

The ideological basis of the recent SACP and ANC attacks against us - NUMSA

Thursday 7 November 2013, by [NUMSA](#) (Date first published: 22 September 2013).

NEC report says ANC leadership not just bureaucratised, it is also united in resisting expropriation of imperialists.

Ideological Reflections and Responses to Some of the Recent Attacks

National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa

(NUMSA)

1. The political context

1. The working class is under siege from the forces of capitalism. These forces are within and outside of the movement. Inside the movement, capitalist forces are pushing for the open adoption of neoliberal policies, advance a deliberate petit-bourgeois and revisionist interpretation of the Freedom Charter, and are extremely intolerant of even an iota of criticism of the state.

2. The forces of capitalism within the movement seek to stifle workers' discontent. The working class is restless because of the continued dominance in South Africa by the white monopoly capitalist class. Since the 1970's and before 1994, white monopoly capitalism suffered from the long-term structural crisis of falling profitability.

3. The de-industrialisation of the Western-oriented parts of the global economy, accelerated by the rise of neo-liberalism which encouraged financial speculation in the early 1980's to this day, led to a massive decline in the demand for raw minerals. This global process, coupled with the rising tide of the anti-apartheid liberation struggle within and outside of South Africa, gave further impetus to the already existing structural profitability crisis in the South African economy.

4. By 1994, white monopoly capitalism had managed to co-opt the leading cadre of the national liberation movement and schooled it in orthodox neoliberal economics. This leading cadre, which came to be known as "The Class of 1996", spearheaded a package of policies that called for the reduced role of the state in the economy, a two-tier labour market, trade liberalisation, financial market de-regulation such as the dismantling of exchange controls, etc. In addition, the state had to reduce corporate taxes on white monopoly capital.

5. From a class point of view all these policies summed up to: a) weakening the power of organised workers through casualisation and outsourcing and intensification of the rate of exploitation, b) reducing state expenditure on the basic needs of the working class in an attempt to balance the

budget, c) an increase in unemployment and further de-industrialisation, because of the massive inflow of imports, d) massive outflow of profits, including the dual-listing of major conglomerates, resulting in low levels of saving and investment, which translated into low levels of economic growth, e) a policy of high interest rates to attract profits from flowing out of the country, but which further discouraged investment in the real sector and therefore encouraged financial speculation.

6. The only salvation for the economy to raise its levels of growth came from the global commodity boom in the early 2000s, which was fuelled by the rise of China, India and Brazil. Despite the global upswing, the South African economy continued to suffer from the age-old structural problem of being mineral export dependent.

7. In 2009, in just one year, the economy shed almost 1 million jobs. The manufacturing sector remains small and continues to decline relative to the whole economy. The South African white monopoly capitalist state, whilst continuing to sustain the white complex, is completely incapable of resolving the structural crisis of Colonialism of a Special Type.

This incapacity, such as poor service delivery to the working class, is itself a result of the state's function to aid capitalist profitability by restraining expenditure. If ever there is spending, such spending is in a way that ensures that profits are accumulated in capitalist pockets through tenders or public debt.

8. Once again, the white monopoly capitalist class, which now has internationalised its ownership because of dual-listing here at home and abroad, has appealed to its leading cadre in the national liberation movement. The appeal is for the leading cadre of the national liberation movement to administer a second round of neoliberal reforms, to restore profitability and investor confidence. The appeal is for the leading cadre of the national liberation movement to prevail over its allies in COSATU, to persuade COSATU to be reasonable, to make workers understand that because the global economy is in a crisis, belts must be tightened and labour-power must be cheapened.

9. White monopoly capital proposes a number of areas that need to be re-examined, a) a review of the tax system to see if nothing can be done to further reduce corporate taxes and to increase the tax burden on the working class and the petit-bourgeoisie, b) to balance the budget, the state must cut back on expenditure on public sector wages, c) to manage the working class, state officials must announce progressive-sounding budget allocations but must not spend as much, decrying chronic under-spending in every budget speech,

10. In relation to the labour market: a) to cheapen labour-power directly, review aspects of the labour relations act, such as extension of probation periods, lowering of entry-level wages for young people, provide youth employment incentives, etc., e) to open new avenues for private investment, liberalise the electricity, transport and telecommunications by unbundling Eskom, Transnet and Telkom and promote private-public-partnerships, as we have seen with e-tolls. For more details and more proposals to restore profitability, consult the NDP.

11. Such is the brief political economy context within which we operate. The on-going cyclical crisis of capitalism is embedded in the long-term structural crisis of colonial capitalism in this country. As we have mentioned repeatedly, this long-term structural crisis cannot and will not be resolved unless the basic wealth of our country is transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole through first and foremost, the nationalisation of the mines, banks and other monopoly industries and through an active industrial and trade policy to control other industry to assist in the well-being of the people.

12. The political disarray that afflicts the trade union movement occurs in this context, a context where: a) there is growing mass impatience about the continued dominance of white monopoly

capitalism, b) the national liberation movement has failed to transfer the wealth of this country to its people and instead, has allowed our country's wealth to be transferred abroad, c) white monopoly capital and global capitalism are in the midst of a profitability crisis. The main strategic line of attack that has been adopted by the capitalist class is to shift the burden of the crisis to the working class by weakening the political coherence and blunting the ideological clarity of working class organisations.

13. We have boldly maintained that at the heart of the crisis in COSATU are two opposing forces: the forces of capitalism and the forces socialism. The capitalist forces within the Federation seek to make workers to understand and tolerate the continuation of white monopoly capitalist domination, by accepting elements of the neoliberal NDP.

The socialist forces seek to mobilise the working class to break the power of white monopoly capitalism through the implementation of the Freedom Charter as historically understood by the working class.

14. It is also within this context that we should understand the recent speeches by senior leaders of the Alliance that are aimed at NUMSA. As we have always maintained, NUMSA is an unashamedly a socialist union, guided by Marxism-Leninism. We are convinced that the recent attacks on NUMSA by senior leaders of the Alliance, in the context where COSATU is in a state of paralysis, cannot be understood outside the on-going conflict between the working class and the capitalist class both within and outside of the Alliance.

2. A Defence of Imperialism Under the Slogan of Anti-Imperialism

A. Imperialism Defended Against Nationalisation

1. It is now public knowledge that there is a spy report that has been doing the rounds within the movement, in which the GS of COSATU among others is alleged to be working for US imperialism. As is well-known, the spy report claims that there are efforts to unseat liberation movements in Southern Africa, including efforts to topple the Rwandan government.

2. Not long after the GS of COSATU publicly exposed this report as a ploy to divide the leadership of the working class, the GS of the SACP boldly asserted in the POPCRU Political School: "Whilst it is important that as an Alliance we must discuss this matter even deeper now that we are approaching 20 years of our democracy, there are very serious signs of an imperialist offensive against our movement as a whole. The trade union movement is also a target of this offensive".

3. The GS of the SACP continued: "Imperialism is generally unhappy about liberation movements being in power and/or lasting too long in power. The ANC, together with its allies, is one such movement. In the entire history of the national liberation struggles and movements, imperialism has always sought to divide the movement, both before and after independence. The principal target has always been that of separating and/or driving a wedge between the national liberation movement and the trade union movement, where the latter exists in any significant form".

4. But what is imperialism? Lenin says: "*If it were necessary to give the briefest possible definition of imperialism we should have to say that **imperialism is the monopoly stage of capitalism**. Such a definition would include what is most important, for, on the one hand, finance capital is the bank capital of a few very big monopolist banks, merged with the capital of the monopolist associations of industrialists; and, on the other hand, the division of the world is the transition from a colonial policy which has extended without hindrance to territories unseized by any capitalist power, to **a colonial policy of monopolist possession of the territory of the world**, which has been completely*

divided up".

5. Cabral further defines imperialism as follows: "*We will simply state that imperialism can be defined as a worldwide expression of the search for profits and the ever-increasing accumulation of surplus value by monopoly financial capital, centered in two parts of the world; first in Europe, and then in North America.*

If we wish to place the fact of imperialism within the general trajectory of the evolution of the transcendental factor which has changed the face of the world, namely capital and the process of its accumulation, we can say that imperialism is piracy transplanted from the seas to dry land piracy reorganized, consolidated and adapted to the aim of exploiting the natural and human resources of our peoples" [1].

6. In 1989 the SACP analysed the strategy of imperialism in the Southern African region as follows: "*The strategy of imperialism consists of ensuring its regional domination of southern Africa. In this regard, **imperialism pays particular attention to defending the interests of monopoly capital especially within South Africa as its prime springboard into the region.** In pursuit of the objective of regional domination, imperialism employs various tactics aimed at blocking and reversing the struggle of the revolutionary masses, and maintaining the essence of colonial domination within South Africa and the region as a whole*".

7. Based on the above, it is no surprise that the Freedom Charter, particularly its economic clauses, call for the most direct onslaught against imperialism. The Freedom Charter demands that "the mineral wealth beneath the soil, the Bank and monopoly industries be transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole". The South African working class, under the leadership of COSATU, maintains that the best way in which "the people as a whole" can own this wealth is through nationalisation (see for example, the 9th Congress resolutions).

8. The Morogoro Strategy and Tactics of the ANC boldly stated: "In our country - more than in any other part of the oppressed world - it is inconceivable for liberation to have meaning without a return of the wealth of the land to the people as a whole. It is therefore a fundamental feature of our strategy that victory must embrace more than formal political democracy. **To allow the existing economic forces to retain their interests intact is to feed the root of racial supremacy and does not represent even the shadow of liberation**".

9. The Conference further said: "Our drive towards national emancipation is therefore in a very real way bound up with economic emancipation. We have suffered more than just national humiliation. Our people are deprived of their due in the country's wealth; their skills have been suppressed and poverty and starvation has been their life experience. The correction of these centuries-old economic injustices lies at the very core of our national aspirations. We do not understand the complexities which will face a people's government during the transformation period nor the enormity of the problems of meeting economic needs of the mass of the oppressed people. But one thing is certain - **in our land this cannot be effectively tackled unless the basic wealth and the basic resources are at the disposal of the people as a whole and are not manipulated by sections or individuals be they White or Black**".

10. From the above, we learn that a) imperialism is finance capital of the big monopoly banks merged with the capital of industrial monopolies, b) imperialism is piracy designed to exploit the natural and human resources of our people, c) in South Africa, the national domination and deprivation of Blacks in general, and Africans in particular, cannot be resolved unless the basic wealth and the basic resources which are currently in the hands of imperialism, are at the disposal of the people as a whole and are not manipulated by sections or individuals be they White or Black.

11. The defence of imperialism in South Africa is the key strategic objective of global imperialism in relation to the African continent in general, and Southern Africa in particular. The core of the defence of imperialism is to allow the existing, white monopoly capitalist economic forces to retain their interests.

12. Over the past 20 years, the neo-liberal petit bourgeois leadership of the ANC has ensured that imperialism not only retains its interest in South Africa, but imperialism consolidated and restructured its operations through de-listing and dual listing of South African monopolies. The imperialist grip on South Africa has been consolidated through the rapid increase in foreign monopoly ownership of key sectors in the South African economy. Having consolidated its interests in South Africa as its springboard, imperialism further benefits by using South Africa as a gateway to the rest of the continent.

13. It is in this context that the resolutions that call for nationalisation must be understood. For the South African working class, nationalisation is a fundamental economic demand that first and foremost breaks the power of private, white monopoly capitalism. Carried forward by a mass movement that is rooted in anti-imperialist working class politics, such a nationalisation forms the basis to build and consolidate worker control of the decisive means of production, thereby giving such a nationalisation a revolutionary-democratic content.

14. What happened in the height of the debate on nationalisation? We saw opportunism of the highest order. For many years, the revolutionary movement interpreted “the transfer of mineral wealth beneath the soil, banks and monopoly industry to the ownership of the people as a whole” to mean “nationalisation”. Even Cde Ben Turok who drafted the economic clauses of the Freedom Charter, never raised any objection when Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo, the SACP and later COSATU interpreted this Freedom Charter clause to mean “nationalisation”. Today, Cde Turok is bold to say the clause was never intended as a call for nationalisation. Yet, there is no historical evidence that he objected to what he now calls a “misinterpretation”.

15. For example, in 1962 the SACP put forward one of the following proposals, *within the framework of the Freedom Charter*: “In order to ensure South Africa’s independence, the Party will press for the strengthening of the state sector of the economy, particularly in the fields of heavy industry, machine tool building and fuel production. It will seek to place control of the vital sectors of the economy in the hands of the national democratic state and to correct historic injustice, **by demanding the nationalisation of the mining industry, banking and monopoly industrial establishments, thus also laying the foundations for the advance to socialism**”. Furthermore: “...in order to guarantee the abolition of racial oppression and White minority domination, the Freedom Charter necessarily and realistically calls for profound economic changes: drastic agrarian reform to restore the land to the people; **widespread nationalisation of key industries to break the grip of White monopoly capital** on the main centres of the country’s economy”.

16. There is no historical evidence that Cde Ben Turok cautioned the Party about “misinterpreting” the Freedom Charter.

17. It is furthermore obvious that the Party’s call for nationalisation was not just influenced by the social-democratic fashion of the 1950’s, because it clearly states that “widespread nationalisation” is a guarantee to “the abolition of racial oppression and White minority domination”.

18. As the ANCYL observed in its August 2010 document on nationalisation, in 1969 the ANC elaborated on the clauses of the Freedom Charter, by among others, stating: “An ANC government shall restore the wealth of our country, the heritage of all South Africans to the people as a whole. The mineral wealth beneath the soil, the banks and monopoly industry shall be transferred to the

ownership of the people as a whole. At the moment there are vast monopolies whose existence affects the livelihood of large numbers of our people and whose ownership is in the hands of Europeans only. **It is necessary for monopolies which vitally affect the social wellbeing of our people such as the mines, the sugar and wine industry to be transferred to public ownership** so that they can be used to uplift the life of all the people. All other industry and trade which is not monopolistic shall be allowed with controls to assist the wellbeing of the people”.

19. In its 9th Congress COSATU in 2006 emphatically stated: “While COSATU will continue to support the ANC in the next period, *we note that currently the ANC is dominated by the interests of capital rather than the working class*. COSATU at its first CEC in 2007 should develop a set of policy objectives against which to measure the extent to which the ANC is able to shift to represent the interest of the working class. The criteria shall include: **Implementing the nationalisation provisions of the Freedom Charter**; An end to privatisation, public-private partnerships and the commercialisation and commodification of service delivery; The adoption of economic policy that ensures the distribution of wealth to the poor; The abolition of legislation that is not worker-friendly”.

20. When the debate on nationalisation started, comrades started ducking and diving. Big English emerged. Instead of advancing the long-standing historic position of the Alliance on this question, the ANC started talking about “increased state ownership, where deemed appropriate on the balance of evidence”, as if state ownership as historically conceived was inappropriate and not based on evidence. Some even began to take pride in having defeated “wholesale nationalisation”, as if historically and even during the debate, “wholesale nationalisation” was ever put on the table. The ANC has since avoided the word “nationalisation” altogether, and opted for big English, as the CEO of the Chamber of mines predicted.

21. We know that nationalisation is a core historic economic demand of COSATU even prior to the on-going global capitalist crisis, even when the mines and BEE capitalists were creaming off super-profits during the global commodity boom. So, it could not be said that nationalisation, which is necessary to abolish white minority domination, is just a BEE capitalist programme.

22. When the debate took off, some leaders within the Federation said the MPRDA of 2002 had already “nationalised the mineral wealth beneath the soil”, thereby making a mockery of subsequent calls for the “nationalisation of the mines” as the COSATU 9th Congress of 2006 repeated resolved. Were workers so foolish as to call for something that was already implemented in 2002, in their subsequent 9th, 10th and 11th Congresses?

23. Besides, the Freedom Charter as has been historically understood, makes it clear that we should nationalise “banks and monopoly industry”, and the mines are also part of monopoly industry, like SASOL, Arcelor-Mittal, SAPPI and MONDI, construction and cement industries, etc.

24. Despite the ducking and diving, the working class maintained their historic demand in the 11th Congress: “This Congress therefore resolves to embark on a programme of action to drive the radical economic shift in line with the demands of the Freedom Charter. Key demands include: The call for decisive state intervention in strategic sectors of the economy, including through **strategic nationalisation** and state ownership”.

25. It is precisely this programme of action that is being frustrated through divisions within the Federation. The Federation will be divided until the voices that call for nationalisation are completely silenced.

26. Now, instead of radicalising the calls for nationalisation by raising the ideological understanding

of the working class in order to instil within the struggle for nationalisation, the idea of worker-control of the means of production, the SACP *preferred* what it calls “socialisation” *rather than* “nationalisation”.

27. According to the SACP, nationalisation smacks of a “narrow bureaucratic take-over” of assets. In its paper, the Party spends an inordinate amount of time about “nationalisation” having the consequence of bailing out “debt-ridden BEE capital” and advancing “*narrow BEE*” interests.

28. In 1955, workers were clear about the class content of nationalisation. What is often not mentioned is that the call for nationalisation in the Freedom Charter was bound up with the call for worker-control.

29. The speaker who moved for the adoption of the economic clauses of the Freedom Charter interpreted the clauses as follows: “[The Freedom Charter] says ownership of the mines will be transferred to the ownership of the people. It says wherever there is a Gold Mine there will no longer be a compound boss. There will be a committee of the workers to run the Gold Mines. Friends, we also say that wherever there is a factory and wherever there are workers who are exploited, we say the workers will take over and run the factories. In other words the ownership of the factories will come to the people. Friends, there is one more thing...Let the Banks come back to the people, let us have a people’s committee to run the banks”.

30. The Party never even posed the nationalisation debate within this clear, classic worker-control understanding. Instead the Party leadership created a smokescreen called “socialisation”, which was never explained in the same terms as workers wanted to run the factories.

31. Now later, the Party flipped towards an argument that “nationalisation is one important potential means” for the accelerated consolidation of democratic public control over mining.

32. However, according to the Party leadership, nationalisation is “*too narrow*” a prism for approaching the totality of tasks of transformation, as if the ANCYL document never raised the issue of “nationalisation for industrialisation”, nationalisation for transformation of the accumulation path”, etc. This approach of presenting nationalisation as “too narrow” marks an important departure from the 1962 perspective, which saw “widespread nationalisation” as a guarantee to abolish white domination and to secure national independence.

33. The result of this shift is that the SACP failed to elaborate on how existing mines, banks and monopolies are to be nationalised. What was the end result? The Party ended up endorsing the SIMS report, which states that nationalisation would lead to “unmitigated economic disaster”!

34. In short, while nationalisation remains the most potent means to break the power of imperialism and, in the hands of the working class, represents the most revolutionary-democratic measure in the economic sphere, components of the Alliance have tended to shy away from it. Instead, they opted for big florid English. In so doing, the interests of imperialism in South Africa and in the region have been firmly secured and South African based corporations go about their “sub-imperialist” roles on the continent.

35. In talking about nationalisation, Lenin says: “The banks, as we know, are centres of modern economic life, the principal nerve centres of the whole capitalist economic system. To talk about “regulating economic life” and yet evade the question of the nationalisation of the banks means either betraying the most profound ignorance or deceiving the “common people” by florid words and grandiloquent promises with the deliberate intention of not fulfilling these promises”.

36. Similarly, to talk about “state intervention” through “regulations and windfall taxes on super-

profits" and yet "evade the question of the nationalisation of the mines, banks and monopoly industries means either betraying the most profound ignorance or deceiving the common people" with Big English and grandiloquent promises.

B. A Defence of Imperialism Under the Slogan of Anti-Imperialism

37. It is therefore ironic that, having played a diversionary role in the debate on nationalisation, the GS of the SACP emerges as the foremost critic of imperialism. In his speech to POPCRU he said: "In our own region, through the umbrella of 'civil society, imperialism has sought to encourage the trade union movement to increasingly define itself as part of a 'civil society that is naturally in opposition to the movement and its government. In this context organizational 'independence increasingly must mean being anti the national liberation movement or the government it leads. This is for instance the whole posture that has been adopted by the media in our country". 38. In 2005, the GS of the SACP had said: "Perhaps the only significant mass organisations post-independence are trade unions. It is for this reason that any independent mass activity or resistance to unpopular governments tends to arise from, or be led by, the trade union movement. This has sometimes led to the argument, found in sections of a number of former liberation movements in our region, that the trade union movement is being used by imperialism to roll back the gains of liberation". 39. Earlier in 2004, long before the Party leadership embedded itself in government, the SACP was firmly behind COSATU in campaigning against repression by the Zanu-PF government in Zimbabwe. The SACP issued a statement saying: "As the Communist Party, we reject with the utmost contempt the suggestion by the Zimbabwean government that {{COSATU is an agent of imperialism}}. {Instead it is the bureaucratisation of liberation movements and their departure from the revolutionary agenda that exposes our region to imperialist agendas}". 40. The concrete situation that we face today, in 2013, is that the ANC leadership is not just bureaucratised, it is also united in resisting the expropriation of imperialists. The Party itself managed to suppress the property question by diverting attention away from nationalisation. COSATU emerged ideologically incoherent as some of its affiliates were pulling in different directions, while many of its affiliates simply ignored the debate, despite clear resolutions on this matter. That situation to us, on the watch of the vanguard party, constitutes a real defence and advance of imperialism. 41. It is true that imperialism has sought to use "the umbrella of civil society" to destabilise revolutionary movements. It is however also true that "national liberation movements" themselves are not immune of "imperialist capture" and then get used to smash the working class. This reality is a consistent ideological blind-spot of the GS of the SACP. The debate on nationalisation has demonstrated how strongly embedded imperialism is within the ranks of the national liberation movement and how the SACP played its sterling part in assisting imperialism to parry the nationalisation blow. 42. Senior leaders of the national liberation movement own shares in the very mines, banks and monopoly industries that are supposed to be nationalised. Their role has been to ensure that the national liberation movement is caged in and paralysed from fulfilling its mission, i.e. to transfer to the ownership of the people as a whole, the basic wealth of our country. 43. That is why even when there is a clear anti-imperialist sentiment from within the branches of the ANC on any matter, the ANC has been found seriously wanting

when it comes to implementation. The ANC bureaucracy so manages matters that at the end of the day, the revolutionary content of ANC conferences gets washed out in Big English nebulous resolutions. The reason for this is that within the movement there are monopoly capitalist forces whose primary and only task is to block progress. 44. Having funded half of the costs of the SIMS study, it was therefore quite revealing, though not surprising, when the CEO of the Chamber of Mines, was quoted by the Business Day (06 August 2012) as saying: "If you look at the ANC's record, how excellent is it in implementing its resolutions? It's a lousy record and we are happy about that". 45. Therefore, even if the ANC had adopted nationalisation, it would have not been capable of implementing it. As Mr. Sibiya said: "It may be politically correct for some people to support nationalisation at the policy conference and thereafter have an elegant exit". He knew that the Chamber of Mines has its surrogates within the national liberation movement who will gracefully welcome the nationalisation debate only to usher it out in Mangaung. 46. In all of this the SACP leadership has been deeply complicit. Yet, the GS of the SACP continues in his speech at POPCRU Political School in 2013: "COSATUs affiliation into this body [WFTU] is something that is of very serious concern to imperialism and some of its trade union allies. Given the continued strategic importance of South Africa in relation to imperialist ambitions in the African continent (as the next economic growth point), coupled with South Africa joining BRICS, the implications of a COSATU in WFTU are a bit too much for the imperialist agenda in our continent".

47. Earlier, in 2005, the GS of the SACP had said: "The latest in these accusations is that directed at COSATU by the Zimbabwean government, that COSATU is being used by the CIA, by virtue of its affiliation to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU). **The SACP has correctly rejected this ridiculous characterisation of COSATU.**

Perhaps this is a reflection of much deeper problems; the tendency of the national liberation alliances to fragment after independence, and what seems to be growing mutual suspicions between former liberation movements in power and the trade union movement in the region. Our own work as the SACP in the region shows a disturbing uneasiness by some of the former liberation movements in government about the role of the trade union movement".

48. Not only did the SACP just reject ZANU-PF's accusations that COSATU is an agent of imperialism in 2004, the SACP rejected such characterisation of COSATU, by virtue of being affiliated to ICFTU, *with the utmost contempt*. Now, what was contemptible in 2004/05 is now acceptable in 2013. The major difference between 2004 and 2013 is that in 2004 the SACP leadership was not in government and in 2013 it is in government.

49. If South Africa is of "strategic importance in relation to imperialist ambitions in the African continent", which of course it is, what has the SACP leadership done in order to weaken the imperialist grip over our country? Once again, the role of the SACP leadership in protecting the interests of imperialism in the mines, banks and monopoly industries cannot be ignored.

50. The SACP leadership in its paper, "On the Nationalisation of the Mines", deliberately created an ideological confusion by placing "narrow BEE capital" on the same plane as "white monopoly capital". Yet, we know that BEE capitalists are *not the principal enemy* class force in the NDR. Therefore, even if the form of nationalisation that was contemplated somehow benefitted "narrow BEE capital", its design could have dealt a major, bigger blow to "white monopoly capital", which is *the principal enemy* class force of the NDR. But no, no, no! The SACP leadership would have none of it.

51. The SACP leadership *preferred* to throw into the air “socialisation” whilst “nationalisation” was on the agenda. The aim was to bog down the progressive forces into a sterile debate about the difference between “nationalisation” and “socialisation”. Seeing that this diversionary tactic did not work, the Party leadership decided to clog up the discussion with the issue of “debt ridden BEE capital”, *as if the latter were the principal enemy class force*. In so doing, the Party leadership provided perfect cover for white monopoly capital and imperialism. Through such interventions the Party leadership provided a sterling defence of imperialism in South Africa and on the African continent.

52. Today, the SACP says we should either impose a windfall tax or nationalise SASOL. What happened to “socialisation”? Just when nationalisation is “off the table”, the SACP leadership does not even begin to make a case for its “socialisation”. Instead, it reverts to “nationalisation” (of SASOL) or “windfall taxes”, as if the two are mutually exclusive alternatives from the standpoint of the political economy of power relations.

53. State power does not derive from “windfall taxes” on super-profits. It derives from ownership of the underlying means of production, and as long as nationalisation is evaded, we are bound to hear Big English.

54. That Big English, florid language and grandiloquent promises which evade nationalisation are, to us, a defence of imperialism in South Africa and as the SACP stated in 1989, by extension, the whole continent.

3. The Strategy of Capital is Not Only Confined to Trade Unions!

1. Consider the elaboration of the strategy of capital that the GS of the SACP has offered to POPCRU: “The other strategy by capital to weaken the progressive trade union movement has been through attempts to render the progressive pieces of legislation like the Labour Relations Act and the Basic Conditions of Employment Act ineffective...”

2. We know that this strategy is embedded in the NDP and is derived from the DA policies.

3. The GS continued: “The bosses have also used the strategy of corrupting or co-option of some of the worker leaders through a phenomenon we have characterized as ‘business unionism- use of ones leadership in the union to enrich ones self! To workers, unions are the shield against employers, but to private capital trade unions are business propositions, as today unions have control and influence over billions of rands in their investment companies, as well as through workers provident funds and stop orders in the insurance industry”.

4. This is extremely important and it is correct. However “the strategy of corruption or co-option” is not confined to trade unions, it is equally applicable to any organisation, including a communist party, which is supposed to be the insurance of the working class in the NDR. The strategy is also applicable to the national liberation movement as well, as Cde Ronnie Kasrils has recently revealed.

5. We should recall that workers confront capital directly in the private sector and indirectly in the public sector. Just as much as “corruption or co-option” is a strategy of capital against not only the progressive trade unions, we should also bear in mind that *through deals within the public sector, through tenders, dishing positions to cadres etc., capital also “corrupts and co-opts” a communist party, a trade union movement and a national liberation movement.*

6. The issue is how we should fortify working class organisations against such a capitalist strategy. In our opinion, the best way to combat this strategy is to open space within organisations for the

widest possible expression of democracy, combat the bureaucracy which distorts and sabotages the real aspirations of the lower structures (as has happened in ANC Conferences), by allowing lower structures to take charge of their own organisations and, in relation to the trade union movement, instil worker-control by providing the widest possible platform for locals and workers themselves to fully express their views on any issue.

7. As we see the situation, the leadership of the national liberation movement has long been captured by imperialism. By embedding itself in the state, instead of “building working class power” there *by exposing the incapacity of the capitalist state to meet the aspirations of the working class*, the SACP leadership has itself been swallowed into the capitalist strategy. Any criticism of the state is now “oppositional”, the SACP itself has long ceased to criticise state policy. Since 2009, the SACP has not produced single critique, not even one, of state policy. Instead, the GS of the SACP informed the working class, through Justice Malala’s show, that there is no neo-liberalism in the Zuma Administration.

8. Now, since some senior trade union leaders are in the Central Committee of the SACP, they have by extension been also swallowed into the capitalist strategy.

In short, though the ANC leadership pursued an imperialist agenda under the leadership of the Class of 1996, the SACP leadership, because it was not part of that trend, ensured that imperialism failed to capture the leading cadre of the trade union movement. Today, the situation is different. The SACP decided to amend its constitution to allow its senior leadership to enter the state.

9. That situation completely exposed COSATU to capitalist capture via the SACP in the state, as we show in the GS of the SACP speech to POPCRU where he appealed for “nuanced approach” to the “democratic government”, without any justification on the basis of Marxist-Leninist class analysis.

10. The GS of the SACP continued to say in his POPCRU speech: “Perhaps a weakness that is almost built into the nature of the trade union movement is its inability to relate to and support other non-wage labour activities...Sometimes this includes failure to pay attention to skills development for youth as a way of improving youth employability in society in general”.

11. This is another way of saying exactly what the DA and the neoliberals in the ANC always say, in their push for a youth employment incentive. They say COSATU represents an “insider” in the labour market that blocks young people from getting skills. The GS says COSATU is failing to “pay attention” to the skills development of young people.

12. From the speech of the GS of the SACP, it is not clear what exactly COSATU should do to “support skills development for youth as a way of improving youth employability”. Whilst indeed skills development is important as an integral part of the development of the productive powers of labour, we think it is inappropriate to place the responsibility at the door of trade unions to do that.

13. The capitalist state, in which the GS of the SACP serves, has the responsibility to skill everyone, to house everyone, to provide basic goods and services to everyone. The resources lie with the capitalist class. The GS is supposed to push for heavy progressive taxation of the capitalist class, to bring back the surplus that has been produced by workers, and to expand skills development, among many other issues.

14. The GS of the SACP is supposed to push for state owned enterprises to cease being commercial entities and focus on the developmental agenda which should include skills development. He should push for the state to end tenders, to “nationalise the tenders”, or “de-tenderise” the state as the SACP put it, in order to build internal state capacity and to drive production of basic goods and

services on a non-profit basis, thereby directly intervening in the skills development effort.

15. To appeal to COSATU to "pay attention" to skills development is to unfairly suppose that COSATU never demanded skills development and training from the capitalist class and its state.

16. To be fair, the GS of the SACP did say the following in the POPCRU Political School: "It would also be naïve to think that unions are not faced with the many threats that face political movements and governments. Trade unions can be corrupted just like governments can. It is therefore wrong to think that by being a trade union leader one is immune from being corrupted, and that it is only governments or those serving in government that are corruptible. Some trade union leaders have also been co-opted by business and other perverse interests. Trade unions are not immune from the ills of society. Just like governments suffer from 'sins of incumbency, trade union leaders also suffer the same!" 17. We wholeheartedly agree with this. We just want to make an addition that a communist party and a national liberation movement are also not immune to the corrupting and co-opting influence of capital, and what should be done about it, and we have explained what must be done to combat these tendencies. {{4. A Defence of Neo-liberalism Under the Slogan of Taking Responsibility for the Revolution}}

1. One of the refrains from the GS of the SACP is that the working class must "take responsibility for the revolution". However, taking responsibility appears in practice to mean being subservient to the neo-liberal petit-bourgeoisie in its defence of white monopoly capital. Taking responsibility of the revolution also means taking up positions in the state and then turning around to defend those neo-liberal against the working class.

2. The first simple example has been the SACP leadership's ambivalence when it came to the issue of e-tolls where, in the form of the first Deputy GS of the SACP, some "sophisticated" defence of e-tolls was put forward. What implications did this have for COSATU? Not surprisingly, those leaders who sit in the COSATU Central Executive Committee who happen to also sit in the SACP Central Committee dragged their feet in advancing the campaign against e-tolls. The Federation nevertheless managed to pull the campaign off the ground, since many workers heeded the COSATU call to resist e-tolls.

3. Taking responsibility of the revolution also means forgetting the fight against neo-liberalism and suppressing the history of working class struggles against neo-liberal policies in South Africa. In short, it means taking responsibilities of the crises generated and exacerbated by neo-liberalism.

4. Once again the first Deputy GS of the SACP, in his address to SACTWU Congress stated that in the mid-1990s: "We were persuaded by South African monopoly capital, in particular, to liberalise, to de-regulate, to allow dual listings for Anglo, SA Breweries, SASOL, and others".

5. He continued to say: "We were advised to open all our doors and windows to attract inward investment flows. Unfortunately, almost the exact opposite has occurred".

6. {Who is this "we"?} As far as NUMSA is concerned, COSATU was never persuaded by the enemy class force to practice neo-liberalism. As far as NUMSA is concerned, monopoly capital never advised COSATU to support the opening of "all our doors and windows to attract inward investment flows". {Who is this "we" that the Deputy GS of the SACP is talking about?}

7. As far as NUMSA is concerned, COSATU cannot take responsibility for neo-liberalism in South Africa. To do so, as the Deputy GS of the SACP has done, is to negate the gallant struggles that the working class under the leadership of COSATU has waged since 1994. In fact, we can say that the history of South Africa after 1994 is the history of class

struggles against neo-liberalism. 8. The first Deputy GS of the SACP continued to say they have "misread" the situation in the mid-1990's: "In other words, perhaps we thought we were dealing with national capital that OBJECTIVELY, from the sheer perspective of a return to viability, had an interest in committing to a major national reconstruction and development programme, major economic and social investment. They used their vast media and ideological power to browbeat us into believing that reconstruction and development would be best served by implementing a macro-economic package that put a premium on fighting inflation, and on sweeping liberalisation and de-regulation measures". 9. As NUMSA we knew right from the start, under the leadership of COSATU, that GEAR is a road to hell for the working class. We did not "misread" anything. Guided by a consistent Marxist-Leninist perspective, we understood the link between the neo-liberal petit-bourgeois leadership of the ANC and white monopoly capitalism through BEE. We also did not forget what the SACP taught us, that white monopoly capitalism in South Africa is in fact Anglo-American imperialism, that is to say, the imperialism of Great Britain and the USA. 10. How could the first Deputy GS of the SACP and his comrades have "thought we are dealing with national capital" that is committed to major investment. In short how the hell could they have trusted the enemy class force? 11. To answer this question it is important to dispel the myth that it was all an "honest misreading" of the situation. At least Cde Ronnie Kasrils has now come out to acknowledge exactly what we are saying in this paper when he says their optimism: "overlooked the resources and tenacity of a powerful international corporate capitalist system with the ability to seduce and corrupt on a grand scale. That was the time from 1991-1996 that was the battle for the soul of the ANC got underway and was lost to corporate power and influence. That was a fatal turning point". 12. Ronnie Kasrils reveals the power of capital to "seduce and corrupt" the ANC and he concedes that the soul of the ANC is now with the international corporate capitalist system. 13. This is the issue which the GS of the SACP has consistently failed to address in his speeches, when he one-sidedly focuses on the "corrupting and co-option" strategy of capital on trade unions and denies that neo-liberalism exists in South Africa today. 14. The Deputy GS of the SACP believed that he and his comrades were dealing with "national capital" OBJECTIVELY committed to development. He forgot that Colonialism of a Special Type is colonialism. By definition it is not interested in investing in the development of Africans. 15. To believe that white monopoly capitalism in South Africa ceased to be Anglo-American imperialism and became just "national capital" in the mid-1990s, requires a serious shift in ideological orientation. To be "persuaded" by the enemy class force to adopt neo-liberalism requires an abandonment of Marxist-Leninist analysis. 16. Interestingly, while the vanguard got persuaded, the trade union movement under the leadership of COSATU remained steadfast in its exposition of what neo-liberal policies were from the get go. Those of us who were never persuaded remain steadfast to this day that, as long as the basic wealth of our country is owned and controlled by the very same Anglo-American imperialism, no amount of tinkering will change the colonial conditions of our people. 17. As long as white monopoly capital in general, Anglo-American imperialism in particular, remains the dominant class force that owns the economy, neo-liberalism will remain in force, regardless of who is in government. {{5. Disruption of Unity Under the Slogan of Unity}}

1. The GS of

the SACP, in his address to the POPCRU Political School, made mention of the need for unity in COSATU in the following words: "First we want to dismiss with the contempt it deserves claims and insinuations that the SACP is or wants to divide COSATU". 2. He went on to say: "The SACP respects all these processes as internal COSATU processes and we shall not interfere in them". 3. The first Deputy GS of the SACP, in address to SACTWU Congress said: "A weakened COSATU, a COSATU absorbed in internal leadership divisions, a COSATU in which the principle of worker-solidarity is undermined by competition between affiliates - is a COSATU that will weaken the entire liberation movement, undermining the prospects of advancing a Second, more radical phase of the Democratic Transition, and any prospects of rolling back monopoly capital and building an economy based on the principle of from each according to their ability, to each according to their needs". 4. He also said: "It is no secret that COSATU is going through perhaps its most difficult period ever. In the face of all kinds of disinformation campaigns seeking to blame the SACP for being behind alleged factionalism within the federation, as the SACP we have deliberately maintained a principled silence. Those, of course, who are making these allegations are often themselves located outside of COSATU, but have appointed themselves as "COSATU" spokes-persons. The anti-SACP allegations from their side amount to doing exactly what they accuse us of doing, meddling and factionalising through the media in what are essentially internal COSATU issues". 5. Lastly the first Deputy GS said: "The internal difficulties within COSATU must be settled within COSATU, by COSATU through appropriate processes that respect worker democracy and the COSATU constitution. Any external meddling, however well-intentioned, will simply complicate matters. This is why the SACP has consistently said: Hands Off COSATU!" 6. Hands Off COSATU indeed! 7. Before engaging with the SACP's calls for "maximum unity", we need to take a step back to the SACP's Ngoye Congress of December 2012 and refer to the Political Report of the GS of the SACP. In that report, after expressing displeasure at NUMSA's irritating "behaviour" of problematising the deployment of the SACP leadership in government, he said: "there is a small, but lingering, phenomenon in the trade union movement that of wanting to deliberately cause strain and divide the labour movement from the SACP and the ANC. We must intensify ideological work to expose and defeat this phenomenon within the ranks of COSATU and the progressive trade union movement". 8. And so it came to pass that in 2013 COSATU Central Executive Committee could not undertake a single campaign. It also happened that during this period, up to this day, efforts were made by those leaders of COSATU who sit in the Central Committee of the SACP, to "surgically remove" the General Secretary of COSATU. 9. It also happened that, just as much as the GS of the SACP lashed out at NUMSA and soon turned to this "'small but lingering phenomenon" that happened to be the GS of COSATU, the foot soldiers of the SACP leadership inside the COSATU Central Executive Committee accused the GS of COSATU with "flirting with the workerism of NUMSA". It also happened that, within the COSATU CEC, NUMSA was called "the enemy within" etc., etc. 10. NUMSA is firmly of the view that the SACP leadership cannot absolve itself from taking responsibility for what is happening in COSATU, calls for unity notwithstanding. The SACP leadership, in its political report to its highest decision-making structure, pointedly committed itself to interfere within COSATU, which is supposed to be an independent formation, in order to "isolate and defeat a lingering

phenomenon". 11. Today the very same SACP leadership is bold to assert that "COSATU internal processes" must be respected, "Hands Off COSATU!" etc. The SACP leadership publicly resolved to interfere with COSATU processes, to "isolate and defeat a lingering phenomenon". At the same time the SACP leadership wants a "vibrant and independent COSATU" that is neither a lapdog nor an extension of the SACP. 12. Immediately after the clarion call by the SACP to "isolate and defeat" a lingering phenomenon "within the ranks of COSATU", COSATU soon got embroiled in a devastating and paralysing internal strife. 13. What is also not surprising in these battles is that those who want the GS of COSATU removed are using the same "ideological labels" that were coined by the SACP leadership. Things such as "anti-majoritarian liberal offensive", "oppositionist stance", "syndicalism, workerism", etc. 14. We are not going to be fooled when the SACP leadership now turns around and says: "Hands Off COSATU!" 15. Hands Off COSATU, too! {{6. Fanning Divisions By Creating Suspicions Between Presidents and General Secretaries}}

1. While the calls for unity continue being made, the SG of the ANC in his speech to the POPCRU Political School, joined in with his version of how COSATU must operate. The most important thing in a trade union is worker-control. We fully agree! 2. It turns out, however, that his view of worker-control is bureaucratic and incorrect. He creates an analogy between himself as the SG of the ANC and the President of the ANC. He is quoted in the media as saying he knows his place as the SG and the President likewise. Similarly union presidents are "worker-leaders" because they get paid by their employers, unlike General Secretaries who are just "employees" of unions. 3. In his address, the SG of the ANC said: "As workers you gave power to the general secretary and killed worker control. When you did that, you tampered with the content and nature of the trade union movement". So the crisis in COSATU is that General Secretaries were given power and Presidents must take it back. 4. All of a sudden, General Secretaries are the villains. The GS of the SACP for his part did not see the General Secretaries of unions as fit to deal with organisational matters: "Union President to immediately launch organisational renewal process and struggle in each of the unions, with a particular focus on renewing service to members and strengthening worker components of the union movement". What about General Secretaries? 5. These speeches smack of opportunism. The main target is the General Secretary of COSATU, but the attack on the COSATU GS is framed as if the relationship between General Secretaries and Presidents is bad across the board, thereby fanning divisions within unions where such divisions do not exist. 6. Having successfully divided the Federation at the top by pitting the President and the General Secretary, the SG of the ANC and the GS of the SACP, now make a generalised call for "Presidents to take over", for Presidents to "wake up" and take over the running of the unions from General Secretaries. This call is opportunist, based on a wrong premise and divisive. 7. Why is this call opportunist? During his tenure as GS of the NUM, the SG of the ANC "ran the union", there was no problem with the "power of the General Secretaries" then. Even the General Secretary of the SACP "runs the organisation", there is no problem with this power relative to that of the Chairman. The SG of the ANC also "runs the organisation", relative to the power of the President of the ANC. 8. The call for Presidents to "take power" is also premised on a fallacious notion of "worker-control". Just because Presidents are paid by their employers does not mean that they are the worker-leaders. A worker-

leader derives mandates from workers and in order to do so, a worker-leader provides the maximum space for the maximum expression of democracy by ordinary members within a union. A worker-leader does not make deals on behalf of workers (and for themselves) without consultation, a worker-leader defends the democratic space and provides a platform for ordinary workers to democratically express themselves within their organisations. 9. Even if a President gets paid by the employer, if the President fails to do these things, that President is not a worker-leader. The same applies to all trade union leaders, including the General Secretary. 10. The SG of the ANC further said the General Secretary of the union is just "an employee" of the union, something like a DG in government. Nothing can be further from the truth. The General Secretary of the union is a political leader in their own right. General Secretaries are not appointed, they are subjected to the same political process as the Presidents, that of {elections}. 11. General Secretaries too are worker-leaders, not {employees}. They can be fired in the same way a President can be fired, through the sitting of a {political structure}, not by the Human Resources officials. 12. Why is the call for Presidents to "take over" divisive? It is divisive because it makes the two most senior {political} leaders to be suspicious of each other. It sparks "power consciousness" with the aim of initiating a "power struggle" between the two most senior political leaders. Once that happens, as we have seen, the organisation becomes paralysed, which is exactly the aim of white monopoly capital during this crisis. 13. The SG of the ANC cannot absolve himself from the crisis in COSATU as well. The call to "isolate and defeat" the lingering phenomenon happened during his watch, as the Chairman of the SACP. He was first to accuse COSATU of being "oppositional", when it was becoming clear that there is no shift away from neo-liberalism. The same "oppositional" song has now been re-mixed and extended in the CEC of COSATU by those who want the GS of COSATU removed. {{7. A Division between Public and Private Sector Unions}}

1. Another division which is being driven inside COSATU is the division between "public sector" and "private sector" unions. The GS of the SACP, in his address to POPCRU said: "It is time now that we ask and seek to answer the question of whether public sector unions, as opposed to private sector ones, might be having different and additional responsibilities in relation to the agenda of consolidating and deepening the NDR". 2. He further said: "Lets say for instance that all our unions, both in the private and public sector, have a role to play in building a developmental state. For the private sector unions this means intensifying the struggle to roll back the corrupting influence of private capital, but for public sector unions it must be about building the capacity of government and the state to deliver services to the needs of the population, especially working class communities".

3. Then the most important point: "It is time to elaborate the strategy and tactics of playing this role, without sacrificing the independence of public sector unions, whilst at the same time not adopting a posture as if the democratic government is an enemy government. It is in these fora that we must nuance our approach as the workplace is not homogeneous. How do we for instance exploit the fact that we have a government whose ruling party we are in alliance with?"

4. The problem with these statements is that they create a chasm between public sector unions and private sector unions. This chasm finds expression in the lack of coherence of the Federation in its strategy and tactics. As the GS of the SACP said, they thought that the whole "internal process in COSATU" would "help COSATU to, amongst other things, clarify a lot of issues relating to the

strategy and tactics, political posture and other challenges facing the federation”.

5. In his speech, he appeals to public sector unions to “nuance” their approach by “not adopting a posture as if the democratic government is an enemy government”. He loses class analysis altogether. He fails to contemplate the possibility that this democratic government, is a bourgeois-democratic government and as such, it largely implements *“the policies of the principal enemy class”*.

6. The issue that “we have a government whose ruling party we are in alliance with” does not address the possibility that the democratic government, as the political arm of the capitalist state, can be used to “bribe” public sector workers in order to weaken the entire Federation. The GS of the SACP incorrectly limits corrupting and co-option strategy of capital only to the “private sector”, and absolves the capitalist state and the bourgeois-democratic government from such tendencies.

7. Public sector workers must see through this, and never lose sight of the class nature of government and the state in which this government is located, no matter who is in it. If public sector workers lose the class nature of government and agree to “nuance” their approach, public sector workers would more often than not find themselves in collision with private sector unions whose bosses are not “in the ruling party”, leading to incoherence of the Federation as a weapon of workers *against capital in the state and capital outside of the state*.

8. The unity between public sector workers and private sector workers lies on one and only one factor: Both workers suffer under the yoke of capital. To begin “nuancing” this fact leads to problematic theoretical and ideological positions, e.g. on the nature and character of the state as a whole.

9. To begin thinking that public sector workers can “exploit” the fact that the ANC is a ruling party and therefore they can get concessions by being “nuanced”, is to agree that the ANC has to strike deals with capital as a whole in order to realise such deals. Under those circumstances, capital would simply extract more surplus from private sector workers in order to realise the deal for public sector workers.

10. Once public sector workers lose sight of the class nature of government, they will not understand why the pressure from private sector workers, and indeed the rest of the working class, for the state to attack private monopoly is so important. They will not see that neo-liberalism is alive. They will not understand the working class critique of the existing bourgeois-democratic government, because they would have been bribed.

11. What happens when the public sector unions inside the Federation, having “nuance their approach” to the bourgeois-democratic government, while private sector unions, frustrated by neo-liberal policies of the same government call for a working class offensive to force government to move against its own bourgeoisie? What would happen is part of what we are seeing in COSATU today, paralysis and organisational incoherence, a factory of “labels”, from which “oppositional songs” are recorded.

12. Should we wonder why, after having played such a sterling role in the nationalisation debate, the GS of the SACP opted to call for nuances of approaches to the “democratic government”, without any Marxist-Leninist analysis of such a government and the state in which it is located?

8. Having Said All of This, So What?

1. Perhaps, it is time we recalled the wisdom of Amilcar Cabral, in his address to the revolutionary movements of Latin America, Africa and Asia when he said: “...we are not going to eliminate

imperialism by shouting insults against it. For us, the best or worst shout against imperialism, whatever its form, is to take up arms and fight. This is what we are doing, and this is what we will go on doing until all foreign domination of our African homelands has been totally eliminated”.

2. This remains the challenge of the revolutionary working class, as it grapples with the disarray in its Federation, while Anglo-American and other imperialisms strengthen their grip on our country.

3. It is a challenge for the working class, to rid from within its ranks, the true agents of imperialism: the defenders of existing property relations and policies that strengthen imperialism, those that are eating at the dinner table of white monopoly capitalism.

They unashamedly own shares in the very same industries that the Freedom Charter says should belong to the people, they have now acquired these industries for themselves, while at the same time they sing praises of the Freedom Charter as the basic programme of the Alliance.

4. That is why we maintain that, at the heart of the political crisis in COSATU, is the contradiction between the forces of capitalism and the forces of socialism.

Adopted by the: Numsa Special NEC on 15th September 2013

Issued publicly by: Irvin Jim, Numsa General Secretary

Released on: 22 September 2013

Issued by NUMSA, September 22 2013

Footnotes

[1] Amilcar Cabral, *The Weapon of Theory*, 1966.