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MISTRA's Monthly Briefing is a newsletter from the Mapungubwe Institute for Strategic Reflection. It aims to inform MISTRA's partners about the Institute's research, strategic reflections, published papers, and other news relating to the network of people and organisations committed to MISTRA's strategic engagement with the issues facing South Africa. The briefing is issued monthly.

In **Issue Number #9** we report in brief on workshops convened by the Faculties of Political Economy and Humanities, convened to introduce their new priority research projects.

And also include a brief report on a MISTRA skatien with **Mamosa Motjope** on the role of women in engineering, entitled "*Women: The Oppressed Majority - What Holds Us back?*"

We provide a range of media articles written by **Joel Netshitenzhe**, **Graeme Bloch**, **Mcebisi Ndletyana**, and **Barry Gilder**.

And we're proud to announce the publication of a new book, "*South African Development? Perspectives in Question*" by **Leslie Dikeni** a senior researcher in the faculty of Humanities.

We hope you find our Monthly Briefings informative and invite you to visit our website, where you will find more information on our research, key papers, media on MISTRA, as well as an [Expression of Interest Form](#) if you are interested in participating in any of the Institute's research projects.

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MISTRA STRATEGIC REFLECTIONS

Joint MISTRA-Kagiso Trust Conversation on Education

MISTRA and KAGISO Trust are pleased to invite you to a conversation on "*Models of Change for South African Schooling*".

The Kagiso Trust runs the Beyers Naude School Development Programme (BNSDP) in a number of provinces. Kagiso Trust has engaged MISTRA to assess their

methodology, their achievements and also any problems. Is there a 'toolkit' that is applicable elsewhere?

To topic of the forum is "*Is Kagiso Trust's approach a good model for change?*" and will be held at the Council Chambers at the University of Johannesburg's Kingsway Campus on **03 October 2012 from 18h00-2030**.

Kgotso Schoeman of Kagiso Trust, who will introduce the BNSDP, and Graeme Bloch from MISTRA will introduce the research. This will be followed by a keynote address by Prof Sarah Gravett, the Dean of education at UJ.

*** If you're interested in attending this event, please RSVP to Tumi Mofokeng at: tumi@masake.co.za**

Faculty of Political Economy: New Priority Projects 2012-13

The Institute held a workshop on 31 July 2012 at Cedar Park Conference Centre, organised by the Faculty of Political Economy, to introduce their new priority projects for the current year. The two projects discussed were on "The Great Recession and its implications for human values and the philosophy of social relations", and "Changing economic balances in Africa: Implications for competitive advantages, integration and geo-politics".

Among the discussants and attendees were MISTRA Executive Director, Joel Netshitenzhe, MISTRA's Head of the Faculty of Political Economy and Programme Director, Dr Mcebisi Ndletyana, and speakers: Dr Oscar van Heerden (Independent Analyst), and Prof Vusi Gumede (Associate Professor of Developmental Studies at the University of Johannesburg). Also in attendance were Prof Sibusiso Vil-Nkomo, Chairperson of the MISTRA Board of Governors, Tabo Foulo (DBSA), Thami Madinane (SARS), Harry Gouvelis, J.P. Landman, and Michael Sachs from the National Treasury.



Dr Oscar van Heerden

Speaking on "*The Great Recession and its implications for human values and the philosophy of social relations*", Prof Gumede suggested that the global economy should be modelled on that of China, Brazil and India's economies, which are based on adaptable strategies and policies. South Africa should similarly make use of this model through a case study of the Nigerian and Rwandan economies, which have experienced a rise in the past few years. Studying these economies in the context of the global economy and selecting those aspects, which could give rise to stronger economic prospects, is something worth exploring for South Africa within the progression of this project.

[To read more on the deliberations click here](#)

Faculty of Humanities Workshop New Priority Projects 2012-13



The MISTRA Faculty of Humanity convened a workshop to convene their three new research projects at Cedar Park Conference Centre on 21 August 2012. The workshop introduced abstracts of the research projects:

- **The philosophy of Chinese civilisation: the rise and decline and rise of civilisations**
- **The role of the arts in South Africa's 30 year strategic plan**
- **Basic education: in pursuit of quality and stability in education.**

The intention of the workshop was to enable discussion on the abstracts that have been developed for each project. Amongst the discussants and attendees were:

- Joel Netshitenzhe - MISTRA Executive Director
- Dr Leonard Martin - MISTRA Head of Faculty of Humanity
- Prof Linda Vilakazi - Educationalist
- Prof Pitika Ntuli - Internationally renowned poet, fine artist and academic.
- Dr Martyn Davies - CEO Frontier Advisory
- Brett Pyper - CEO Klein Karoo National Arts Festival
- Nalini Reddy - USAID Education Program Manager



The philosophy of Chinese civilisation: the rise and decline of civilisations

The project headed by MISTRA Senior Researcher in the Faculty of Humanity, Jeffrey Sehume, looks at a possible synthesis of models for South Africa. Given the rise of China as the world's next superpower, the project considers whether it would be possible to match the civilisation's success to that of Europe and the United States and use them to South Africa's advantage.

Jing-Hao Lu posed the question: *Is it possible to match the civilisations success story to South Africa without jeopardising Chinese ties in the country and overcoming the power China has in South Africa?*

[To read more on the deliberations click here](#)



Jing-Hao Lu

The Corrupt, The Corrupted and The Corrupters by Barry Gilder



Barry Gilder

Delivered to the Public Affairs Research (PARI) Symposium on 'Institutionalising Government: International, Comparative Perspectives on Corruption' on 6 august 2012.

I have titled my input today *The Corrupt, the Corrupted and the Corrupters* because I hope to contribute to the effort to lift us out of the simplified, moralistic notions of corruption that seem to dominate public discourse on this challenge to governance in post-apartheid South Africa. In doing so, I draw on my own experience of having come out of the anti-apartheid struggle and into various senior positions in the democratic government, some of these positions having been in the intelligence

departments where we had some responsibility for investigating corruption, and one position as administrative head of the reputationally most corrupt department in government – Home Affairs.

The key lesson I have extracted from my own experience and observation is that a nuanced understanding of the nature, causes and dynamics of corruption is critical to designing measures to deal with it. Understanding corruption requires an understanding of the intricate and complex dynamics of our apartheid legacy, the continuing (and perhaps growing) inequities in South African society, the active co-optation of new, post-apartheid public servants into the values and mores of a capitalist economy, and the active corrupting efforts of those outside of government in a society suddenly freed from the shackles of authoritarianism and repression.

[To read full text click here](#)

MISTRA Skaftien “Women: The Oppressed Majority - What Holds Us back?”

MISTRA's skaftien sessions are informal 'brown bag' engagements on pertinent or topical issues. In August 2012 MISTRA hosted a skaftien session with **Mamosa Motjope** on the role of women in engineering.

Motjope is an electrical engineering graduate from the University of the Witwatersrand with experience in strategy consulting for South African and London-based investment banks. She is currently a student at the Thabo Mbeki African Leadership Institute where she focuses on the African Political Economy as well as Africa and International Trade.

The skaftien focused on the dynamics between race, class, demographics, gender and the ideologies that inform South Africa's education system with regard to those factors. It was based on an article in The Thinker magazine entitled, “Women in Engineering - What holds us back?”.

Motjope argues that the fight for freedom is far from over in South Africa as our democracy provides a guise for apartheid. She further argues that the reality in South Africa is that black people have been put in power but are still pursuing the white monopolistic agenda which continues to oppress the poor.

[To read more click here](#)



Mamosa Motjope

MISTRA IN THE NEWS

The battle to transform our schools

By Graeme Bloch

We tend to fight things out in the public domain. In the education space – after the shocks of the Limpopo textbook scandal, mud schools in the Eastern Cape, school attacks in the Northern Cape – this is perhaps no bad thing. Yet issues are complex.

Apart from getting things resolved properly and quickly, there are always discussions to be had and difficult issues raised.

In Rivonia recently, a primary school was accused of being racist. The high court has affirmed the right of the Gauteng Department of Education to set limits on school admissions.

The headmistress has pleaded guilty of gross insubordination in front of a disciplinary committee.

Less obvious has been the resolution of a difficult issue through negotiation. While the department should never interfere or target good schools, given its basic job to address the disgraceful collapse in most township schools, while the school probably has admitted large numbers of disadvantaged kids who don't pay fees, there is much cause to celebrate: resolution through discussion; even the headmistress seems relaxed.

[To read article click here](#)

* Originally published in *The Star* on 20 September 2012



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SA Time: Fri Sep 21 17:29:38 2012

Does the ANC really give a damn?

September 3 2012 at 10:15am

By Mcebisi Ndletyana

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The shock is unabating. Eighteen days later, the scenes of the mine workers collapsing on to the ground, succumbing to lethal bullets fired by the police, still seem surreal.

Has the South African Police Service really handed post-apartheid South Africa its own Sharpeville Massacre?

The question lingers.

None of the visions that filled our dreams of the future, on May 10, 1994, sparked by the sight of Nelson Mandela being sworn into the presidency of the new



Does the ANC really give a damn?

By Mcebisi Ndletyana

The ruling party's reaction to the killing of 34 strikers at the mine [on 16 August 2012] betrays a defensive posture over state actions and makes a mockery of claims that it cares, writes Mcebisi Ndletyana.

The shock is unabating. Eighteen days later, the scenes of the mineworkers collapsing on to the ground, succumbing to lethal bullets fired by the police, still seem surreal.

Has the South African Police Service really handed post-apartheid South Africa its own Sharpeville Massacre?

The question lingers.

None of the visions that filled our dreams of the future, on May 10, 1994, sparked by the sight of Nelson Mandela being sworn into the presidency of the new "Black Republic", contained an inkling of what would happen on August 16, 2012.

We screamed "i-buyile i-Afrika"; cognisant that tomorrow would not change much from today.

But, we never, ever thought those entrusted with our safety in a liberated SA would purposely unleash live ammunition on to a free citizenry, especially protesting African mineworkers.

[To read article click here](#)

Originally published in *The Sunday Independent* on 13 September 2012

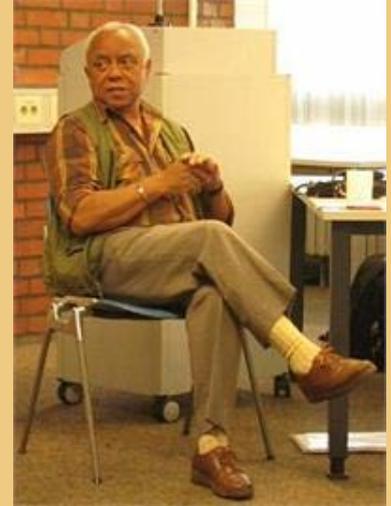
A tribute to the great revolutionary, Neville Alexander By Graeme Bloch

Neville Alexander dies a great revolutionary. There is much that will still be said and found out about him as the tributes pour in.

Perhaps I need to say we often found ourselves on different sides of the revolutionary coin. I once in the 1990s wandered into a meeting at SACHED (SA Committee on Higher Education), where he taught. The assorted "leftists" there eyed me suspiciously but all seemed to assume I must be a sleeper in the UDF and left me to listen. After some ten minutes of hearing strategies on how to break the schools boycott (and the student movement), I accused them all of sectarianism and a lack of democracy, stood up and left them to work out why WECSO, a COSAS affiliate, was winning so much ground for the Congress.

Neville smiled. I often challenged him, and he listened and disagreed.

More recently, I was on a Commission with him at UCT, looking at admissions policy. He was to the last a firm ant-racist: the mere mention of the word "race" was for him to reinforce an unscientific anti-biological concept. I argued that our history, and that of Western colonialism, have reinforced the reality of race. We need to acknowledge race to fight it, or to measure progress away from race. While the Commission is still sitting to conclude its recommendations, Neville agreed on a compromise: we do need to move away from race, not from redress, and we do need a university to take bold steps. Maybe this Commission will eventually be another tribute to his work.



Neville Alexander

[To read more click here](#)

Originally published in The New Age on 29 August 2012

SA reflects extreme form of inequality By Joel Netshitenzhe

The Grant Thornton survey released last week, reflecting global disquiet on executives' packages at large public corporations, brings out in bold relief the debate around inequality across most countries, SA included.

(continued below)



SA Time: Fri Sep 21 16:53:56 2012

SA reflects extreme form of inequality

August 19 2012 at 10:50am

By Joel Netshitenzhe

[Comment on this story](#)

The Grant Thornton survey released last week, reflecting global disquiet on executives' packages at large public corporations, brings out in bold relief the debate around inequality across most countries, SA included.

But does inequality as such matter? If, for instance, a society is experiencing a rising tide of economic growth which lifts all household boats – even if it's not at the same pace – should the issue of inequality arise at all? We can put forward all kinds of arguments that inequality is morally bad. But is this enough?

At a factual level, instructive research done by



But does inequality as such matter? If, for instance, a society is experiencing a rising tide of economic growth, which lifts all household boats – even if it's not at the same pace –, should the issue of inequality arise at all? We can put forward all kinds of arguments that inequality is morally bad. But is this enough?

At a factual level, instructive research done by Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett in their book, *The Spirit Level*, establishes interesting correlations between levels of inequality and societal wellbeing.

[To read more click here](#)

[Originally published in The Sunday Independent on 13 August 2012](#)

Military can fight on a new social front

It may turn out that the SANDF is a repository of useful scientific knowledge, writes **Mcebisi Ndletyana**

Can the army be harnessed towards meeting South Africa's development needs? This is the question that currently confronts the South African National Defence Force (SANDF). A [Defence] Review Committee, chaired by the eternally youthful and prominent negotiator in South Africa's transitional talks, Roelf Meyer, has been pondering this question since it was set up in July 2011. The review process has entailed a series of consultations with a number of stakeholders, including a seminar co-hosted with the Mapungubwe Institute (MISTRA) on August 16, 2012, entitled "*The Role of the Defence in the Developmental State*".

At face-value the question at hand comes across as an oxymoron. A mere mention of the military invokes an imagery of war and its deadly manifestation. Though a legitimate state institution, necessary to defend national sovereignty, the sight of gun-waving troops does not always make one feel safe. It also horrifies, and this is the effect the South African Defence Force (SADF) induced amongst South Africa's black population. Formed out of the repressive and



Dr Mcebisi Ndletyana

conquering Boere Commandos and settler invaders to defend white supremacy, the SADF represented violence amongst the black community.

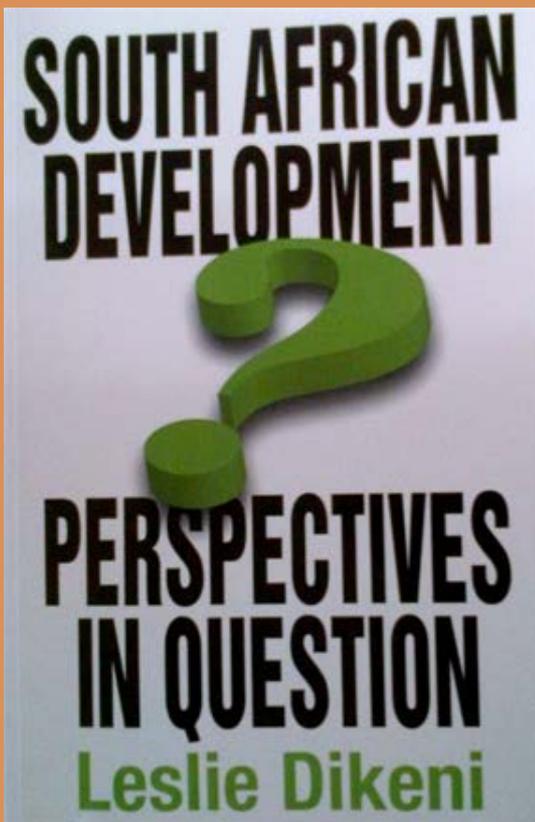
Because the modern army was introduced into South Africa to conquer, its very initial encounter with the Africans was violent. That representation of violence, by which the modern army introduced itself to the indigenous population, was permanently etched onto the African imagination. At the height of political resistance in the 1980s, the apartheid government could no longer resist unleashing the army onto the black population, justifying its invasion of townships through the declaration of the State of Emergency. And the SADF did what seemed to come naturally: turning township life into hell on earth. Black folks were captives in what were supposedly their own homes.

[To read article click here](#)

Originally published in The Sunday Independent on 26 August 2012

MISTRA PEOPLE

Book Release: “South African Development? Perspectives in Question” by Leslie Dikeni



MISTRA is proud to announce the book release of “South African Development? Perspectives in Question”, a contemporary monograph by Leslie Dikeni.

All too often the issues of social development as well as the institutions and practices required to attain this are treated in intellectual discourse as theoretical concepts underpinned by aggregate national and international data. In this challenging sociological work, Leslie M. Dikeni eschews this: he brings together different “case studies” on local experiences of the relationship between government and communities. Thus unfolds, in this interesting work, many unique lessons for discourse on the generic dynamic of state-citizen-market relations.

Described by Prof Nicola Viegi as a “mine for original thinkers. It provides a rich vein of experiences and theoretical reflections on the way state and social actors interact. Anyone interested in development policies should read this forceful call to “think more, think hard, think better.”

[To read more click here](#)

* Leslie Mxolisi Dikeni is a senior researcher in the Faculty of Humanity's at the Mapungubwe Institute for Strategic Reflection (MISTRA). He is a visiting Research Fellow at the school of Public and Development Management, University of the Witwatersrand, as well as a Research Associate at the University of Pretoria in the Department of Political Sciences. Dikeni is co-editor with William Gumede of the book Poverty of Ideas: The Retreat of Intellectuals

in New Democracies.

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