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SACP Open Letter to NUMSA Special Congress delegates



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DON'T GAMBLE WITH THE UNITY OF COSATU!

LET US NOT WALK AWAY FROM THE STRUGGLE FOR THE HEART AND SOUL OF OUR MOVEMENT AND OUR NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION!

Comrade Delegates,

A huge responsibility rests upon your shoulders in the coming days. It has taken many decades of collective sacrifice to build a powerful, independent and militant trade union movement in our country. Over the decades there have been advances and defeats and more advances. Today that workers' movement is best represented in your federation, the 2 million strong COSATU.

In the midst of an ongoing global capitalist crisis, in the midst of an unceasing offensive against the international working class, in the midst of a complicated and often frustrating democratic transition in SA, COSATU faces many challenges. But whatever the challenges and difficulties, whatever the tactical differences within the federation, the unity of COSATU, based on worker control and a principled programme, must be defended at all costs.

As workers you know how hard it is to build and sustain union organisation in the face of the daily onslaught of the capitalist bosses. It is hard to build, and yet so easy to destroy unity from within if we become factionalist, manipulative, intolerant of fellow workers – if we allow democratic worker control to be hijacked.

The SACP, from its long history and experience of trade union organisation, and also taking into account the current challenges facing the working class and the national democratic revolution, a divided COSATU will only benefit the bosses!

Trade union unity is not about the suppression of non-antagonistic differences within the working class. Throughout its history, NUMSA has been home to many shades of radical thinking. This has often been a strength of your union, not a weakness. The SACP is proud of the many

outstanding communists who have been leaders and rank-and-file militants in NUMSA. But we also respect and acknowledge the co-existence of many others socialist comrades within your ranks. A vibrant and militant NUMSA in which there are contending socialist perspectives is not the primary challenge your union is facing today. Together, as communists and non-communists, let us not allow your union NUMSA to be hi-jacked, to become a pawn in a dangerous leadership gamble that has nothing to do with the interests of the working class - and everything to do with the personal ambitions of a few.

Frustrated personal ambitions

The resignation letter from former NUMSA president, cde Cedric Gina has lifted a veil. It has confirmed what many of us have long known. In the interests of comradely engagement as the SACP we have held back, but with the unity and even survival of COSATU now in danger, we can no longer remain silent:

It is now public knowledge that, in the run-up to the ANC's 2012 Mangaung National Conference, Irvin Jim tried to lobby President Zuma for cde Zwelinzima Vavi to be installed as ANC deputy president. Jim has not denied this engagement. His claim that the Vavi proposal was not his at this meeting has been half-hearted and unconvincing. If these were not his proposals, Jim has not told us and the NUMSA members whose proposals were they? And what mandate did they derive from? Jim's personal ambitions and original game-plan are now plain for all to see.

He hoped for cde Vavi to be positioned to become Deputy State President in 2014, while Jim would take over the general secretary's position in

COSATU. The failure of this un-mandated, behind-the-scenes manoeuvre and Jim's thwarted personal ambitions are what lie behind his current reckless behaviour and posture.

Hypocrisy

While he was trying to install cde Vavi into the number two position in government, the very same Jim has been leading a strident attack on the SACP leadership's participation in government. The SACP has patiently endured these attacks. At first, we said publicly that, while we disagreed, we accepted in good faith the intentions of those raising the matter of deployment of SACP leaders. We gave those raising the matter the benefit of the doubt, hoping (or pretending) they were genuinely concerned about the strength of the Party and not trying to score factional points. We explained that in 2008 there had been a debate within the Party itself about the advantages and disadvantages for the Party in deploying senior leaders. There were different views in the Party. But, in the end, a collective Central Committee and Special National Congress decision was taken to endorse the deployment of senior Party comrades into government to contest this key site of power. The general performance of our comrades in government since then has, we believe, more than vindicated the correctness of the CC decision.

Who is dividing COSATU?

Having failed to install himself as COSATU general secretary, and the prospect of such now seemingly remote, Jim is now determined to split the federation and lead a break-away. He accuses the SACP, the ANC and everyone else of dividing COSATU. But since the beginning of this year, it is Jim who has openly proclaimed a "rupture" in COSATU. He talks about "two camps" in COSATU, about two "trenches". This is factionalist war talk, not the posture of someone concerned to defend the principled unity of the Federation through conducting a robust but constructive debate.

In particular, Jim has sought to manipulate the disciplinary processes involving cde Zwelinzima Vavi, riding on the coat-tails of a working class leader who, whatever his faults, and whatever the outcomes of the various internal COSATU processes under-way, has earned a legitimate popularity within COSATU and beyond.

Instead of working to ensure that COSATU's internal disciplinary and mediation processes are above reproach, and that they help to build unity and draw lessons for the Federation, Jim has gone out of his way to factionalise COSATU on a simple "for-or-against Vavi" platform. He has even taken the absolutely unprecedented step, in the name of "NUMSA", he has taken COSATU to court.

An opportunism that stoops to the lowest level

In seeking to portray himself as the leading champion defender of cde Vavi, Jim's opportunism knows no bounds. When the unfortunate episode of cde Vavi's involvement at work with a subordinate whom he had personally appointed became public, Jim (in the name of "NUMSA") treated us to a garbled reference to the Communist Manifesto- *"for us the working class, in a capitalist society, all law, morality, religion are so many bourgeois prejudices, behind which hides in ambush just as many bourgeois interests ...in a capitalist society, our relationship to our wives and children have no longer anything in common with the bourgeois family relations!"* (This quotation is taken from the NUMSA 11th August Position Paper entitled "Analysis of the Crisis in COSATU".)

This disgraceful piece of opportunism (printed in your name, NUMSA comrades) seeks to displace the real issue in question. What is at stake in the matter of the relationship between cde Vavi and the COSATU employee is not whether they infringed bourgeois family morals, but a very real working class issue – was a female subordinate the victim of patriarchal abuse by a manager? Was the relationship used to misappropriate

COSATU resources? Since this matter is the subject of an internal COSATU disciplinary process, we have no interest in pronouncing on it as the SACP.

However, we do note that once the matter became public, cde Vavi had the decency to apologise, if not to his former subordinate, at least to his wife and family and indeed to COSATU and the working class. Irvin Jim has singularly failed to follow cde Vavi's lead in this regard.

Jim's "NUMSA" versus the real COSATU on the NDP

Jim is a sectarian bully who seeks to drive wedges wherever possible. Anyone who does not agree with his factional positions 100 percent is presented as the "enemy" if not "a sell-out". For instance, Jim constantly seeks to portray the positions of the SACP on the National Development Plan as a "sell-out". He contrasts our positions with the "NUMSA/COSATU" position on the NDP. In point of fact, the SACP and COSATU (the real COSATU, not Jim's portrayal of it) have adopted almost identical positions on the NDP. This is not accidental. There has been close engagement and mutual influencing between our two formations on the NDP. The joint SACP-COSATU stance on the NDP had an important impact on the end August/early September Alliance Summit resolutions. It is not the SACP that is out of step with COSATU on the NDP, but Jim's "NUMSA" leadership clique.

It was not COSATU that boycotted the Alliance Summit. All major COSATU affiliates were present and active in the summit – with the exception of NUMSA, under the sectarian boycotting influence of Jim and his clique.

An opportunism that is prepared to sacrifice workers' interests in the pursuit of personal ambition

With his ambitions frustrated, with the royal road to the general secretary position in COSATU not opening up for him, Jim has become ever more

reckless. He is prepared to risk workers' jobs in his headlong quest for personal publicity.

The SACP unambiguously supported the demands of metal-workers in the recent auto and components sector strikes. However, it is an open secret that while the demands of the workers were absolutely legitimate, something gravely went wrong with the strike. Instead of a militant, short but sharp and massive demonstration of worker strength across the sectors based on proletarian solidarity and unity in action, the strike was fragmented. Sectors that form part of a single auto industry were brought out on strike at different times. The strike in one sector impacted negatively on workers in another sector which was not on strike within the same industry through short-time, lay-offs, loss of wages, and therefore defenseless suffering for workers without any intervention to mitigate the effects of wage loss. In practice, the strike dragged on but was staggered for 8 weeks between the auto assembly and the components sectors, with potential long-term implications for jobs.

The bombastic pseudo-Marxist Jim likes to proclaim that there is an irreconcilable class war between capitalists and workers. We do not disagree. But in the midst of the auto sector strike what did this proletarian warrior have to say? He complained to the commercial media that the Retail Motor Industry bosses were no longer treating him as a friend. *"Speaking at a briefing on Friday, Numsa general secretary Irvin Jim said employers were no longer treating the union as an 'insider' but rather an adversary. This called into question the hard-fought right of collective bargaining, he said."* ("Numsa threat to motor sector collective bargaining", *Business Day*, 30 September 2013). It is not collective bargaining that is called into question, but Jim's own self-proclaimed credentials as a class-struggle warrior. Having clumsily led the strike for his own personal political ambitions, Jim also came running to the much maligned SACP leadership in government asking for assistance to end the strike.

Jim and the EFF - flirting with a fascist right-wing

The bourgeois media like to present Julius Malema and his EFF as militant “left-wingers”. Nothing could be further from the truth. While amongst the rank-and-file membership of EFF there might be genuine if misguided youth, Malema and his side-kick Floyd Shivambu are lumpen-capitalists. Malema and his side-kick have ripped-off public resources. They have eaten their former organisation the ANCYL into bankruptcy. “Commander-in-chief” Malema amassed a fortune in ill-gotten wealth, a farm, mansions, and much more - without ever having done a day’s work. Their call for the “nationalisation” of the mines is little more than an ill-disguised attempt to rip off more resources for personal accumulation. With their swaggering para-militarism, their ill-discipline and cult of personality, these are not left-wingers, but a dangerous right-wing fascism.

They have been expelled by the ANC. They have been disowned by cde Vavi. Almost alone from within our movement, Irvin Jim refuses to distance himself from this dangerous right-wing tendency (On 20 October at Queenstown, Cosatu Local, about Jim said the ANC was draconian, thus he not only undermines the ANC’s independent right to exercise discipline but he identified himself with those expelled by the ANC and who ultimately formed EFF). Why? That is a question that delegates must pose to Jim at the NUMSA special congress. The answer, we suggest, is that these right-wing rabble-rousers are part of the storm-troopers that Jim hopes to deploy to advance his own personal agenda.

Towards the socialist transformation of worker funds

Monopoly capital has manoeuvred very smartly in post-1994 SA. Monopoly capital has built a powerful class hegemony in key sites of economic power. A major strategy has been to seize class control over the multi-billion rands in worker retirement funds, among a variety of other

worker funds. At best this has involved capitalist financial firms deciding on profit-maximising investment strategies for these funds regardless of developmental, job-creating objectives. They receive massive management and consultancy fees for this. But often this parasitic activity has gone much further. There has been widespread pension stripping, and complicated restructuring deals in which fund surpluses are illegally transferred to other businesses putting them out of sight of the pension fund’s registrar and democratic worker control. These manoeuvres have often been facilitated through BEE intermediaries and through the corrupting of some union officials.

The SACP does not know if this has happened with NUMSA and its investment arm. But there are many rumours floating about. It is for this reason that the SACP CC recently called on Irvin Jim and Karl Cloete, in their own interests, to subject themselves to lifestyle audits. Let us clear the air. Worker leadership and members need to be clarified on NUMSA’s investment arm and its relationship to its holdings in Dove (the funerals, insurance and finance company). What is the relationship between NUMSA’s Doves Absa account, the Eriotrax FNB account and Brevity Trade 12? Have the membership of NUMSA, or at the very least, the broader leadership collective, even heard of these entities? What is Jim’s explanation for personally allotting Preference Shares from Brevity Trade to Eriotrax in December 2010? What was the purpose of so doing?

Comrade Cedric Gina, in his resignation letter as NUMSA president, referred to a NUMSA Absa account and his differences with Jim in this regard? What exactly was cde Gina referring to? Can Jim assure NUMSA members that funds earned through Dove and other NUMSA Investment arm activities are not being diverted into a web of personal accounts, businesses and war-chests? What is the role of Khandani Msibi, Mahlubi Mazwi, Mphumzi Maqunqo, and Azwell Banda and their private businesses?

These are some of the questions that, we believe, the rank-and-file membership of NUMSA must pose to the leadership. They must do so in the name of worker democracy and in the name of taking back control of their union and their own funds.

We hope that there are credible answers to these and many other questions. We are not necessarily making any allegations – but, at the very least, NUMSA members and worker leaders deserve clear answers. The NUMSA special congress should call for an independent audit.

We call on NUMSA and COSATU to lead a campaign for an end to the privatisation of worker retirement funds, as a starting point. We call on the federation to spearhead a campaign to socialise the billions and billions of rands in these funds. Let these funds be used to invest in sustainable development, in housing for the working class, in decent public transport, in the job-creating manufacturing sector. It is a scandal that worker funds continue to be part of the capitalist productive investment strike in our country.

Forward to a radical second phase of the democratic transition!

The SACP agrees with COSATU and many in the ANC that all is not well after nearly 20-years of democracy. Serious policy errors were made, particularly with the 1996 GEAR package. The 1994 democratic breakthrough had presented a favourable situation in which to advance immediately with a radical reconstruction and development programme. Our ANC-led alliance had secured an overwhelming electoral victory. Monopoly capital in SA was off-balance, having lost its decades-long white-minority semi-colonial state. The time to press ahead with a radical second phase of the democratic transition should have been immediately in the mid-1990s. Precious time and opportunities have been lost.

Yes, important redistributive gains have been advanced since 1994– social grants, RDP houses, water and sanitation connections, free

schools, progressive labour legislation, and much more. But the main beneficiaries of our 1994 democratic breakthrough have been the big monopoly corporations, and their narrow BEE partners. Inequality has widened and the dominant capitalist system in SA continues to reproduce crisis levels of unemployment.

So what should we do? Some argue that we should break the alliance and form a new “independent workers’ party”. There would be nothing “new” about such a party. It would, at most, be the temporary coming together of a host of squabbling, pre-existing factions, groupings, ambitious personalities, frustrated entryists, and even business unionists. Like other break-aways from the liberation movement, like the PAC, or UDM, or COPE, it would quickly fragment, disappointing starry-eyed followers, with a few leading personalities clinging on to and squabbling over the remnants of power.

The problem with such a break-away is not the threat that it poses in its own right – but rather the fact that it could lead many genuine working class militants into the wilderness. It would draw socialist energies away from contesting for the heart-and-soul of our liberation movement, our national democratic revolution, and democratic state. In practice, it is advancing a strategy of abandoning these key sites of struggle to monopoly capital. Above all, it would seriously divide COSATU. And we again repeat: **The only beneficiaries of a divided COSATU will only be the bosses, not the workers!**

It is time for NUMSA rank-and-file workers to rescue their union from reckless adventurers spurred on by their own personal ambitions. It is time for the workers’ movement in general to take back their unions from the tenderpreneurs and parasites who are leeching off worker funds, from those unelected intellectuals from outside of COSATU and from outside of our movement, who are paid to write divisive speeches and policy documents supposedly in NUMSA’s name.

It is for all of these reasons that the SACP calls upon you, NUMSA Special Congress Delegates:

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SOCIALISM IS THE FUTURE, BUILD IT NOW!

Uniting workers behind the programme of radical transformation: Confronting the challenges facing COSATU

By Aluta Msebenzi

The Struggle For Radical Transformation - Key Challenge Of Our Time

We are involved in a complicated transition period which began in April 1994 when our people led by the ANC attained political power. It is a period which has now entered its second phase for a radical transformation of the economy and a phase which will require transforming the present and persisting apartheid-colonial economy - i.e. shifting the control of the economy from the hands of the minority to the majority.

This is also a period where the workers around the world are under relentless attack from their class enemy - the capitalist class. The attack by the capitalist class is an attempt to respond to the global economic crisis which they inflicted upon themselves. In this attack the workers are blamed for the crisis not of their own making. Everywhere, especially in North America and Europe, the wages of workers are being pushed downwards, pensions and benefits cut. Millions of workers have lost and are still losing their jobs and others are casualised. The public sector is being downsized and privatised.

In South Africa a million workers lost their jobs when the economic crisis began in 2008. Indeed the bosses' profits were also hit hard, especially in the mining and manufacturing sectors. The bosses blame the economic crisis on workers' rights, including strike action, and on the material gains the workers have made in terms of above-inflation wage increases, collective bargaining and so on.

The situation in the mining sector, which led to Marikana tragedy and the emergence of a 'vigilante trade unionism' must be understood within the context of the capitalist attack against the working class and trade union movement as a whole. Attack on NUM in particular is an attack on COSATU in general.

At the same time this is a context where the crisis of capitalism provided the ANC-led government with an opportunity to pursue a programme that builds and strengthens the public sector, rather than privatise and outsource its services; a programme that prioritises job creation and re-industrialisation to reverse policies that de-industrialised the economy. It is a programme committed to expanding basic services to our people and a National Health Insurance that will bring about free and quality national health care to all South Africans. It is a programme that expanded social grants to 16-million of our population.

It is a programme committed to realise a vision of full employment, eliminating poverty and creating an egalitarian society in the next few decades. All these commitments require a radical transformation of our economy driven by the ANC-led Alliance.

All of us in the Alliance agree on the need to pursue the struggle for the second radical phase of transition whose outcome will depend on a programme which unites all our people and in which the working class will play the leading role.

In the present situation, the role of each organisation in the Alliance is therefore critical. For organised working class, the critical task remains that of building a united, powerful, class conscious and militant COSATU. Our Federation has since its formation drew in its ranks hundreds of thousands of workers organised in various sectors of the economy and the state.

In organisational terms, we have always advanced a viewpoint that a class conscious and militant leadership, from the shop-floor upwards, needs to be present in all trade union sectors

organised under the banner of our federation if we are to play the role of a united, powerful, class conscious and militant COSATU.

However, it would be a disaster in the present situation if, in the name of trade union independence, COSATU and its affiliates fail to locate their role within a common Alliance programme for radical transformation.

It would also be disaster if any debate or disagreement within the Federation is allowed to undermine unity and incite a split. We must stand strong for the unity of COSATU. This is the key challenge of our time. We must expose any activity that threatens to split the federation for what it is - a renegade activity against organised workers and our revolution!

Understanding The Role Of The Trade Union Movement In The Present Period And Beyond

The basic character and role

The trade union movement in South Africa has been and remains the best organised mass contingent of the working class, and indeed of the broad progressive forces in our country. Of all mass-based organisations of the working class, a trade union is the **primary organisation**. The trade unions that we have built in South Africa have been, first and foremost, trade unions which are broad as possible by scope of membership and sectors they organise. In the sectors or industries progressive trade unions organise we sought to be open to all workers, irrespective race, gender, geography, income and occupation.

Therefore, the trade union movement seeks to unite all workers on sector or industrial basis, irrespective of the level of political or ideological orientation of its members. **This defines their mass-based character and we must defend this character no matter the level of class conscious of its leading cadre.** It is only by maintaining this basic role and character of the trade union and through workers experience in

trade union struggle that we can provide fertile ground for class and political consciousness among the workers.

However this does not mean that trade unions are apolitical. They must take part in the political struggle, rather than focussing narrowly on basic economic struggle issues like wages and conditions of work. Historically speaking, the trade union movement in South Africa has always understood that racism as perpetrated by apartheid regime and exploitation of the working class by the capitalist class are **two-sides of the same coin**.

Even though the apartheid state was defeated in 1994, the capitalist class still retains monopoly economic power in present-day South Africa. Democracy has delivered majority rule in the political sphere, but democracy has yet to deliver majority rule in the economic sphere. This is why the struggle continues.

The capitalist class uses everything it has in its power, including constant efforts to influence the government by all means, and defending its class domination over the working class. In other words, even when we are building a new state from the ashes of the apartheid state, **the democratic and working class friendly state we are trying to build is daily contested by the capitalist class**.

This is why the trade union movement in South Africa, in post-apartheid South Africa, has repeatedly rejected the calls from its detractors to pull-out of the broader **political conflict**. Indeed we cannot stand aside, in the name of trade union independence, when the capitalist class forces (aided by the commercial media and the DA) launch an offensive against our own government.

If the trade union movement rejects being part of the broader alliance, as Comrade Joe Slovo once wrote, they '*would in fact be surrendering the leadership of the national struggle to the upper and middle strata*'. **Indeed, it is only through participation of the trade union**

movement in the national liberation alliance that the leadership and hegemonic role of the working class in the present phase of radical transformation can be strengthened.

The above perspective helps us not to confuse the relationship between the **general** political leadership of the working class with the **specific** trade union leadership. We now turn to this matter.

Trade union struggle and political leadership of the working class

We have noted that trade union struggle cannot be separated from the struggle for national democratic revolution and for socialism. In this context the line between trade union politics and overall leadership of working class and society as a whole may not, in practice, appear clearer. However there is distinction between the specific trade union politics and general leadership of the revolution. **A trade union movement which attempts to play these two roles will end up committing suicide, since it would have liquidated its role and character as broad mass democratic worker organisation.** It is impossible, therefore, for a trade union, including trade union federation, to attempt to play a role of revolutionary political vanguard of the working class.

In the present situation an unfortunate **workerist tendency has re-surfaced within the ranks of our trade union movement that tends to conduct itself as a vanguard political party.** We are saying this tendency has resurfaced because there were times in the history of the working class movement - such as the 1980s - when this tendency acquired some importance within the trade union movement, first in FOSATU and subsequently in early COSATU. One of the notions advanced by this tendency has been that **trade unions should act as political parties.** This notion was so discredited that it had few, if any, open supporters.

Now we see this workerist-tendency emerging in a new form - this time the tendency seeks

to misappropriate our struggle languages, our communist heritage and slogans in order to position a 'workerist political party' for the trade union movement.

The Party of the working class and COSATU

COSATU has over many years since its formation recognised the true political leadership role of the vanguard of the working class - the South African Communist Party (SACP). It is through the SACP - the party committed to building Socialism in South Africa - that the workers seek political guidance for the challenges they face and the 'line of march' with regard to the general political tasks of the working class as whole.

Indeed, South African communists have for many decades played a central role in building the revolutionary trade union movement. COSATU is what it is now precisely of the outstanding contribution of South African communists. Therefore it is no surprise that within the trade union movement, many communists are occupying leading positions, as shop stewards, provincial and national leaders, as well as officials, and are expected to lead the workers by example. **They are expected be the first to strive for maximum unity of the workers and advancing the day-to-day demands of the workers, respect the internal discipline and internal processes of a trade union organisation.**

Building class consciousness, socialist organisation and socialist activism, requires amongst others, joint political programmes between the SACP and COSATU and its affiliates, so as to strengthen the militant and campaigning working class movement committed to the struggle for national democracy and socialism.

The economic and political struggle

We have already noted that workers in South Africa have learned through struggle experience that trade unions cannot stand and develop outside of the political movement. By connecting the trade unions with the political movement, the

workers were basically rejecting the advocates of workerism in South Africa. It was really in the 1980s that workerism sought to disconnect the struggle of the workers at the workplace from the struggle at the community level. That idea never received any serious support from the workers. Thus workers learned very well the connection between politics and economics.

It is true that during the 1980s trade union leaders in FOSATU (the predecessor to COSATU) and a number of them with Trotskyite (and anarchist) background, did propose that trade unions should remain neutral in politics. They argued that workers must focus on the workplace issues and not get involved in struggles at the community level. **In advancing this argument, the workerist tendency within the trade union movement sought to politically and ideologically separate the trade union movement from the broader national liberation movement led by the ANC.**

In other words their call for workers to be neutral on politics was not about 'political neutrality', but an attempt to build an independent workerist political base away from our ANC-led broader movement. Indeed over time, this project came to be known as Worker(ist) Party project, which was pursued even inside COSATU.

But we need to emphasise that this workerist party project, throughout the history of COSATU, remained **a minority project**. It has never at any point enjoyed popular influence within trade unionism and was confined to few unions, particularly NUMSA.

Being independent and being part of the Alliance

The whole perspective of trade union 'independence' is closely related to what we said above, an attempt to divide the political and the economic. It is based on a view that a trade union movement, no matter what circumstances, must have a different policy from that of the ANC and the government it leads. Its argument, goes like

this 'If you do not have a different policy, then you are not independent. Being oppositional means being independent'.

This is of course nonsensical and represents a liberal notion of 'independence'. A trade union independence we have always believed in is one that neither transforms COSATU into a conveyor belt for the SACP or ANC. The trade union independence we believe in is one that builds a militant COSATU which takes up day-to-day struggles of the workers.

This independent COSATU we believe in, however, cannot be opposed to the Alliance and therefore there is no contradiction of being independent and being part of the Alliance. There has been no such before and there is none today.

The ANC and COSATU

We have noted the relationship of the SACP and COSATU, but what of the ANC and trade union movement? First of all, we need to understand the **basic character of the ANC as a multi-class organisation - presenting no single ideology or class. As the head of the national liberation alliance and primary representative of all the oppressed, the ANC welcomes within its ranks all from whatever class they come who support and are ready to implement the strategic vision of the Freedom Charter.**

The overwhelming majority and most strategically placed of our people are workers. The ANC therefore recognises the leading role of the working class. So participation of the workers in the ranks of the ANC is one of the important ways in which the working class plays its role in the national democratic revolution. **But the ANC is not the political vanguard of the working class. If it seeks to play such role, it will lose its broad-based ('broad-church') character.** The ANC is a multi-class organisation **with working class bias** - biased to their interests and aspirations.

It is precisely of these defining characteristics of the ANC that the progressive trade union movement has always encouraged workers to

swell its ranks. Therefore, it is expected that the leading cadre in the trade union movement should also be an active member of the ANC. **We have understood that the leading role of workers in the national democratic revolution include active participation in the ANC, including contesting for leadership positions in the ANC, through ANC's internal democratic process. Without such leadership, to paraphrase Comrade Joe Slovo, we will be surrendering class leadership of the national democratic revolution to the bourgeoisie, with all its consequences for the working class.**

We have noted above that there is no contradiction of being independent and being part of the ANC-led Alliance. In contrast, the liberal notion of trade union independence has been to reject the active role of worker leaders in our movement.

COSATU and so called Civil Society

As we have noted, the liberal notion of trade union independence, ironically, tends to service the agenda of workerism. In the same token it serves the agenda of the forces of opposition and so-called civil society NGOs, who have relentlessly campaigned to separate COSATU from the Alliance.

But who is 'civil society'?

'Civil society' is not a homogenous entity - it is made of classes and strata in our divided society. As Comrade James Petras put it, those who are talking about 'civil society' (who are mainly NGOers) tend to 'obscure these class divisions, class exploitation and class struggle that polarizes contemporary society'. Petras observed how this obscured concept of 'civil society' conveniently facilitates 'NGO collaboration with capitalist interests which finances their institutions...'

However, there are NGOs which are largely formed to support revolutionary or progressive movements and do not compete with or oppose these movements.

In South Africa we do find a number of NGOs

- involved in 'constitutional rights', 'governance' and so on which are openly right-wing, liberal, neo- and semi-liberal. They are opposed to the agenda of the ANC-led Alliance.

We are not concerned with the above NGOs, for now. We want to focus on those NGOs which go under the brand 'left', 'progressive' and 'democratic'. A number of these NGOs are orbiting around COSATU. They consist of former trade unionists, political activists and other individuals of the petty-bourgeois type. What is sometimes called 'issue-based' movements, are not actually mass-based movements, but NGOs that provide intellectual support to 'grassroots activists'.

Subordinating trade union leadership to NGOs

Indeed, it is important to recognise that there are NGOs which do criticise neo-liberal policies, the IMF and so on, and therefore it will be simplistic to club them together with those that collaborate with capitalist interests. **But even in such circumstances, the trade union movement must be vigilant against the agendas or projects of these 'progressive NGOs' which seek to subordinate trade union leaders to their organisations.** This is the case where the agenda in the "civil society" campaigns, in which the trade union movement is a participant, is determined by these "progressive NGOs". **In fact in many cases, where campaigns are led and determined by the trade union movement, NGOs are nowhere to be seen or heard of.**

In recent period, there are times when the trade union movement's leadership got caught up in agenda set and driven by "progressive NGOs" rather than the trade union movement itself such as those driven by Section 27 and Equal Education. Although some of these NGOs patronize COSATU by falsely describing the Federation as the "vanguard of civil society", they do this to separate the Federation from our ANC-led movement, and to gain the legitimacy of their actions. And some of the public statements of some of COSATU's leadership tended to play into the hands of this agenda.

The kinds of NGOs we need to forge relations with are those that mainly exist to support the work and struggles of the trade union movement. They should not seek to compete with or displace the voice of the trade union movement. These are NGOs which must be rooted inside the mass democratic movements led by the ANC-led Alliance to ensure that their projects are not determined by external donors, but by the mass-based organisation themselves.

Confronting the challenges facing COSATU

We have presented the major political challenge of our time - the struggle for radical transformation as we enter the second phase of post-1994 transition in our national democratic revolution - and we have identified the strategic role of the revolutionary trade union movement under the banner of COSATU in such struggle. We have also clarified the tendencies within our trade union movement which seek to turn COSATU into what it is not.

These tendencies distort not only the role of trade union movement in the current period, but consequently the relationship between COSATU and the Party of the Working Class (the SACP) and the head of our national liberation alliance (the ANC). As a result the leadership of the trade union movement face the danger of falling into the agenda of our class enemies - to separate COSATU from the Alliance, and in fact some have already fallen into this agenda. They do this by giving COSATU the mantle of 'vanguard of civil society', or at worse to do the impossible - transforming COSATU into some kind of workersist political organisation.

Let us also note that we are talking about a tendency and not this or that individual. This characterisation of tendencies and analysis helps us to identify clear tasks we need to carry out in order to root out these destructive tendencies, irrespective of the individuals involved. Where there is ideological and political rupture within some in the COSATU leadership with the tradition and role of the progressive trade union

movement, this too must be exposed as we have done in this intervention.

It is clear that the strategic direction of COSATU is contested and we must strike to the core of those who seek to divide our beloved 'parliament of the workers'.

Uniting our Federation - what do we mean?

The challenges facing COSATU, therefore, have to be confronted and they are being confronted. And they all revolve around the question of uniting the Federation and isolating forces that seek to steal our federation:

Unity of COSATU means collective leadership: No leader can conduct himself or herself outside of the collective or disregard the decisions of the collective, or demand to be judged by his or her own values instead of those set by the collective. In doing so - i.e. the contrary, such a leader will immediately undermine the internal processes of the organisation and elevate himself or herself above the organisation - often demonstrated by a public posture that paints the picture the organisation than it is. Such leaders sometimes project themselves as above the organisation and are liable to be co-opted into anti-movement agendas (like the tendency we have presented above), wittingly or unwittingly.

We have said collective decision means adhering to the decisions arrived at by the collective and democratically: This include matters related to deployment. Deployment as opposed to employment is not a matter of choice of an individual. Leaders do not choose where and when they should be deployed, it is structures of organisation at appropriate levels which decide where and when a comrade should be deployed.

Unity means isolating those against unity! It is an open secret that there are elements (of syndicalist type) within the Federation who are basically inciting a split within the Federation. They opportunistically use that current situation

in the Federation to justify separation from COSATU and the Alliance as whole. These elements must be roundly condemned and exposed for what they are - renegades bent on destroying our federation and weakening our revolution.

Unity, above all, must be based on a programme: This means we can only unite our federation if we take up the concerns and needs of the workers around a programme committed for a radical transformation. Aspects of this programme are contained in our COSATU Congress resolutions and the 2015 Plan. This programme is further taken forward through the Alliance, especially the recent Alliance Economic

Summit which provides a basis for a common Alliance programme beyond 2014 elections.

Unity means unconditional support for ANC decisive majority victory in 2014! It means mobilisation of a massive campaign force from COSATU and its affiliates, to ensure not only the Election Manifesto reflects working class bias, but that we deliver a more than 70% landslide victory against forces of reaction and doom!

Aluta Msebenzi is an all-round Alliance member of a Cosatu affiliated trade union, the ANC and the SACP, and writes in her personal capacity.

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110 Cnr Jorissen and Simmond Street
Moses Kotane Floor, COSATU House, Braamfontein 2001
Tel: 011 339 3621/2 Fax 011 339 4244
e-mail: info@sacp.org.za