

Why the working class should support the public sector strike (and why we cannot trust the Cosatu and SACP leaders)

We call on the entire working class to support the public sector workers strike; the final settlement will set a precedent for all workers in the private sector; the only ones who are feeding and taking care of the unemployed are the employed workers, of which the public sector workers make up a huge part. The government is deliberately trying to drive a wedge between teachers, nursing staff, and public sector workers in general, on the one hand, and students, the parents (most of whom are from the working class) and the sickly and their families, on the other. Let us examine the facts and see where the ANC/SACP government really stands:

1. A government minister earns R1,6 million per year; after 5 years of 'work' they are guaranteed their salary for the rest of their lives; A public sector worker who earns R60 000 per annum will have to work 27 years just to earn what the Minister takes home in just one year (A worker who earns R40 000 per annum will have to work for 40 years); these highly paid millionaire/billionaire ministers are telling us that we must accept a lowly 7%;
2. South Africa has the highest income inequality in the world; the government's 'offer' is thus entrenching this inequality;
3. Over 6 years the government has spent over R100 bn on the world cup; for example the Gautrain (the rich people's train) which started off as a R5 Bn project, ended up over R35 bn; from the world cup expenditure, the government could have wiped out the housing backlog; instead the US banks were the ones who (through their control of Murray & Roberts, Group 5, etc) made huge profits; government guaranteed their profits while the working class was once again told to wait for houses, wait for jobs, wait for education, etc;
4. Two schools were demolished at Mafafeni, Nelspruit, while the Mbombela stadium was built; even up to today, the schools have not been rebuilt;
5. While medicines had run out at public hospitals and clinics around the country, the ministers were too busy jetsetting in private jets to world cup games;
6. The food gangsters (Pick 'n Pay, Shoprite, Spar, Woolworths and others) are making billions out of overcharging for food prices, while the government sits on their hands and does nothing;
7. Government is spending R1 trillion (R1000 Bn) on doubling the electricity capacity over the next 5 years, borrowing hundreds of billions of Rands at high interest rates, doubling the price of electricity over the next 2 years; enslaving us and future generations in what is a massive bailout of US imperialist banks- there is no plan for electricity for all, let alone housing for all; we pay over 60 cents per unit but big companies like Anglo American pay 12-16 cents- the working class and lower middle class is not only subsidizing the electricity of the big capitalists but we are paying for coal and nuclear power stations that are not needed (we could have tapped into the 200 000 MW hydroelectricity capacity of the DRC and/or build solar power stations in the North Cape desert.
8. the ANC/SACP are all loudmouth about women's rights but they could not even grant workers in Transnet equal maternity leave as the managers;



In other words, the main agency assisting the imperialists to starve us and keep us enslaved, is the ANC/SACP government.

Cosatu leaders and the SACP are undermining the public sector workers struggle

There was a CEC resolution in May that there should be mobilisation for a general strike against the electricity increases; Cosatu leaders keep quiet about the planned meeting at Nedlac for the 14th June; it is already August and the increases have come into effect on the 1st July, having a devastating effect on the working class, the lower middle class and some sections of the small capitalists; yet no plans are in place or any mobilisation started for a general strike; we can only conclude that the Cosatu leaders and the SACP have sold out on this struggle and have struck a deal with imperialism for their trillion Rand plunder of the working class to go ahead. The Cosatu leaders are in effect calling for social 'peace' while imperialism continues their attacks. We call for workers to mobilise for the immediate removal of this traitorous leadership. Down with the millionaire trade union leaders! We call for workers to march and occupy the Cosatu offices, demanding that a general strike against the imperialist onslaught be called. We call for workers' crisis committees to be set up in every workplace, every mine, every farm, every factory, every working class area, to fight against the electricity price increases and the other attacks by imperialism; what we need is an emergency workers summit uniting delegates from every workplace, irrespective of union, or whether unionised or un-unionised, including delegates from the unemployed and rank and file soldiers, to plan and direct a general strike.

Around the globe, the trade union leaders have made pacts with imperialism for them to continue to plunder the working class, with increased rate of exploitation, with increased unemployment, with increased hunger and suffering; but around the globe the working class has not sat with folded arms in the face of this united onslaught by imperialism and their own worker leaders; in Bolivia the industrial workers are demanding that workers break from supporting the regime of Morales; in Argentina in some areas workers have resorted to street fights against the police; in Brasil there is a renewed wave of strikes (breaking of the 'social peace' deal that the union leaders had with imperialism); in Kyrgyzstan the working class overthrew the US puppet Bakiev and burned parliament to the ground; in Thailand workers occupied the centre of the capital for several weeks; there have been 8 general strikes in Greece this year despite the leaders of the workers, including the stalinist party KKE, continuing to defend the imperialist government; of course there have been the heroic strikes of the transport and municipal workers which shattered the plans of the SACP and Cosatu leaders for 'social peace'; the SACP and Cosatu leaders have done and are doing their best to avert any general strike against the ANC government (any general strike would be a strike against the SACP as their leaders are the key component of the ANC cabinet).

With the above in mind, the working class would do well to draw the lesson that despite the huge public sector strike starting, despite what they say, the Cosatu leaders would not call out the industrial workers in solidarity strikes; the Cosatu leaders are doing their best to lower the demands of the workers to avert a strike; they have already reduced workers demands to 8,6% (very low indeed); they are preparing the psychology of the workers to accept an increase of 7% or less. Last year, when president Zuma declared that in 2010 public sector workers should only expect 7%, not a single union leadership raised any objection; in other words they already agreed with this. As the Cosatu leaders did in the municipal strike and last year's clothing workers strikes, if the workers press ahead with strike action, they will only organise for 1-3 days actions, or a short period, and then hope the workers get tired; they will call stayaways so that workers do not occupy the workplaces, thus



opening workers up to demoralisation by being isolated and alone; the stayaways will enable the union leaders to manipulate mandates in the absence of mass meetings of delegates to control the strike; further stayaways will be used to prevent workers from taking over their workplaces and really posing the question as to who does the work and who are the parasites (the capitalists). A public sector strike, in the absence of support by the broader working class, will be greatly weakened. Already the Cosatu leaders act as strike breakers by calling only a 1 day strike, while they know that Fedusa affiliates have called an indefinite strike (last week PSA went on strike while Cosatu leaders called on their members to go to work); the basic principle of working class solidarity is that all workers should strike at the same time; this is the way to have the shortest strike; but Cosatu/SACP leaders are so desperate to please the imperialists that they actively divide the public sector workers.

The most important lesson to draw from the public sector workers struggle is that the alliance with the ANC and SACP is an alliance that places the profits of the imperialists above the interests of the working class; with this alliance, workers democratic demands are trampled on; we call on workers to break with the capitalists; this means breaking with the ANC-SACP; the only way to achieve the democratic aspirations of the masses is for the working class to organise independently from the capitalists; indeed, to achieve the most basic democratic demands, the working class needs to take power!

Forward to an indefinite, unified public sector workers strike until all demands are met!

Forward to a general strike against the electricity increases!

Forward to a general strike in support of the public sector workers!

Forward to mass regional and national strike committees that control the strikes, every step of the way!

Forward to joint parent teacher student committees to take over the schools and organise solidarity actions in support of the strike!

For a minimum service level while having daily marches and mass meetings!

For daily mass meetings of strikers to control the strike and strike committee!

Down with the treacherous Cosatu leaders!

Forward to an emergency workers summit!

Forward to an independent revolutionary working class party as part of a revolutionary International (refund the Fourth International)

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