’s emerging response to the ASSAf PhD have identified three important thrusts for human capital development; namely:

- Growing the next generation of researchers and academics, i.e., support more postgraduate students and post doctoral fellows;
- Developing and supporting emerging researchers, i.e., support and translate more new generation researchers into established researchers; and
- Supporting and maximising the output of the established researchers, i.e., increase the number of active researchers and ensure that they produce the required knowledge and innovation outputs and supervise the next generation of researchers.

The National Research Foundation had good news for the research community in regard to all these issues last year and can look forward to further good news in the coming year. It is my sincere hope that the objectives of ADA and the Summer School in Research Methods live up to your expectation of what a difference a vibrant research culture can make for the countries and peoples of Africa.

>> Naledi Pandor is an ANC NEC member and Minister of Science and Technology
TO SUBMIT ARTICLES OR COMMENT FOR ANC TODAY

Send your email to mndlovu@anc.org.za

OR

By Fax to 086 508 2440