



**Numsa Special CC
11th August 2013
Pretoria.**

**Numsa Central Committee – Position Paper – Analysis of the Crisis in
Cosatu: “Cosatu at the Crossroads.”**

“The People Shall Share in the Country’s Wealth!

The national wealth of our country, the heritage of South Africans, shall be restored to the people; The mineral wealth beneath the soil, the Banks and monopoly industry shall be transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole; All other industry and trade shall be controlled to assist the wellbeing of the people; All people shall have equal rights to trade where they choose, to manufacture and to enter all trades, crafts and professions.”

(The Freedom Charter, 1955)

*“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.”***

(ANC, Morogoro, 1969)

*“The proletarian is without property; his relation to his wife and children has no longer anything in common with the bourgeois family relations; modern industry labour, modern subjection to capital, the same in England as in France, in America as in Germany, has stripped him of every trace of national character. **Law, morality, religion, are to him so many bourgeois prejudices, behind which lurk in ambush just as many bourgeois interests.”***

(The Communist Manifesto, 1848)

“The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.”

(The Communist Manifesto, 1848)

A. Introduction

No one can pretend anymore that all is well in Cosatu. Cosatu is faced with a crisis whose size is such that if not properly resolved can destroy the federation. For the first time since 1994, Cosatu faces the real danger of imploding.

What are the causes and sources of the crisis in Cosatu?

In this input, we present the Numsa NOBs analyses and reflections on the causes and sources of the crisis in Cosatu, with a view to assisting this Special Central Committee to prepare for, and mandate it delegates to, the Cosatu Special CEC scheduled for the 14th of August 2013.

We are happy to report that the NOBs of Numsa have not only fully engaged directly with the crisis in Cosatu, but also formally met on the 8th of August 2013 to share their views and produce a concrete analysis of the crisis in Cosatu.

The NOBs are convinced that any simplistic explanations, and therefore simple responses to the crisis, without first locating the crisis in Cosatu in its proper international, continental and South African contexts, and more specifically in the crisis in the ANC led Alliance will fail first to help us to understand what is happening in Cosatu, and secondly, will not help us to respond effectively to the crisis.

In this Document the NOBs present their collective views and analysis of the crisis in Cosatu, without being exhaustive of such an analysis.

B. The Causes and Sources of the Crisis in Cosatu

1. We think that it is impossible to understand what is happening in Cosatu without first understanding what is happening to the world capitalist system, and the class struggles that are happening in the world, in Africa and in South Africa itself.
2. It is very tempting, and a very dangerous and lazy thing to do, to reduce the crisis in Cosatu to the dissatisfaction of several leaders of Cosatu affiliates against Comrade Vavi, and now, to further simply jump on the sexual misadventure of Comrade Vavi and pretend that removing Comrade Zwelinzima Vavi from Cosatu will resolve the problems at Cosatu.
3. After deep reflections and debates, the NOBs have been able to trace the sources and causes of the problems and crisis in Cosatu in the international system of capitalism and how this crisis of global capitalism plays itself out in Africa, South Africa and in the Alliance itself.

4. As a Socialist orientated trade union formation deeply rooted in Marxist-Leninist theoretical, ideological, political and cultural traditions, Numsa prides itself in always relying on solid class analysis – understanding society and any social phenomena from a working class perspective – the NOBs have faithfully traced the sources and causes of the crisis in Cosatu to their logical origins: ***capitalism and the failure of the Alliance to pursue consistently a socialist oriented National Democratic Revolution (NDR).***
5. There is a real rupture in the Alliance, and therefore in Cosatu, the ANC and the SACP between the forces of socialism and the forces of neoliberal capitalism in whatever form.
6. In this Document we focus on the expression of this rupture between the socialist forces and the neoliberal capitalist forces in Cosatu. We can do the same analysis for what is happening in the ANC and the SACP.

A. Global sources and causes of the crisis

1. The Communist Manifesto says this about human history:

“The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.”

2. Today, we live in a capitalist world. There are two main classes in the capitalist system: the working class and the capitalist class. The capitalist class owns and controls the means of production. The working class live by selling their labour power to the capitalist class, by getting jobs.
3. There is permanent warfare, permanent class struggle, between the working class and the capitalist class. The capitalist class is dominant and it oppresses and exploits the working class. This class struggle is about the control and ownership of what labour – the working class – produce.
4. The capitalist class produces for profits and profits only. The capitalist system is a system dominated by production for profits, and not to satisfy human needs, no matter how well concealed this fact may be.
5. Cosatu, as a socialist trade union federation, fights not only for the immediate demands of the working class at the shopfloor; it also fights for the abolition of the world capitalist system and its replacement by a workers civilisation in which production and work will be for satisfying human needs, and the protection and sustainability of our environments.

6. All the Congresses of Cosatu confirm and affirm this fact: ***that Cosatu is a socialist trade union federation which fights to abolish the evil system of capitalism.***
7. It is important to understand the significance of the socialist orientation, traditions and socialist revolutionary culture of Cosatu because the crisis in Cosatu today is in fact about ***whether or not Cosatu should continue to be a socialist trade union federation or it should simply become a yellow capitalist federation of the workers or a labour desk of the bourgeoisie.***
8. The fights and crisis in Cosatu are about those who want Cosatu to continue to be a revolutionary socialist trade union federation of the working class or to be reduced into just any other trade union federation in a capitalist country, however cleverly concealed this fact may be.
9. It is from this standpoint that Numsa, a consistent industrial revolutionary socialist trade union, fights to defend the revolutionary socialist character of the federation.
10. In all our analyses and strategies, we are guided by our Numsa Constitution which charges us to fight for world victory of the working class over the world capitalist forces which oppress and exploit the world working class.
11. In all our work, we are motivated by the greater struggle we, the working class, globally, are waging against the international capitalist class which oppresses and exploits the world peoples in general and the world working class in particular.
12. Ours is a principled struggle to advance and win working class power in the workplace, in our communities and in all society. It is this understanding of revolutionary trade unionism that impels us seriously debate the political instruments through which the working class directly exercise political power beyond the workplace.
13. Thus you will easily notice that because we fight everywhere in the world to advance and win working class power, Numsa supports the global unity of the working class as a matter of cardinal working class principle, but also advances the unity of socialist formations of the world working class. It is from this standpoint that we oppose any violence and fights among the working class, such as we did in Marikana.
14. Inside Cosatu today, there are those who, consciously or unconsciously, are working very hard to turn Cosatu into a capitalist friendly federation just as Numsa is working very hard to defend the socialist orientation and traditions of Cosatu. Comrade Vavi must be understood as a representative of the socialist camp in Cosatu.
15. ***The rupture in Cosatu is between forces of capitalism and forces of socialism.***

B. Continental location of the crisis

1. Africa has experienced and suffered slavery, colonialism, and now neo-colonialism.
2. During the slave trade period, more than 30 million Africans were captured from Africa and shipped to the United States of America and Europe, to work as unpaid labourers on farms, mines, factories and in homes. They were owned in the same way that one can own a tractor.
3. Some of the slavery took place in Africa itself. In South Africa, Africans and the Khoisan people were captured and enslaved, especially in present day Western Cape. The Indian and Malay population arrived in South Africa as indentured labourers and slaves, also in the service of European capitalism.
4. Capitalist colonialism was the period of Western capitalism's expansion in the world. Whole peoples and continents were turned into colonial possessions of capitalist powers in Europe.
5. Africa was literally divided up between European colonial powers and capitalists, leading to the chaotic boundaries that today exist between the different countries in Africa.
6. Cosatu, as a socialist formation fights to destroy capitalism and its legacy on the continent. It is from this standpoint in fact that Cosatu is in an alliance with the African National Congress and the South African Communist party – to fight colonialism and capitalism, simultaneously.
7. Post 1994, Cosatu, later joined by the SACP, fought side by side the capitalist neoliberal trajectory which the ANC leadership had adopted, especially through their macro-economic policy called GEAR.
8. GEAR effectively overthrew and replaced the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), which, if fully implemented, would have provided greater possibilities for a socialist National Democratic Revolution.
9. GEAR not only deepened and entrenched South African capitalism; it also laid the grounds for deepening imperialist domination in South Africa. As we will explain below on the location of the crisis in Cosatu in South Africa itself, GEAR made the implementation of the Freedom Charter virtually impossible.
10. To fight capitalism and colonialism in South Africa, Cosatu supports the radical implementation of the Freedom Charter – the radical programme which forms the basis for the formation and continued existence of the ANC led alliance.

11. In Cosatu today, there are those who, consciously or unconsciously, oppose the struggle against capitalism and colonialism because they oppose the radical, immediate and full implementation of the Freedom Charter. On the other hand, together with Numsa, there are those in Cosatu who are demanding the full and radical implementation of the Freedom Charter.
12. In 1956, the ANC adopted the Freedom Charter. The Freedom Charter says the following, as the only basis for ending colonial economic domination and to destroy the power of monopoly capitalism in South Africa:

“The People Shall Share in the Country’s Wealth!
The national wealth of our country, the heritage of South Africans, shall be restored to the people; The mineral wealth beneath the soil, the Banks and monopoly industry shall be transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole; All other industry and trade shall be controlled to assist the wellbeing of the people; All people shall have equal rights to trade where they choose, to manufacture and to enter all trades, crafts and professions.”
13. Comrade Vavi unequivocally supports the radical implementation of the Freedom Charter, as the only way to resolve the crisis of capitalism and colonialism in South Africa and its undying effects of mass unemployment, massive poverty and grotesque inequalities.
14. Almost two decades into our “democracy”, evidence shows that despite some changes, the colonial conditions of the majority of the people of South Africa remain intact.
15. ***The rupture in Cosatu is between those who are for the continuation of capitalism and colonialism in South Africa and those who are against.***

C. National sources and causes of the crisis

1. In 1969, in Tanzania, Morogoro, the ANC said the following, in its Strategy and Tactics Document:

*“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.**”*

2. Having adopted the Freedom Charter in 1956, it was only logical that the ANC should aim to eliminate racial supremacy by destroying white dominance in the economy.
3. Some 101 years ago, the African National Congress was formed as a reaction to the formation of the white Union of South Africa – a union between Afrikaner and British settlers in South Africa.
4. Like all anti-colonial formations, the ANC was formed to restore the lost social and economic sovereignty of the African people, when the racist white settlers formed their Union.
5. All anti colonial liberation struggles are fought to defeat and end colonial occupation and restore economic and social sovereignty to the colonised. They are premised on the return of the means and forces of production to the control of the indigenous population.
6. In South Africa, recognising that the settlers had every right to belong to South Africa, in 1955, the anti-colonial movement produced and adopted the Freedom Charter as a blue print to end the brutality and exploitation of South African colonial capitalism.
7. The Freedom Charter became the programme upon which the ANC led Alliance was constructed, and built.
8. The 1994 “democratic breakthrough” did not nullify or render irrelevant the Freedom Charter as the basis of the Alliance. The Freedom Charter remains the most popular codification of the demands of the colonised people.
9. Further, the Freedom Charter has come to be recognised as the only viable basis for the construction of a truly democratic South Africa.
10. The 1994 “democratic breakthrough” has since come to be recognised as a major compromise on the part of the democratic forces in general and the liberation movement as led by the ANC in particular.
11. The adoption of GEAR in 1996 has proved to have been a measure that has entrenched South African racist capitalism and prevented the elimination of white domination in South Africa.
12. GEAR has further opened up South Africa to rapid imperialist penetration and allowed South African monopoly capitalism to evade expropriation and to avoid taking any responsibility for the colonial system, thus in fact GEAR negated one of the fundamental objectives of any liberation struggle – the elimination of imperialism.

13. Cosatu, later joined by the SACP, struggled against GEAR and its key proponents in the ANC, and in 2007, won some partial victories by defending the primacy of the ANC led alliance and removing from the leadership of the ANC key proponents of GEAR including Thabo Mbeki.
14. At the ANC Conference in Polokwane, Cosatu was relatively pleased at the partial defeat of GEAR and its supporters, and at the re-establishment of the centrality alliance, and with some of the key policy resolutions of the ANC.
15. The migration into government of a major portion of the leadership of the SACP, including the two general secretaries, soon proved to be disastrous, and perhaps became the first major open signal of the “rupture” as those deployed in government found themselves inevitably having to defend the capitalist trajectory and behaviour of the ANC government.
16. Before 2007, all those in the SACP who assumed high government office could easily be dealt with during SACP Congresses. To prevent this from happening after 2007, the SACP has effected several changes to its Constitution including allowing for the general secretary to take up a full time job and increasing the number of deputy general secretaries.
17. Both Cosatu and the SACP’s efforts to transform the relationships inside the ANC led alliance in relation to state power have all evaporated: neither a “reconfigured alliance” nor an Alliance Pact have materialised.
18. The adoption, at the ANC Mangaung Conference of the National Development Plan – a 20 year plan – without the full ANC led alliance formal endorsement is perhaps the ultimate ideological expression of the victory of the forces of neoliberal capitalism over the forces of socialism within the national liberation movement.
19. Further, the NDP neither attacks the monopoly capitalist and colonial foundations of the South African economy and society, nor does it offer any radical policy departures from GEAR. Rather, it in fact in many key areas seeks to fast track the penetration of imperialism into South Africa and whittles down the gains won by the working class since 1994.
20. The ideological degeneration of the national liberation movement also finds expression in its incapacity to see the glaring identities between the NDP and the DA policies. There is a deliberate attempt, not less by the SACP, to downplay and to deny the similarities between the ANC’s NDP and DA policies. Since the ANC has embraced the NDP, such a development marks a decisive convergence between the ANC and the DA when it comes to substantive economic policy questions.
21. The SACP now finds itself in a very awkward and extremely embarrassing place with regard to the NDP, since the bulk of its senior leaders are embedded in government.

It cannot reject and condemn the capitalist neoliberal NDP. Thus it proposes a woolly response and attempts to deny that the NDP is in fact a “PLAN” in spite of what the key leaders of the ANC consistently claims: ***that the NDP is now a monumental ANC PLAN.***

22. Numsa has produced not only a critique of the Draft NDP, but of the NDP itself exposing its DA, GEAR and neoliberal groundings.
23. Comrade Vavi has pronounced against the NDP in no uncertain terms as not being any different from GEAR.
24. The rupture in Cosatu is between those who, for whatever reasons including the personal defence of careers in the ANC and its government, cannot and do not want to defend Cosatu in its denunciation of the NDP and those who are against the NDP.
25. ***Inevitably, the rupture in Cosatu is between those who want to see a thoroughgoing implementation of the Freedom Charter, thus a rejection of the GEAR that the NDP is, and those who are consciously or unconsciously defending South African capitalism and imperialism by defending the NDP and not openly supporting the implementation of the Freedom Charter, especially its nationalisation demands.***

D. Expression of the crisis in Cosatu

1. We have recently seen how hard it has become for the General Secretary of Cosatu to even produce and present an honest Cosatu Political Report in its Congress, without both the ANC and the SACP becoming very unhappy with any criticism of the anti working class trajectory of post 2007 behaviour of the ANC in government.
2. A debate in Cosatu over whether the NDR is on track was heavily monitored and attended by senior leaders of the ANC and SACP, principally to ensure that Cosatu made the pronouncement that the NDR was on track.
3. Cosatu’s Socio-Economic Report however, statistically and clearly proves that the NDR was long derailed and is not on track.
4. The General Secretary of Cosatu has expressed himself, in line with Cosatu Constitutional positions, against the failings, capitalist orientation and corruption of the ANC government pre and post 2007.
5. The ANC elections processes before Mangaung generated a big national debate, especially as the Deputy President of the ANC and government was clearly going to contest the incumbent. Furthermore, there was massive policy contestation between the NDP and the pro Freedom Charter proponents.

6. There were major problems in the ANCYL, which led to the expulsions and suspensions of several national leaders of the ANCYL.
7. Major labour challenges emerged in the mining sector leading to the first post 1994 South African government massacre of the working class in favour of stability on the mines, for the mine bosses.
8. The crisis in the mining sector has led to a major internal crisis in our sister union the NUM, to its major haemorrhaging of members.
9. The crisis in the mining sector has seen the birth of a socialist formation, the Socialist and Workers Party, WASP and the emergence of the Association of Mining and Construction Unions (AMCU).
10. While the ANC Policy Conference endorsed nationalisation of strategic economic sectors, Mangaung “buried” nationalisation and adopted the NDP, in support of “bringing policy certainty” and pleasing capitalists (investors) and global capitalist credit ratings.
11. Our analysis at Numsa is that Mangaung was a victory for capitalism.
12. Inside Cosatu, a rump of the leadership of Cosatu affiliates with close links to the SACP in government and who are also either now national leaders in the ANC or are close to national leaders in the ANC have taken it upon themselves to fight to have a pro capitalist orientated Cosatu.
13. Our General Secretary – Comrade Irvin Jim and the General Secretary of Cosatu – Comrade Vavi refused to be drawn into the NEC of the ANC, recognising that it was going to be impossible to serve Cosatu and the working class fully, should they have agreed to serve on the NEC of the ANC.
14. The Cosatu 11th Congress was heavily contested between those who wanted Cosatu to be reduced into a labour desk and those who wanted Cosatu to remain loyal and faithful to its socialist traditions.
15. Comrade Vavi was seen as not being loyal to the current orientation of the ANC and SACP, and thus he was to be removed through the ballot.
16. Realising that the ballot was not going to succeed to remove Comrade Vavi and rather this would have opened up space for the pro current orientation of the SACP and ANC, this faction suddenly about turned and pushed for retention of all the top leaders of Cosatu.

17. Immediately after the 11th Congress of Cosatu in which Comrade Vavi was elected unopposed, the faction that wanted Vavi out soon launched their offensive, and this time they wanted to use internal processes of Cosatu, well removed from the ordinary membership, to remove Vavi. Thus we now have the so called facilitated process.
18. In this Document, it is important to note how, after the rape charges have been quickly withdrawn, the faction that wanted Comrade Vavi out of Cosatu quickly moved to call for a Special Cosatu CEC in order to migrate the sexual charges into new offences against the Cosatu GS for its own purposes.
19. *Those who want Vavi out of Cosatu want a Cosatu which will be a “toy telephone”, a “labour desk,” a pro capitalist Cosatu and those who are defending Cosatu want a revolutionary socialist, anti colonialist and anti-imperialist Cosatu.*

E. Numsa’s strategic and revolutionary response to the crisis in Cosatu

1. While our analysis above is not exhaustive, it covers all the main elements. We have traced the causes and sources of the challenges and crisis in Cosatu to global capitalism and how we experience this capitalism in Africa and South Africa and in Cosatu itself.
2. We have illustrated how the ANC and the SACP, through the negotiated democratic breakthrough processes, to GEAR to the NDP have led to the situation in which Cosatu now is a heavily contested federation between the pro socialist and pro capitalist forces, whether individuals in these camps actually know this or not.
3. In all our work and analyses, Numsa has been guided, unfailingly, by our Marxist-Leninist socialist revolutionary theory and traditions. We have been motivated to achieve the following goals:
 - Defend and protect the integrity of constitutional decisions of Cosatu
 - Defend and advance the socialist traditions and trajectory of Cosatu
 - Prevent the conversion of Cosatu into a labour desk
 - Defend and protect the revolutionary leadership of Cosatu
 - Defend the unity of the federation
 - Ultimately, defend Cosatu itself from being destroyed!

4. On the 14th of August 2013, a Special CEC of Cosatu was called to resolve the matter, purportedly, of the future of Comrade Vavi in Cosatu, after the sexual charges, ***when in fact what is in question is the continuing socialist and anti colonialist character and traditions of Cosatu!***
5. At Numsa, we have refused to be bullied into sacrificing a Comrade and a socialist revolutionary Cosatu at the altar of bourgeois “morality”. The Communist Manifesto teaches us that:

“The proletariat is without property; his relation to his wife and children has no longer anything in common with the bourgeois family relations; modern industry labour, modern subjection to capital, the same in England as in France, in America as in Germany, has stripped him of every trace of national character. Law, morality, religion, are to him so many bourgeois prejudices, behind which lurk in ambush just as many bourgeois interests.”
6. We see here that 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.***
7. And precisely because we the working class have no property (that type which is used to exploit labour) in a capitalist society, our ***relationship to our wives and children have no longer anything in common with the bourgeois family relations!*** This fact is actually worsened in South Africa because of our racial capitalist past.
8. The Numsa NOBs decided to call an urgent Special Numsa Central Committee in order to share this analysis and to seek mandates for its Cosatu CEC delegates.
9. These are historic moments. Our choices are very clear: defend Cosatu as a socialist trade union federation or turn it into a yellow capitalist labour desk.

F. What is to be done?

If we are defeated in this struggle, what will our next step be? What is to be done? This is the question the Numsa special congress must also apply its mind to. There are some specific questions:

1. If the Cosatu National Office Bearers convene the Special National Congress, what should we aim to achieve in that Congress to release Cosatu from paralysis, reclaim it as a militant federation and transform it into an independent, militant, revolutionary, socialist oriented, anti-imperialist, worker controlled and democratic organisation?
2. What can we all do now, at a local, regional and national level, to make sure that we rebuild a militant, revolutionary Cosatu so that our revolutionary positions dominate the Cosatu special congress?

3. How can we empower Numsa comrades who occupy Cosatu positions to build the revolutionary organisation we are trying to build?
4. If all efforts fails to reclaim and re-engineer Cosatu as an independent, militant, revolutionary, socialist oriented, anti-imperialist, worker controlled and democratic organisation, what do we do?
5. If we do not succeed in getting the Cosatu Special National Congress convened, what do we do?

End.