

The proposed employment equity amendment is about strengthening the middle class base of the ANC not about dismissing workers

As a result of the world offensive of imperialism, due to their crisis of falling profits, tens of millions of workers continue to be retrenched. The same trend is felt here as imperialism continues with their campaign of slaughter against the working class through permanent unemployment, high transport, housing and high food prices. Like elsewhere in the world, the working class is beginning to resist these attacks and is beginning to break from the ANC-SACP regime that is the agency of the capitalist onslaught against the masses. The ever increasing wave of strikes, such as the public sector strike of last year, the mineworkers and municipal workers strikes are all an indication of this trend as are the increasing number of protests for housing and water; the break with the ANC-SACP regime is also reflected in the hundreds of buses that had to be cancelled for the Cosatu 25th anniversary (which was really an ANC rally in another form) and the half-empty stadium when the ANC 2011 election manifesto was launched. The soldiers' struggles against the corrupt generals and the state also poses a massive problem for imperialism. In short, imperialism is facing a crisis of legitimacy of its regime in SA that is deepening rapidly.

Since 1994 the ANC has implemented Gear, Asgisa, the New Growth Path, really Structural Adjustment Programmes of world imperialism. These attacks on the working class have been spearheaded by Trevor Manuel and his Harvard gangsters. Millions of workers, thousands of teachers were retrenched while monopoly capital had their tax rate cut from 40% to 28%. The giant monopolies have made unheard of profits while the masses' suffering has increased. Life expectancy in South Africa is now less than that of drought-stricken Ethiopia. Between 1994 to 2010 unemployment among 'whites' have gone up from 55000 to 147 000 (and increase of 92 000), among 'coloureds' from 339 000 to 510 000 (an increase of 171 000), among 'Africans' from 3216000 to 5430000 (an increase of 2.2 million). [terminology and statistics from Stats SA used throughout for ease of reference although the figures are an under-estimation across the board]. Youth employment stands at only 13% of the 10 million between the ages of 15 -24 having some form of work. Meanwhile the numbers with some form of employment has stagnated at about 12.5-12.8 million for the past 10 years. The ANC government is capitalist and not the friend or ally of the working class or any section of it (despite what the SACP and Cosatu leaders say).

The proposed employment equity amendments do not compel any employer to take on more workers- so 'equity' for the millions of unemployed is non-existent. This exclusion of the unemployed is something that the ANC and DA agree upon. So if the amendments are not really about the rank and file worker, what are they aimed at?

The proposed Amendments are not about dismissing 'Coloured' or 'Indian' or 'white' workers but about expanding the black middle class base of the ANC

For the sake of clarity we quote an extract from the proposed amendments:

"42. II Assessment of compliance

In determining whether a designated employer is implementing employment equity in compliance with this Act, the Director-General or any person or body applying this Act [must] may, in addition to the factors stated

in section 15, take [into account all of] the following into account-

(a) The extent to which suitably qualified people from and amongst the different designated groups are equitably represented within each occupational [category and] level in that employer's workforce in relation to the[-

(i)] demographic profile of the [national and regional] economically active population;

[(ii) pool of suitably qualified people from designated groups from which the employer may reasonably be expected to promote or appoint employees;

(iii) economic and financial factors relevant to the sector in which the employer operates;

(iv) present and anticipated economic and financial circumstances of the employer;] and

(v) the number of present and planned vacancies that exist in the various [categories and] occupational levels, and the employer's labour turnover;

[(b) progress made in implementing employment equity by other designated employers operating under comparable circumstances and within the same sector;]

[Q] reasonable steps taken by an employer to train suitably qualified people from the designated groups:

(c) reasonable [efforts made] steps taken by a designated employer to implement its employment equity plan;

(d) the extent to which the designated employer has made progress in eliminating employment barriers that adversely affect people from designated groups; and

(e) [any other prescribed factor] reasonable steps taken by an employer to appoint and promote suitably qualified people from the designated groupS."

According to StatsSA, in the categories of unskilled workers, plant and machine operators, craft and related trades, sales and services, 'African' workers are already at 80% of the national profile. [Craft workers are 71% 'African']. This means that no 'Coloured' , 'Indian' or 'white' worker will be affected. In any case it is illegal for any worker to be dismissed to achieve an 'equity' target. Even 'Coloured' managers and professionals would not be affected as national profiles are in line with the 9% population proportion.

Significant disparities occur for 'white' workers in the following areas: skilled agriculture (33%); technician (27%), clerical (26%), despite 'whites' being only 9% of the population. These sectors form the base of the Solidarity union and explains why they oppose the proposed amendments. These figures reflect the heritage of the co-optation of the 'white' working class by the capitalist class in exchange for assisting to maintain the system where the rest of the working class are virtual slaves. This is the heritage that Solidarity defends. What their racist leaders do not realize is that imperialism has no loyalty to any section of the working class- they are loyal only to profits. The current crisis in the world capitalist economy pushes the imperialists to make alliances with any social force to contain the coming revolution. That social force, for the moment, is the black middle class and the black bourgeoisie. The key factors which Solidarity ignores are :

1. Imperialism keeps Africa as an exporter of primary, raw materials- completely dependent on the imperialist centres for technology. This is reflected in among other things that only 20% of the workforce have a tertiary qualification- which shows that

the economy is based on cheap labour with limited scope for skilled labour- a structural limit imposed by imperialism.

2. the stagnation of the SA and world economy means that new employment for skilled workers will be very limited. This will affect all workers, not only 'white'.

3. A proletarian (working class) response would be to call for equal pay for equal work, the shortening of the working day without loss of pay and for all the work to be shared among all who can work. This means breaking with the upper middle class and capitalist class be they black or white. It follows that the working class should unite across colour barriers, breaking with the Freedom Front +, the DA and the ANC-SACP. What is necessary is a united working class revolution against capitalism-imperialism locally and internationally. In this way, we unite the working class to fight to end 'white' privilege not through dismissal of 'white' workers but through real solidarity in the fight for work for all, which must mean the overthrowing of capitalist relations in South Africa, the rest of Africa and the world.

The amendments really concentrate on promotion into management positions. This is the main reason why the racist DA is objecting to the amendment. The main base of the DA is the white middle class. Currently, **75.8% of all top management positions are held by the white middle class**. In the main sectors of the economy, mining, agriculture, construction and retail, this percentage of top management who are 'white' is about 70%, ie for a 'group' that is only 9% of the population. This same white middle class was the backbone of the slave capitalist ('apartheid') regime- they built up their riches over the most brutal exploitation over the rest of the masses- this upper middle class is matched in their brutality and lack of humanity only by the Israeli elite. The base of the DA is threatened by the proposed amendments as it means an erosion into what they regard as their virtually exclusive terrain. As the economy is in stagnation, the only way that the ANC can expand its base is at the expense of the 'white' middle class. This is why the DA is so violently opposed to the proposed amendments. **This is why the DA is lying about the supposed dismissal of 'coloured' and 'white' workers- it is a cover to defend the massive numbers of 'white' middle class who continue to grow rich**, having 3 or 4 houses, mansions, live in luxury- the highest standard of living of any group on the planet, while the working class, including the 'white' and 'coloured' worker lives in starvation and deprivation.

Imperialism realizes that an 'Egyptian' explosion is coming to South Africa and indeed Southern Africa. For the coming explosion, so imperialism thinks, the black middle class would be more able to contain the working class- the past 26 years are a testimony to this.

Imperialism realizes that the ANC is losing support among the broader working class- this growing crisis of legitimacy could open up a revolutionary period once again in South Africa. There are at least 3 reasons why imperialism is committed to expanding the black middle class- firstly, by broadening its middle class base the ANC becomes less dependent on the working class. Thus the shrinking base of the ANC among the working class is compensated for and the increased middle class base would enable it to continue to play the role for imperialism of controlling the masses. If the DA had been in power nationally and had launched the same economic attacks on the working class as the ANC has done over the years, there would have been a revolution overnight. In other words the creation of a broader base for the ANC, expanding the black middle class, is a mechanism to attempt to postpone the coming revolution. Secondly, given the greater world trend towards fascistic methods due to the latest capitalist crisis that persists since 2007-8, this step prepares the way for more openly right-wing attacks against the working class. In other words, the adoption of more anti-worker and more reactionary policies by the

ANC is being prepared. Thirdly, the opportunistic clash between the white middle class (DA) and the black middle class (ANC) reinforces divisions among the working class on colour lines- something that imperialism always promotes.

Workers, generally, cannot be dismissed to achieve so-called equity targets; but in achieving new targets the capitalists, who really have the final say over who gets employed, will play the one worker against the other hiding behind ANC policy now as they hid behind NP policy for many years before that.

Racial practices were introduced by colonialism and by imperialism long before the rule of the NP in 1948. The majority of the population was reduced to semi-slaves by the capitalists so that they could better exploit the masses. The predecessors of the DA thrived on promotion of racial policies and extending them as long as possible. It was only the threat of revolution in 1985 that made the liberals become overnight 'champions' of non-racism- in essence democratic phraseology so that the capitalists would not lose everything and would stay in control.

With the formation of the UDF in 1983 the ANC formed an alliance with imperialism and the white liberals against the revolution. Those who fought for an independent policy of the working class to seize power as the only way to end racism, were hounded and sometimes killed by the alliance of imperialism with the SACP and ANC. We were told by the SACP (the Chris Hani's and Joe Slovo's) that it was necessary to put the black middle class (the ANC) as leadership of the struggle to end racism, when what they were doing was strangling the revolution.

Mandela in the June 1956 edition of Liberator newspaper, said that his interpretation of the nationalization clause of the Freedom Charter was that all monopolies should be broken up to create a black bourgeoisie:

'Whilst the Charter proclaims democratic changes of a far reaching nature, it is by no means a blueprint for a socialist state, but a programme for the unification of various classes and groupings amongst the people on a democratic basis. Under socialism the workers hold state power. They and the peasants own the means of production, land, the factories and the mills. All production is for use and not for profit. The Charter does not contemplate such profound economic and political changes. Its declaration "The people shall govern!" visualizes the transfer of power not to any single social class but to all the people of the country be they workers, peasants, professional men or petty-bourgeoisie.

*It is true that in demanding the nationalisation of the banks, the gold mines and the land the Charter strikes a fatal blow at the financial and gold-mining monopolies and farming interests that have for centuries plundered the country and condemned its people to servitude. But such a step is absolutely imperative and necessary because the realisation of the Charter is inconceivable, in fact impossible, unless and until these monopolies are first smashed up and the national wealth of the country turned over to the people. **The breaking up and democratisation of these monopolies will open up fresh fields for the development of a prosperous Non-European bourgeois class**'.*[our emphasis]**

The timid and cowardly ANC and SACP has agreed to Charters in various sectors for only 10-15% black ownership. Even the funds for this 'ownership' were borrowed at high interest rates from the very monopolies. Thus in reality the black middle class has been unable to transform the ownership of a single monopoly. Black 'empowerment' is just a front for continued exploitation of the masses. So this timid ANC, which has failed to transform the ownership of a single monopoly, now wants to make 80% of top management black. At the current pace this will take place over the

next 50 years, if not longer. How will workers benefit from having a black manager as opposed to a white manager? It will be the same. The point is that the illusion will be created that somehow workers demands are being achieved, that somehow workers in general can escape poverty through being promoted; the truth is that only a handful will be promoted and the majority of workers will remain in conditions of great suffering; through this myth the capitalists, the imperialists, want to gain time to continue the plunder and super-exploitation of the masses.

The best land remains in the hands of brutal, racist capitalist farmers and imperialism. The commanding heights of the economy, the Reserve bank, the mines, the banks, the large factories and stores remain in the hands of the handful of capitalists and imperialists- the same who funded and supported the brutal slave capitalist regime of the NP against the masses. The ANC housing policy of the past 17 years have entrenched the social segregation of the masses that imperialism has thrived on for more than 100 years.

The shooting and brutal murder of Samwu strike leader cde Petros Msiza by the ANC government marks a turning point in the struggle. The black middle class is showing that it can be as brutal as the white middle class in putting down workers protests. The ANC government is prepared to shoot workers down to advance the creation of a black capitalist class while entrenching racist divisions created by imperialism.

What the SACP's so-called Internal Colonial thesis (ICT) ignores when it says that the 'white nation' in South Africa is colonising the 'black nation', is that there are class divisions among the oppressed, just as there were class divisions among the oppressor. The upper black middle class has joined hands with the forces of imperialism against the masses. The white working class has proved a decisive ally in the class struggles against capitalism-imperialism.

When high-ranking member of the BMW brigade, Trevor Manuel, claims that Manyi did not know ANC policy, he is not being honest. The proposed amendment must have been scrutinised by the ANC structures. Both Manyi and Trevor Manuel are part of the upper black middle class and are united on the vision of Mandela and the ANC for the creation of a black capitalist class, who have grown rich based on contracts to build housing in the segregated ghettos, who have entrenched the rule of the giant monopolies on the best farm land, whose economic policies keep the bulk of the youth in permanent unemployment. The ANC commitment to capitalism implies a continuation of racism. This is why the ANC has not fired Manyi, who was merely implementing ANC policy in his own crude way.

It is the policy of 'Internal Colonialism' of the SACP, that has put the leadership of the struggle against racism into the hands of the black middle class. The SACP has always argued that the multi-class ANC leads the alliance. At the height of the resistance against the slave capitalist regime in 1989, the SACP argued in its document, ***The Path to Power***, that the black bourgeoisie could be won to the 'national liberation movement' and that alliances with 'all democratic forces' were not only necessary but without them the leadership of the struggle would be surrendered and would amount to 'workers suicide'. Joe Slovo in his 1988 paper, ***The South African working class and the National Democratic Revolution***, argued that a 'democratic state' was the shortest route to Socialism and that this state would be forced to implement 'measures that go beyond bourgeois democracy'.

But a 'democratic state' is a capitalist state, the bourgeoisie still rules. In other words the SACP was arguing that the workers should not take power into its own hands and that the capitalist state would begin to introduce Socialist measures. This goes

directly against what Lenin wrote in September 1917 in his , ***State and Revolution***, namely that the attainment of a democratic republic marks the end of the revolutionism of the middle class and the capitalist class. The past 17 years show that the organised working class have been the champion of the fight to end racism and discrimination, such as the differences between workers wages in rural and urban towns, while the ANC-SACP in government is an opponent, joining the capitalists and imperialists in arguing that workers should wait, should accept lower wages, should wait for decades more for adequate housing, should wait indefinitely for the segregated ghettos to be abolished, that only 15% of ownership of the monopolies should be transformed, that 1000 municipal transport strikers be dismissed for democratic demands, etc, etc. In other words the notion of Joe Slovo and the SACP that the 'democratic' state would go beyond bourgeois democracy is shown to be a blatant lie- its is precisely the alliance with the black middle class and black bourgeoisie that is holding back workers democratic demands, that has led to murder of strikers and premature death of the starving masses in the land where imperialism rakes in unheard of profits.

In his 1988 paper, Joe Slovo argued for an informal alliance with Anglo American, using 'all means' to supposedly 'isolate the most reactionary sector', ie the Afrikaner middle class. With this he raised the Stalinist notion of supposedly 'reactionary' and 'progressive' factions of imperialism, whereas imperialism is reactionary through and through. It was Anglo American and imperialism in general that sustained the NP regime over the years. What Joe Slovo was signalling to Anglo American was that the ANC-SACP was prepared to displace the NP regime so that the ANC could become the new managers for imperialism.

Stalinism has used the same notion (of progressive and reactionary factions of imperialism) to justify support for the murderous Democratic party in the USA as they have supported other imperialists elsewhere.

The only way to achieve equity is to expropriate all imperialist and capitalist assets, without compensation to the capitalists, placing these under workers' control. It is only this step that can enable all the work to be shared among all who can work and place the resources of the land so that we can achieve **'from each according to his/her ability to each according to our needs'**. In this the ANC-SACP government, the lackey of imperialism, is the main obstacle and the united working class, across colour lines, will be the driving force. Only the working class in power, not through parliamentary means, can achieve the total abolition of racism, oppression and exploitation. Such a struggle begins on the national terrain but ends up with the working class taking power in the imperialist centres- this is the path to Socialism.

Workers need to break with the DA, Freedom Front +, ANC-SACP and all capitalist parties!

Forward to a special Cosatu Congress to break with the capitalist ANC and SACP!

Forward to a revolutionary working class party!

Forward to the refounding of the Fourth International!

Forward to Socialism!

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