



**South African Communist Party
Popcru National Congress, 15 – 19 June 2015**

SACP Message of Solidarity
Delivered by General Secretary, Cde Blade Nzimande

**Build a united trade union movement:
Confront destructive forces and neoliberal offensives**

The SACP, with its more than 230 000 members brings you revolutionary greetings and message of solidarity to your Congress. For us it is an occasion to underline and strengthen the relationship that the SACP has with Popcru and indeed Cosatu as a whole.

Maximum working class unity and solidarity

Your Congress takes place at a crucial time in the history of the progressive trade union movement. It takes place at a time when 30 years of neo-liberalism has seen massive restructuring of the work-place and the working class, through amongst other things, massive retrenchments, casualisation, employment of illegal, vulnerable immigrant workers, and labour brokerage of the working class. These challenges require maximum unity of the working class as well as solidarity amongst workers.

The challenges of the period also calls for going back to the basics: organise and service the workers. It is perhaps time we face the reality that our majority status as the Cosatu unions in many of the sectors we organise has also bred some complacency and taking things for granted. As the SACP we once more call for a massive campaign, led by union presidents, to revive service to members, whilst also expanding the organisation of new members.

The SACP supports the efforts of COSATU and its affiliates to rebuild worker unity on the basis of worker democracy, collective leadership and service to members.

But is it an accident of history that at the time of this huge offensive against the working class, some within our ranks deliberately start causing disunity within Cosatu through violating some of its basic principles like one industry one union? Is it another accident of history that some from within our ranks see an injury to some of the Cosatu affiliates as an opportunity for elements like the Numsa leadership clique to cannibalise membership? As the SACP we do not believe that this is an accident of history.

The new-liberal offensive against the working class and the opportunistic and divisive behaviours of some within our own ranks are two sides of the same coin.

This is part of an offensive by the bosses to divide, weaken and ultimately defeat Cosatu in particular. For instance there is so much money that is bankrolling these efforts. The question is where is this dirty money coming from? How can a union decide to expand its organisational scope, be at the heart of forming an alternative federation, lead an effort to form a united front, and over and above all this wants to form a workers' party. There must indeed be lots and lots of monies behind all this.

Cults of personality, business unionism, unprincipled attempts to use unions, union and worker funds to pursue private personal profit, including, personal political ambitions, altogether with corrupt and divisive conduct, are not helpful to the cause of worker unity and service to members.

All these and other counterproductive, negative and destructive tendencies must be confronted openly. They must be defeated if the progressive trade union movement is to regain its unity and strength and soldier on to greater heights.

The SACP wishes to commend Popcru for its contribution and commitment to preserving the unity of Cosatu. Workers need principled and united organisation. They have a crucial role to play in contesting workplace restructuring, challenging unfair labour practices and advancing both workplace and societal transformation. As a class, workers are their own liberators! As the SACP we won't be found wanting in making our own contribution to the unity of the working class.

It is also important to point to another imperialist strategy to divide and weaken the working class. This is the strategy to try and drive a wedge between the communist and labour movements. In South Africa this means driving a wedge between the SACP and Cosatu in particular. It is no accident that the very same forces that want to divide Cosatu are blaming the SACP for this. The aim is to create a conflict between organised workers and the SACP and even the ANC. We must not allow this to happen.

Driving a second more radical phase of our transition

The task of strengthening the trade union movement must not be separated from the current strategic and programmatic commitments of our Alliance, that of driving a second, more radical, phase of our transition. Indeed for us as the working class driving a more radical second phase of our transition is integrally linked to deepening the national democratic revolution to its logical conclusion - a transition to socialism.

The challenge of driving a second radical phase has a number of critical dimensions. We have agreed that the main content of this programme is that of **economic transformation and development**. We need to shift our economy from its current semi-colonial growth trajectory. We need to transform our economy from that of simply exporting mineral resources ("a pit to port" economy), to that which seeks to build the more productive sectors of our economy, industrialisation and manufacturing. This must also include a major state-led infrastructure build, localisation, beneficiation, building a vibrant SMME and co-operative sector and other job-creating initiatives. Neoliberalism is opposed to our second, more radical phase of transition.

Since 1994 monopoly capital has actively sought to reverse working class gains as we have already outlined above. But over and above this, since 1994 there has been a massive capital flight through trans-nationalisation of former South African corporates, tax evasion, transfer pricing, and dual listings. In essence, this capital flight by the beneficiaries of apartheid and white supremacist minority is a flight from democracy and has undermined our transformation efforts in a big way. But this was also worsened by our own government's flirtation with neo-liberal policies between 1996 and 2007, through removal of trade tariffs and import duties in a rushed liberalisation of our economy. This was a period during which we were trying to beautify ourselves before the world hoping that this would pay off. It was part of this ill-informed set of policies that we for instance signed problematic agreements like that of the Rome Statute, subjecting ourselves to the highly problematic international Criminal Court – a court that has not charged Israel for its criminal actions in Gaza, nor the U.S. and the UK on Iraq for instance.

The next task in driving a second, more radical phase, is *ideological*. At the head of the ideological offensive is what we have referred to as the anti-majoritarian offensive, whose aim is to discredit majority rule and seek to undermine the majority of the ANC in particular.

It is important to bear in mind that every economic struggle is political, and that every political struggle has an ideological dimension. Whilst we have made a lot of advances on many ideological fronts, but the major sites and terrains for the production and reproduction of ideas still remains untransformed and largely white male dominated. For instance our media still largely remains untransformed, as well as our university professoriate which still is more than 80% white. Whilst these are not the only sites of production of ideas, but they play a huge role in shaping the ideological outlook of any society.

The media in our country is dominated by private monopoly, despite the fact that we have a public broadcaster. Within this monopoly, Naspers has dominance. The old, apartheid, broeder-bond, media giant Naspers, and its off-shoot Multichoice, has effectively gained control of what was supposed to be democratic South Africa's public broadcaster, the SABC. It is inconceivable that they could have done this without the connivance, of course, of their bought lackeys in Auckland Park.

The lackeys have sold out some of the important public broadcaster's rights on its 24-hour news channel and new entertainment channel. Our national heritage, SABC archives, have effectively been handed over to the control of the private monopoly. The lackeys have, respectively, alienated the SABC of its rights of independent programming and marketing, to Multichoice.

The problematic relationship subordinating the SABC to private capital accumulation, is causing an irreparable harm on public broadcasting.

According to the collusion, the SABC will not even repeat, on its other channels, the programmes broadcast on its entertainment channel. It is by the way to the same monopoly that the SABC has passed on television rights acquired from the PSL. This has led to poor households denied access to most matches as these can only be

viewed on pay TV Multichoice. The SABC has to practically beg back the rights it has passed on to Multichoice in order to broadcast some important matches.

The SACP will continue and intensify its campaign to Save our Public Broadcaster and bring it back from the whims of private monopoly. We will continue and intensify our campaign to achieve media transformation and diversity. We call upon Popcru and indeed the entire trade union movement to join us in this campaign to undo the dirty deal between the SABC and MultiChoice.

We will not be threatened by what clearly appears to be a witch-hunt against our senior leadership by Naspers' News24 titles, especially the City Press. This newspaper has been on a fishing expedition to try and discredit us. We will not back down. We will fight on, to the end!

The Times Media Group, owned by mining monopoly capital, and particularly Business Day and the Financial Mail, owned by mining monopoly capital, has set itself up as the principal campaigner against any attempt at advancing the agenda of industrialisation. Notice how these titles have, like Bulldogs, consistently attacked Mistert Davies and Patel and how they rubbish the Industrial Policy Action Plan and the New Growth Path. Why? Because their mining owners are against beneficiation as they could be forced to sell minerals at locally rather than internationally determined prices. Ideologically, the current semi-colonial growth path is what the bosses of The Times Media Group stand for.

The above means we need to intensify the struggles to transform academia and mainstream media as we pursue economic transformation and development in terms of our resolve for a second, more radical phase of the National Democratic Revolution.

Transforming the criminal justice system and fighting corruption

Whilst the transformation of the criminal justice is a distinct and ongoing challenge, it must however be connected as part of driving a second radical phase. Central to this is the necessity to continue the struggle to transform the judiciary.

Corruption in government is, quite correctly, campaigned against, but often with scant attention paid to corruption, corporate collusion and white collar crime. As a Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union, Popcru is strategically located in exposing all these and setting a good example on what it means to fight crime and corruption, on a principled basis, without fear or favour!

The SACP is a dependable ally of the union and the entire COSATU in the fight against crime and corruption. The Party has for years now initiated a standing Red Card campaign against crime and corruption. The campaign values the significance of social mobilisation. It recognises that law enforcement agencies alone, without strategic partnerships with members of the community, will find it difficult to eradicate crime and corruption.

The SACP is increasingly becoming concerned that sections of the judiciary, an important but in many respects a still largely untransformed pillar of our constitutional

democracy, seem to be deliberately overreaching into the spheres of the other arms of the state. There seems to be a doctrine that is being pushed that, unlike in other constitutional states, the judiciary in South Africa must deliberately seek to shape matters that ordinarily belong to the political arena. This is against the letter and spirit of our agreements in the negotiations and runs the risk of our people losing faith in our political system.

For example sections of the judiciary are applauded when they over-reach into executive functions, but little is said about the persistence of a two-tier judicial system where wealth buys access to courts and legal defence. When a handful of MPs decide to indulge in hooliganism and seek to render parliament dysfunctional, sections of the media applaud and the courts, which are correctly meticulous in defending dignity within their own spaces, appear to be indifferent about the challenge confronting parliamentary official and the wilful undermining of the institution of parliament.

The SACP is of the view that it is time we once more have a national debate on the separation of powers and the role of each arm of the state.

We therefore need to work together, to build, strengthen and participate in organs of people's power, such as street committees and community policing forums, so that ordinary workers and poor have a say on these matters and that matters of the rule of law are not only the subject of the elite and their media. Popcru has an important to play in all of this.

International solidarity

Politically, the neoliberal offensive seeks to disparage any alignments, with our partners in BRICS, for instance, that provide democratic South Africa with a degree of policy and strategic manoeuvre within an otherwise hostile imperialist dominated world. The unfolding international context is filled with signs of an imperialist onslaught on BRICS and all of its partners without exception in all key areas.

Given the continuing neo-liberal onslaught, it is absolutely essential that we do not become isolated into our domestic realities, but instead deepen international working class solidarity.

We must continue with solidarity with Cuba and not relax just because there has been some breakthrough on this front.

We must not relax.

We also need to intensify our struggle in solidarity with the Saharawi and the Palestinian people.

We must join the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) against Israel until the Palestinian people attain their freedom.

The struggle for democracy in Swaziland requires our active and ongoing solidarity.

So we must condemn these elements who shout loudest about the need to arrest some AU leaders but silent on the atrocities of Israel, the U.S. and the UK. Many of them are hypocrites supported by imperialism.

For a militant Cosatu and strong Alliance

We will not achieve any of the above goals and overcome the challenges unless we build **strong organisation**. We need a strong ANC with vibrant branches that are not an extension of tenderpreneurs who want to use the ANC to accumulate wealth on a private basis. We need ANC branches that must serve their communities. It is incumbent upon workers to join ANC branches in their numbers. We need a strong SACP, and SACP that is not a refuge for some to fight their own battles with the ANC.

Most importantly, we need a strong, independent and militant Cosatu. We do not want a Cosatu that is an extension of government. We do not need a Cosatu that is a labour desk of the ANC or the SACP. Our revolution requires a radical and militant Cosatu, but that remains part of the Alliance, challenge government where necessary, but not be oppositionist.