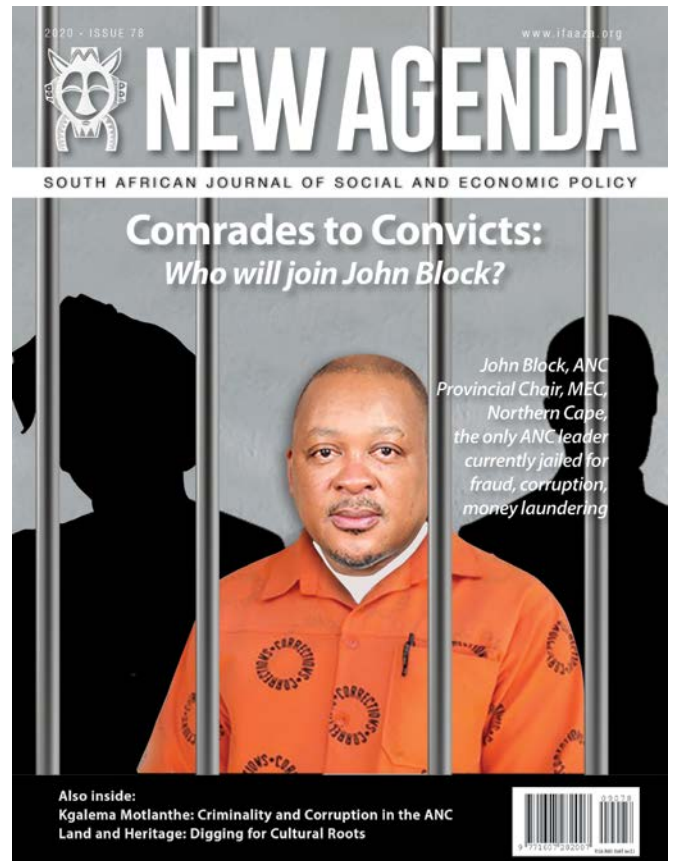
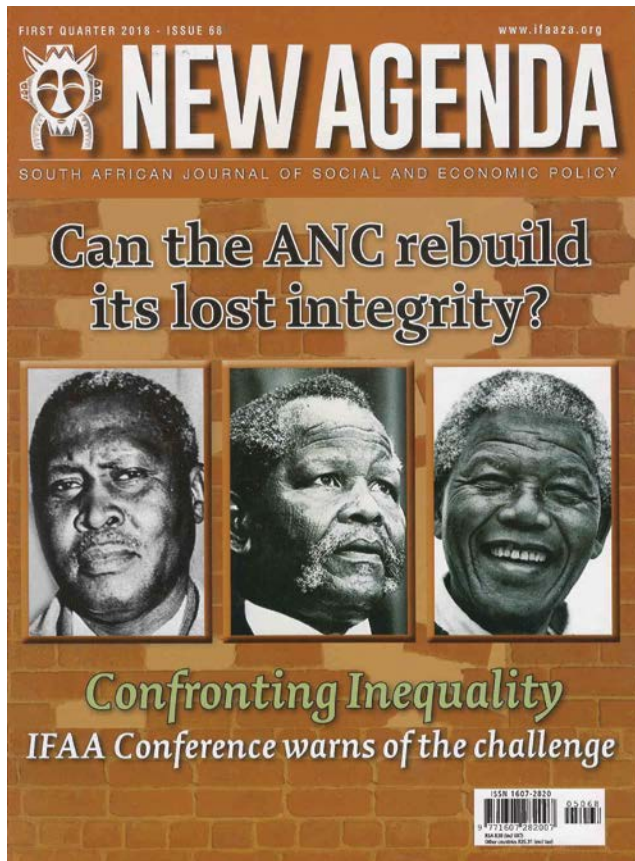


A tale of two covers

By Guest Editor Dr Martin Nicol

January 2018:
Can the ANC rebuild its lost integrity?

December 2020:
Apparently not.



In early 2018, Ben Turok reflected in his New Agenda editorial comment on the outcomes of the ANC leadership contest and the election to top positions of “some people who clearly do not represent the interests of the mass of the people”.

The ANC Stalwarts and Veterans, he said, would get no recognition for their efforts to restore the integrity in the movement. They would have to reach out to other forces seeking change away from “the rot in the state system, in government and within the ANC itself”.

Three years on, things have got worse. In September 2020 Judge Raymond Zondo was quoted in *Business Day* as saying: “...there are no indications that [corruption] is slowing down. It

seems there are people who do not care. They want their share of the corruption”.

We wanted to put the faces of these people on the cover of *New Agenda*. But it has proved impossible because no one has been found guilty in a court of law – as they say. The evidence is there, the sworn testimony of witnesses, but it is all in the passive voice: Public funds were stolen.

Judge Zondo, heading the State Capture Inquiry, commented on three specific instances of corruption in the



ANC-controlled government of the Free State. More than R500 million was paid – illegally – for a housing project when no houses were built. Then there were the asbestos and Estina/Vrede projects:

It is very concerning because the government is there to ensure people get the services they need. A few weeks ago we heard evidence about the asbestos project.

I heard evidence that the job could have been done for a cost of R21m but the [Free State] provincial government gave the job to a joint venture for more than R250m.

There is very little, if any work, that the joint venture did. To make it worse, there was no removal of asbestos roofs, just counting.

Leave that aside, I have also heard evidence about the Vrede dairy farm, which was meant to benefit black farmers. There, too, the people who were meant to be beneficiaries – I heard evidence that they never got anything, yet millions and millions of rands were paid out.

We know there are criminals looting the resources of the nation. We know that ANC politicians and state officials who are ANC members are involved – as payers and as payees. The ANC controls the national government, eight of nine provinces and most local authorities. The ANC itself is implicated in wrongdoing against the people.

The rot is in all spheres of government.

Zondo has said: “[The evidence] does

not necessarily mean the Free State was the worst because we have not heard other provinces and we will not because that kind of job needs years to do.”

Far from trying to rebuild its integrity – lost long before 2018 – the ANC has opened its doors to criminal enterprise. This harsh conclusion is doubly supported by the COVID-19 corruption publicised by the Auditor General and pursued by the press. A pandemic has not deterred the criminal activity.

Even President Ramaphosa recognises the situation. He wrote in August, to ANC members: “Today, the ANC and its leaders stand accused of corruption. The ANC may not stand alone in the dock, but it does stand as Accused No 1.”

We would like to believe the President’s word that the ANC National Executive Committee has decided “to make a break with the past and to act”. **NA**

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