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# FORTNIGHTLY MEDIA SURVEY

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**Länderbüro Südafrika**

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**Cape Town:** - Rumours are flying that the Western Cape's Local Government Minister, Richard Dyantyi, is planning to use municipal laws to remove Cape Town's DA mayor Helen Zille from office. It was reported that Dyantyi plans to use either the Local Government and Municipal Structures Act or the Western Cape Determination of Types of Municipalities Act to do away with Cape Town's executive mayor system. Analyst said if the MEC opts for the provincial legislation Zille could soon be out of a job or see her role reduced to a ceremonial one. If the Local Government Municipal Structure's Act is chosen this could result in a 10-member committee with four seats going to the ANC, four to the DA and two to the ID, and smaller parties could lose their influence.

Under the latter parties are allocated seats according to the strength of their representation in the council. Should this materialise it would give the ANC and the Independent Democrats seats on the committee and strip Zille of her executive status. The proposal is seeking to scrap the current mayoral committee, where all the seats are held by Zille's Democratic Alliance and its allies, including the African Christian Democratic Party, the United Democratic Movement and the Freedom Front Plus. In this system, the mayor (Helen Zille) holds executive power, and she has vowed to fight the proposal in the court of law. (*Mail & Guardian* 15.09.2006)

**Zuma:** - The rand slipped 1,2 percent to R7,45 against the dollar on news that corruption charges against Jacob Zuma were thrown out of court. Analysts said uncertainty over the implications of the decision should curb

further losses in the currency, but it was seen as negative for financial markets because it could point to a widening rift within the governing ANC. At face value the ruling favoured the popular politician's bid to succeed President Thabo Mbeki, but it stopped short of completely dismissing the case, leaving the open possibility that state prosecutors could file a new indictment later. However, this could fuel the argument that there is a conspiracy against JZ if the National Prosecuting Authority reinstates the charges.

It is obvious that Jacob Zuma is on high, firstly he was cleared of the rape allegations against him, reinforcing arguments by his backers that he had been set up by his 31-year old HIV-positive accuser. Judge Willem van der Merwe found Zuma not guilty on May 4, ruling that Zuma had had consensual sex with the woman. Barely four months later, Zuma was in court again, this time face-face with Judge Qed'usizi Msimang on charges of corruption. The charges were thrown out, albeit temporarily, by Msimang who poured scorn on the state's ability to prosecute. (*Sowetan* 21.09.2006)

The factions are emerging within the ruling tripartite alliance and these developments injected renewed enthusiasm into Zuma supporters and strengthened the prospects of a Zuma presidency in 2009. Zuma's supporters, including Cosatu and South African Students' Organisation, have called for his reinstatement as the deputy president of the country. Zuma lost his position in June last year when a high court judge found that he had a "generally corrupt relationship" with convicted fraudster Schabir Shaik. But they are

forgetting one thing, that it is the president's prerogative to fire and hire Mp and/or Cabinet. It is therefore highly unlikely that Mbeki would reinstate Zuma as the country's deputy president. The *Sowetan* is running a reader survey to get public views on a Zuma presidency, people are asked to call and vote *Yes* or *No* on whether Zuma should be the country's next president. (*Sowetan* 27.09.2006)

The ANC Youth League was so jovial about the court ruling to an extent they were sarcastic when they urged the Human Rights Commission to investigate the National Prosecuting Authority for allegedly treating ANC deputy president Jacob Zuma unfairly. The league's president Fikile Mbalula sarcastically remarked that SA Human Rights Commission chairperson Jody Kollapen should investigate a violation of Zuma's rights, "as he had actually been very vocal about human rights violations". This was referring to Kollapen condemning the conduct of Zuma's supporters, including some members of the ANC Youth League, for allegedly intimidating the woman who had accused the former deputy president of rape. Mbalula implied that the same level of condemnation should be applied in the case of the NPA's alleged violation of Zuma's rights.

**Cosatu:** - Congress of South African Trade Union held its national congress at Gallagher Estate in Midrand. One of the major concerns discussed by delegates was the state of the tripartite alliance, as it was perceived as weak. There were also rumours that the Cosatu and SACP would pull out of the alliance because

their **Big- Brother** in the alliance (the ANC) is not singing the same song that they are willing to dance to. Recently the SACP blamed President Thabo Mbeki for marginalizing the left, essentially those people don't agree with his economic policies. Some political analysts say, "to put it in a classical Marxist jargon"; "There is a concern that the ANC has been hijacked by Bonarpatist and comprador elements whose agenda is unfavourable to the working class interest.

The left, as they are affectionately known, argue that the ANC is now led by a dictator who doesn't allow opposition. They claim his behaviour has unfortunately served the interests of the emerging black capitalist elite who are essentially agents of established white capital. It was then believed that the congress would review their stand on the tripartite alliance, as they are not happy with the status quo. It has been reported, however, that president Thabo Mbeki sent his best wishes to the federation ahead of their important congress, but reminded the federation of an important meeting 20 years ago which lay the foundations for the trade union movement in the country.

Then, "there was common understanding that the Pretoria regime and ruling class of South Africa are powerless to provide any real and meaningful solutions to this general crisis. That lasting solutions can only emerge from the national liberation movement, headed by the ANC, and the entire democratic forces of our country, of which Cosatu is an important and integral part". Jay Naidoo, General Secretary of Cosatu, John K. Nkadimeng, General Secretary of Sactu and Oliver Tambo, Presi-

dent of the ANC led the respective delegations. The meeting resulted from the common concern of all parties arising from the fundamental and deep-seated economic, social and political crisis into which the Botha regime and the apartheid system of national oppression and class exploitation have plunged our country. One could view Mbeki's reminder of the past as an endeavour to dilute any attempts by the left from pulling out of the tripartite alliance. (*The Star* 19.09.2006)

As the federation ended their congress, it was concluded with a summary of five Cosatu options, with most attention devoted to one, which aims to nearly double Cosatu's membership. It urges "trained cadres to swell the ranks of the ANC" and transform it into an "ANC led by working class at all levels and which is not hostile to socialism". Patrick Laurence, the editor of *Focus* said it remains to be seen whether the combined drive by the SACP and Cosatu (and sympathisers in the ANC) succeed in restoring working-class hegemony, and reinstating socialism as the main aim of the alliance? And will a successful palace coup by the left induce the nationalists to pull out of the alliance and possibly the ANC itself?

Laurence argues that in relation to the first question the Zuma factor has changed the situation: the alliance between Zuma, the populist, and the socialist brigade may succeed in making socialism the official political creed of the tripartite alliance and perhaps even the ANC itself. The answer to the second question is that the senior ANC leadership is likely to resist any attack from that

alliance left. According to Laurence, another option for the SACP/Cosatu is that they decide to withdraw from the alliance and concentrate on defending their control of the ANC *per se* (provided the Zuma faction doesn't gain party control at its national conference in 2007). But considering that currently 73 of the 279 ANC MPs are communists, it would be difficult for the SACP to match the ANC if its decision to go alone changes its status to that of ANC rival, however one could agree with Laurence that the Zuma factor alter the mix. (*The Citizen* 20.09.2006)

**PAC:** - The newly elected Pan African Congress president Letlapa Mphahlele made a promise to revive the party to reclaim its former glory and place in the political mainstream. Mphahlele said this after being elected to succeed Motsoko Phoko at party's national congress held in Qwaqwa, Free State. He concedes that it will not be easy to lead a party that has been through so many rough patches recently. However, he said "I want to send a strong message to the critics of the PAC who suggest that the party's policies are not relevant.

He claimed that lack of political education lets all sorts of ills creep in, as was evident during the congress where the contest for leadership was largely motivated by political careerism. He said it is somehow scandalous that the PAC drifts from one office to another without a proper home, making the party untraceable to its members. Mphahlele has the mammoth task ahead of him to unite party factions and prove his critics wrong that the party is still a formidable and relevant. His

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critics have also pointed out that charges against him by the national prosecuting authority might be pending and could affect the party. Mphahlele refused to testify before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission about his role in the shooting of civilians in a Cape Town church. (*Sowetan* 27.09.2006)