

# Opinion

## State facilitating xenophobia by attributing violence to 'criminality'

JONATHAN CRUSH

"THREE men came into my shop and asked me for money. I gave them everything I had. They then told me to go into my room that was behind the shop. They said: 'When we're done with you, *kaerkaere* (foreigner), you won't stay in this country anymore - you will run back to your own country.' Then they took turns to rape me."

The Somali woman who told a researcher of this brutal attack had no expectation that the perpetrators would bother to hide, let alone be brought to justice.

Violent xenophobia is a regular feature of life in South Africa, where everyday animosity frequently spills over into violence against migrants and refugees and their economic

enterprises. Some incidents reach the scrutiny of the media and officialdom - such as the attack on a Nigerian man by Cape Town police officers in March that went viral after it was recorded by an onlooker - but most remain invisible and unremarked.

The Southern African Migration Programme has been monitoring the perceptions and attitudes of South Africans towards migrants and refugees for close to two decades. Its periodic surveys provide unequivocal evidence of deep-rooted and pervasive hostility towards migrants and refugees in the country.

The programme's most recent attitudinal survey found that South Africans particularly loath migrants from Zimbabwe, Nigeria and Somalia. Perceptions of an increase in the number of migrants (often

represented with aquatic metaphors such as "floods" and "tidal waves") intensify the levels of threat attached to them.

Rights and entitlements for residents are directly and in a discriminatory fashion linked to citizenship, drawing the boundaries between those who are seen to belong and others who are not.

The perceived threat is influenced by the myths and biases against migrant groups accepted by citizens, including that they are responsible for South Africa's high crime rate, that they bring disease, that they "steal" South African jobs, services and resources and that they are all illegally in the country.

Violence perpetrated against migrants and refugees continues to be explained away by politicians as

criminal acts by isolated elements.

Another form of denialism shifts the blame from xenophobia to the state's dereliction of its duties, particularly its failure to control borders. According to this view, the problem is that the state has not seriously engaged with the "foreign threat." It is difficult to see how South Africa's border and immigration controls can be considered either soft or lenient.

The post-apartheid state has intensified border and immigration enforcement and, even at the height of the 2008 violence, officials were deporting displaced victims they claimed had entered South Africa illegally. State agencies typically focus on identifying irregular migrants among victims of violence and deporting them, reinforcing the

biases and prejudices that fuelled the violence to begin with.

Then there are others who see the violence as a signifier of a broader, deepening social crisis tied to intense competition for scarce resources such as jobs, shelter and services. According to this view, the effects of the inadequate post-apartheid transition have been felt most acutely in marginal urban locations where much of the violence has occurred and where difference has become the site around which the palpable anger and frustrations of those left out has been expressed.

Certainly the spatial incidence of violence in May 2008 strongly correlated with the geography of poverty. But this simply begs the question of why not all poor areas erupted or why poor South Africans

were not attacking each other with similar ferocity. The economic insecurity of the offenders may account for their extreme anxiety and heightened dissatisfaction, but it does not explain why certain groups were and are singled out for deadly assault.

The crises of governance and frustrated hopes in South Africa have little, if anything, to do with the presence of migrants. These connections need to be constructed more carefully to avoid reproducing the very prejudices that need to be confronted. One cannot deny that there is rivalry between locals and migrants. However, migrants represent a very small minority in terms of South Africa's total population, and the detrimental effects of this economic competition have been seriously overstated.

Debate over xenophobia needs to be broadened to consider its many and varied expressions, rather than focusing only on acts of violence and whether or not they are motivated by xenophobia. By denying that xenophobia exists as an attributing abuse of foreign nationals to "criminality", the state stands outside the phenomenon, diverting attention from the embedding of xenophobia within its own structures and policies.

● *Crush, an honorary professor at the University of Cape Town, is co-author of the Southern African Migration Programme's latest publication, "Xenophobic Violence in South Africa: Denialism, Minimalism, Realism" - available for download here: /imcr/04-southern-african-migration-programme/*

# There's our caring capitalis ?

We must look at the model of social corporatism in the Nordic countries that have a far more equitable balance between business and labour, writes **Andile Ntingi**

FOUR years ago, the government unveiled an economic policy it touted as a panacea for South Africa's post-apartheid woes of anorexic economic growth, stubbornly high unemployment, and hostile industrial relations. Ebrahim Patel, a veteran trade unionist and minister of a newly established Economic Development Department at the time was brought into the government as the face of this macro-economic policy known as the New Growth Path (NGP).

The NGP promised to turn the South African economy into a proverbial golden goose that would lay a 7 percent annual growth rate and five million jobs between 2010 and 2020.

But the policy, progressive as it was, got nowhere and was quickly ditched after it was shot down by business which perceived it to be laced with socialist undertones and interventionist in its orientation.

Today, South Africa is paying a heavy price for failing to give the NGP a chance and taking on board some of its elements that would have placed our economy on an industrial growth path similar to successful economies such as Germany. We have a limping, jobs-shedding economy and the outlook is not rosy.

The government expects the economy to grow by a paltry 1.4 percent in 2014 and to slowly limp to 3 percent growth in 2017, still far off the pie-in-the-sky 7 percent expansion that NGP promised when it was first paraded in October 2010.

At the heart of the NGP was a proposal to smooth out the confrontational relations between business and labour to inject stability in the labour market to enable business to do what it does best - accumulate wealth - in return for labour getting a decent slice of the cake.

However, the relationship between the two has remained stuck in the past, colonial and frosty in nature, whereby white-owned capital has become accustomed to prospering on the back of cheap African labour and low electricity costs.

After the end of white minority rule in 1994, workers expected to extract substantial gains from the country's economic riches, owing to the alliance between the powerful labour federation, Congress of



**FIGHT FOR A DECENT WAGE:** Strikes over wage increases that culminated in 44 people being killed in 2012 at the Marikana Mine in North West's platinum belt could have been prevented if the government had listened to Economic Development Minister Ebrahim Patel, says the writer. PICTURE: REUTERS

South African Trade Unions (Cosatu), South African Communist Party (SACP), and the now-in-power African National Congress (ANC).

But how wrong they were. The manna has not fallen on them and instead the number of formal workers is shrinking and is likely to dwindle further as government plans to sell non-core assets to boost its coffers.

Signs of looming fallout between Zuma and Vavi started rearing their head in October 2009. For more than six months after his appointment, Patel had not been given a clear mandate to set South Africa's economic policies.

There were reports of a turf war between Patel and Trevor Manuel, a former finance minister and

administration in 2009 after they had supported him two years earlier to wrest power from Thabo Mbeki.

Patel was Cosatu's payback for its support for Zuma and the labour federation's general secretary Zwelinizima Vavi wanted his man to run the South African economy and tilt the balance of economic power in favour of workers.

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There were reports of a turf war between Patel and Trevor Manuel, a former finance minister and

National Planning Minister, over economic planning and co-ordination.

Distrustful of Zuma, Vavi launched public tirades demanding that Patel be given a mandate to set economic policies, not Manuel, who had assembled a team of academics and intellectuals to develop the National Development Plan (NDP) document for the country.

In October 2010, Patel finally made public the NDP, the macro-economic strategy that would underpin South Africa's growth for the next decade.

Vavi applauded but his excitement was short-lived as NDP became dominant over NGP, raising the ire of Vavi and some Cosatu

affiliates such as the National Union of Metal Workers of South Africa (Numsa), who have lashed the NDP as neo-liberal, anti-labour and potential jobs destroyer.

The unhappiness with the NDP has also split Cosatu down the middle with Vavi falling out with the federation's president, Sibusiso Dlamini, who is seen as Zuma's ally in the battle over adoption of NDP and the death of NGP.

Right now, Cosatu is so fractured and at its weakest point that it won't have the strength to ward off job losses that will arise from the mooted state privatisation.

We should have listened to Patel's progressive thinking because a lot of what has happened since 2010 could have been averted.

Wildcat strikes over wage increases that culminated in 44 people being killed in 2012 at the Marikana Mine in the North West's platinum belt could have been prevented.

The NGP proposed a brand of social corporatism in which a Keynesian-type developmental state acts as a facilitator of class compromise or co-operation between business and labour.

Patel borrowed heavily from Nordic countries such as Sweden, Norway, Iceland, and Finland where a big welfare state exists in an environment anchored on a social pact between capitalists and workers, resulting in neither of the

interest groups acting in a zero-sum game of sabotaging their economies.

Nordic countries, which pioneered social corporatism in the 1930s and perfected it in the 1970s, have efficient governments, high standards of living, and the most equal societies in the world.

A less extensive model of social corporatism is found in Austria and Germany, the so-called Rhenish capitalism, where the bourgeoisie and the proletariat have a cosy relationship that has allowed Germany to become Europe's wealthiest economy and a leading industrial exporter in the world.

Germany's industrial relations are mature to the extent that during the global recession that started in late 2008, German industrial workers agreed to take wage cuts or reduce working hours to help their employers ride out the worst economic slump since the 1930s Great Depression.

Job and Germany's manufacturing sector, the engine of the country's economy were saved while its neighbours and the world economy wallowed in a recession.

Unlike in many parts of the world, German companies, particularly small and medium-sized businesses, respect workers and often consult them on key investment decisions and innovative ways of boosting production.

This level of co-operation between employers and workers is unthinkable in South Africa, but there is no reason why we can't approach problems like the Germans or Scandinavians do.

If modern corporatists of Europe are not inspiration enough, perhaps the capitalists, socialists, trade unionists, bureaucrats, and politicians of South Africa must heed the pragmatic advice of our country's founding father, Nelson Mandela, who after his visit to the US after his release from prison in 1990 told an American audience: "I don't care whether the cat is black or white as long as it catches the mice."

We need to take Mandela's advice to heart or else the NDP will just be another expensive document that will go up in smoke without delivering the promised 11 million jobs and a trebled economy by 2030.

● *Ntingi is CEO of GetBiz, an e-procurement and online media platform.*

## Fiscal capacity and ethereal pupils haunt Eastern Cape education

THE GHOSTS have not yet completely abandoned the Eastern Cape.

Information provided by Basic Education Minister Angie Motshega last week showed there was considerable disparity between teacher and pupil numbers reported on the 10th day of the school year and the subsequent verification exercise conducted by StatsSA in July and August.

While the number of pupils dropped by 128 780, the number of teachers increased by 137, which should leave Education MEC Mandla Makupula relatively satisfied, as the verification exercise did prove that there were 128 780 ghost pupils, and that they may have been the remnants to justify the



**Patrick Cull**  
Eastern Eye

is questionable, as Motshega pointed out, because the Statistics Act places limitations on how the information may be used and great care has to be exercised in order not to identify those who participated.

An equally disturbing statistic was provided by Transport MEC Wezive Tikhana last week when she told the legislature that 98 000 pupils would require transport to school

provincial government could only transport 55 000 pupils a year at a cost of more than R250 million.

Of these, she said, more than 6 000 attended schools that were 40km or more away from their homes, "some even up to 100km".

Tikhana said to some extent this could be attributed to "apartheid architecture and engineering", but there was also an element of parents selecting a specific school even if it was further away.

One solution now being considered is the construction of school hostels.

Meanwhile, in the legislature the ANC and DA were once again at each other's throats, with one altercation resulting in DA Chief Whip Bobby Steynson's conduct being referred

adjustments budget that he had information the ANC was planning to have a truck in party colours in every constituency during the local government elections, adding that he was in possession of a document providing evidence of this compliance with a picture.

Earlier, Stevenson had stressed the need to ensure that state resources were not used for party political purposes.

Asked to withdraw the allegation amidst a barrage of shouts of "can you prove it?" from the ANC benches and a statement that the allegation brought the ruling party into disrepute, Stevenson refused to do so and the matter has now been referred to the ethics committee and, one would imagine, will thereafter

It is difficult to understand why the ANC is reacting like this as it is hardly the first time it has been accused in various legislatures of using state funds for party political purposes and it is highly unlikely it will be the last.

It has nothing to gain by dragging Stevenson before the ethics committee and it is hardly the kind of action that is going to ensure it retains control of Nelson Mandela Bay in 2016 as it is far too vague an issue and will have absolutely no impact on the lives of the people of the metro.

And Stevenson has been around for far too long in politics to be intimidated and will know that the worst punishment he can expect is to be ducked a month's wages and

deteriorate between now and the 2016 poll, particularly as the ANC will know perfectly well that its chances of winning Nelson Mandela Bay outright are negligible while its only real option as far as a coalition is concerned is with the smaller parties, for which there will be a heavy price to pay in terms of positions.

Mayor Ben Fihla tried to put a brave face on the past 12 months when he listed the ruling party's achievements, although only the most committed apartheidist would believe the lengthy list he read out amounted to a great deal in terms of improving the lives of the people of the metro.

And he faces a 2015 in which the national Treasury is planning to

to be in the near future.

On top of that, he faces the challenge of finding a way to collect outstanding consumer debts which, at the end of September, totalled over R2.1 billion, excluding amounts owed for up to 30 days.

Sometime between now and 2016 the ANC will also have to decide whether Fihla should be its mayoral candidate in 2016 or whether it should try to find someone else.

The DA acknowledged publicly in council last week that Fihla had brought a degree of stability to the metro and, given the history of infighting and instability that may earn Fihla another term - not that he wants it, having privately stated that he wants to retire.

Given what notionally awaits

employment of additional teachers at some schools.  
Just how much use the verification exercise will prove to be

next year, up from 96 000 this year.  
The problem, she explained, was that while this was the demand, the "current fiscal capacity" of the

to the ethics committee by Speaker Noxolo Kiviet.  
Stevenson's "offence" was to state during the debate on the

end up in court in the same way that an ethics committee ruling was challenged by DA provincial leader Athol Trollip earlier this year.

suspended from the legislature, a punishment that would be promptly challenged in court.  
The situation will very likely

carry out a "100 percent audit" of all spending on the Integrated Public Transport System (IPTS) which is still not operational and is unlikely

him next year, let alone in 2016, few would blame him if at the age of 82 and after 18 months in the job he decided that he had had enough.

