



A Chilean student at the head of a May Day protest in Santiago against privatisation of tertiary education and the removal of a previous ban on profit making in Chilean higher education



Voice of the South African
Communist Party

Umsebenzi

May 2018 Day

**Our Second
International
Photographic
Round-up**

SACP MAY DAY MESSAGE

Forward to universal emancipation!

Forward to decent work, working class unity and democratic worker control!

WHEN we marked May Day last year, 2017, we spoke of “state capture”. We said the parasitic looting of public resources was the most immediate, and the gravest threat to our democracy.

What was behind “state capture”? We said – ‘Connect the dots’. And so we connected the dots from the many scandals on the front pages of the newspapers. In Eskom some of the dots pointed to former comrades who had lost their moral compass, like Brian Molefe. They pointed to scoundrels and premier league leaders who had auctioned their provinces to the highest bidders.

The dots ran through crooked Cash Paymaster Services’ tenders to pay out social grants. There were dots that implicated Roy Moodley, whose Siyangena company was the major beneficiary in a R4bn tender to supply security surveillance at Metrorail stations that was never installed. It was the same Roy Moodley who had a serving national president on his company’s payroll.

A budget in the Free State to support emerging black farmers was diverted into a dairy farm in Vrede owned by a foreigner with no background in farming. Some of that money also went to a private wedding party flown out from India via a strategic national key point – Waterkloof Airforce Base – making fools of our national sovereignty.

The dots point to money flowing through a spider’s web of private bank accounts in South Africa and miraculously finding their way to Dubai, thanks, in part, to the Indian public Bank of Baroda.

The number two in the South African Revenue Services and his girlfriend were caught depositing huge piles of unaccounted for cash into their private bank accounts. And yet they went unpunished for months.

As we followed the dots, increasingly they pointed in one direction, our country was being stolen from under our noses by the Guptas, in association with the family, the friends, the girlfriends, the Dudu Myenis, and associates of former president, Jacob Zuma.

Cabinet appointments were being made in Saxonwold and not in the Union Buildings. A former minister, like Mosebengi Zwane was reporting directly to the Guptas. We were on the verge of signing a nuclear power deal with the Russians that would have bankrupted our country, and sent us packing into the arms of the global loan-sharks, the mashonisas – the World Bank and IMF.

This was the situation last year as we marked May Day 2017.

An invisible coup was creeping up and beginning to strangle our democracy. It was not a typical coup. It did not have soldiers and tanks in the streets. It did not have rebel security forces seizing the radio station and national airport.

Our creeping coup was different. Our national broadcaster was captured by a dangerous, megalomaniac clown, Hlaudi Motsoeneng, without arms but with a sweet deal with Multichoice and ANN7 and with the clear support and protection of high-up politicians.

Our major national airport, OR Tambo, was not surrounded by rebel tanks. Instead, a privileged entry and exit point was given to the Oppenheimers for the use of the super-rich. This was the 7-Star VIP Fireblade facility. But then the Guptas wanted to take it over after their attempt to smuggle what looked like diamonds out of the facility was declined by the private operators. The ensuing inter-capitalist dispute exposed the whole scandalous deal and revealed more dots.

This was the situation when we marked May Day last year, 2017. And we called it for what it was: State Capture.

And this was the situation when Cosatu called a national strike in October last year with the full support of the SACP.

We used last year’s May Day, and we used the October marches and actions to expose the rot.

Important advances against state capture

Today, May Day 2018, we can note that important advances against state capture have been made.

As we note these advances, let us acknowledge the important role WE have played from WITHIN the Alliance, we, the left axis within the ANC-led alliance – the SACP and Cosatu.

We spoke up for many honest ANC supporters who had been silenced and excluded from their own branches. We spoke up for many ANC stalwarts whose attempts to convene a consultative conference were dismissed. We spoke up for millions upon millions of South Africans.

Since the beginning of this year there have been important advances in the struggle against state capture – but there is still much unfinished business.

There is a new board at SABC and Hlaudi Motsoeneng has gone. Brian Molefe has gone. The Guptas and Duduzane Zuma are on the run. The Hawks are finally moving on the Vrede farm scandal. Tom Moyane is suspended. Arthur Fraser has been shifted from director general of Intelligence. There is an Interim PRASA board. The role of the private sector in acting as a megaphone for the Guptas – as in the case of Bell Pottinger - has been exposed. That London based firm, a multi-national PR company, that had been practising subversion around the world has now collapsed – thanks to our own principled struggle here in SA.



Cosatu May Day marchers toyi-toyi in Cape Town

The role of another multinational, the auditing firm, KPMG has also been exposed, and it has now been banned by the Auditor General from doing public sector auditing. The same has happened to Nkonki Inc – caught up in the Gupta and Venda Building Society web – now undergoing liquidation.

Investigative journalists are, quite rightly praised for many of the revelations – but behind these exposures are also principled public sector workers, honest politicians, comrades who have the courage to speak up.

And finally...finally...as a result of all of this, the head of the NPA has found a spine and announced his intention to pursue charges of corruption and racketeering against Jacob Zuma.

The dots have become dots on dominoes, and everywhere the dominoes are falling. The fall of one domino is causing a ripple effect on others.

Need for vigilance

But we must remain extremely vigilant. The struggle against state capture is far from over. And the organised working class has a critical role to play.

The ANC, and the government are now under a new President. Cde Cyril Ramaphosa is clearly attempting to lead the struggle against state capture. But it is also clear that the organisation that he leads, the ANC, is still hamstrung by factions. There are clear indications of an attempt at a fightback led from high up within the ANC. KZN has become a hot-bed of this attempted fightback. In the face of overwhelming popular anger and frustration, the ANC often appears to be paralysed, or at least very slow to move. The events over the past weeks in the North West province underline this very clearly.

Let us take this opportunity to salute the role being played by our SACP and Nehawu comrades in the North West. SACP's July 2017 National Congress called for Left Progressive Fronts at the local, regional, provincial and national levels. By a Left Progressive Front, we do not necessarily mean a formal structure. What we are seeing in the North West is a practical example of just such a provincial Left Progressive Front in action. Together, in the North West, the SACP and Cosatu have been playing a leading role, a principled role in speaking up for communities, for many concerned ANC members and supporters, even for local business-people and now parts of the Youth League itself. Of course, we condemn the senseless violence and acts of looting by unorganized elements, AND we condemn the fight-back violence by goon squads associated with the Premier. We join the overwhelming majority of citizens in the North West in saying: "Supra must go!" The ANC NEC must act decisively and in line with its own conference decisions. It must strengthen its Integrity Committee and deal with corruption without fear or favour.

The struggle against State Capture is not just a general moral struggle against crime and corruption. As important as that is. It is directly a working class struggle, because State Capture is a direct threat to jobs and to the well-being of workers and the poor in our country. It is State Capture that has drained our budgetary resources. It is state looters and Tom Moyane's perversion of SARS that has led to revenue under-performance. And so we have had an increase in VAT. It is a wrong intervention. We agree with Cosatu that VAT increases are a blow against workers and poor. The SACP calls for a wealth tax on the super-rich, and for a land tax on unoccupied land, and on property speculators. We say no to regressive taxes. We say no to the VAT increase.



Cosatu President Sdumo Dlamini and SACP General Secretary Blade Nzimande arrive at Cosatu's Mandela Bay May Day rally

Now is the time for maximum working class unity. Now is the time for maximum unity in action of the entire trade union movement.

The fight for a living wage

As the SACP we were disappointed that others chose to use the Nedlac national minimum wage agreement as their headline mobilisation. We call on all trade unions to pursue the demands of their members in a manner that unites, rather than divides the trade union movement.

Let us not resort to an opportunism that says: "We reject any improvement for now. Let millions of workers continue to be paid less than R2 500 a month, less than R20 an hour. We reject these improvements until our maximum ambitions have been realised."

Of course, R3 500 a month is not a living wage. But it is a floor below which no worker must fall. Of course, we must struggle relentlessly to achieve both full employment and a living wage.

But between 4.6 and 6 million workers as we speak are earning less than R20 an hour. More than 51% of South Africans live below R1 036 a month.

It is a tactical error to condemn workers to wage levels that are below R2 500 by rejecting the Nedlac agreement. In fact, this rejectionism will simply work to the advantage of the capitalist bosses who will continue to pocket the surplus they enjoy from the super-exploitation of the unorganised, the marginalised, and the precariously employed.



SACP General Secretary Blade Nzimande addresses Cosatu's Mandela Bay May Day rally

Once the national minimum wage becomes law, it is an important responsibility of all unions to USE this floor as a weapon to organise the most vulnerable – including in sectors where there are sectoral settlements of R17 or less than R20 per hour.

For the majority of the organised working class, already earning much more than R2 500 or R3 500 a month, support for the national minimum wage is an act of class solidarity with millions of domestic workers, farm workers, retail workers, and other vulnerable workers.

The SACP supports progressive trade unionism. The SACP has set itself the objective to achieve broad working class unity on a principled programmatic basis. We repeat the call on all trade unions – pursue the demands of your members in a manner that unifies rather than divides the trade union movement.

In this regard, we salute the role that SATAWU has been playing, working together with a range of other unions, in the ongoing nationwide, bus strike. The bus companies must end their super-exploitation of workers in the sector. Not only are the wages often poor, but many of the cost-cutting practices are totally unacceptable, like not paying the second driver when he or she is not driving on a long-distance trip. In other cases, the hours drivers spend collecting buses from the depot and returning them again at the end of a shift are not counted. This is scandalous and must end.

Our struggle is not only a struggle for decent work and a living wage. It is also a struggle for a comprehensive social security system, including a much broader social wage that addresses the

social needs of the working class and poor – like affordable and well-located housing, like affordable and safe public transport. The National Health Insurance must be introduced sooner not later. It must not be watered down. Nor must it be set up for failure. It must not be captured by private profit interests. At the same time the dire state of much of our public health care system requires urgent attention to cope with decay and dilapidation of facilities.

The SACP supports the demands of the public sector unions in the current round of negotiations – while acknowledging that government has difficult budget challenges. But public sector workers must not be made to pay for the sins of the parasitic looters. At the same time, it is critically important that public sector workers are not themselves involved in looting, as some have been. Public sector workers must be both the ears and eyes against corruption as in the North West currently, and they must prioritise *Batho Pele* service to the public.

Need for worker unity and reconfiguring the Alliance

The ANC is beginning to move into election mode. Some sections of the opposition are off-balance and weakened, while others are trying to re-invent themselves after the removal of President Jacob Zuma. It is important to continue organising young people, developing their leadership capacity and deepening political education around the historical mission of our revolutionary movement – the creation of non-racial, non-sexist and prosperous South Africa based on democratic majority rule. We must not live these important tasks to our youth formations alone. If we do not succeed, the youth could find itself attracted to populist, demagogic and anti-worker slogans. In this regard the SACP congratulates Cosatu for a successful launch of its youth desk last month.

If the ANC is to regain lost electoral ground it is absolutely imperative that it works closely with its alliance partners. This has not always been the case. In many areas the relationship remains very poor. We need to reconfigure the Alliance, how it operates, not just nationally but at all levels. Cosatu, Sanco and the SACP must not be used as useful campaigning machinery, as voting fodder and then get dispensed with after elections. We are not saying this to advance our own personal careers – but as advice to the ANC, to the honest ANC – you need your Alliance partners more than ever. This will be on the basis of a genuinely radical, shared programme to transform our society and our economy.

Worker unity is absolutely critical if we are to avoid a new black elite replacing the established capitalist class in oppressing the majority in the name of “Radical Economic Transformation”.

Worker unity is absolutely critical if we are to ensure that the struggle against “state capture” is not dominated by those who want to go back to before the ANC’s Polokwane Conference, to retreat back to 1996. Let us ensure that the “New Dawn” does not turn out to be a return to neo-liberalism.

Let us build working class unity! Let us reconfigure the ANC-headed alliance on the basis of an organised, active, campaigning working class! Let us continue to roll-back state capture! Let us send the crooks to jail! Let us ensure that our democratic movement retains political power to serve our people exceptionally and wholeheartedly! Let us not allow public power to be stolen and used to further private interests!

● *This is an edited version of the SACP May Day message*



BRAZIL: A young flag-cloaked Brazilian on his way to the May Day march in Sao Paulo



COLOMBIA: May Day protesters prepare to set alight an effigy of US President Donald Trump dressed as a Nazi officer in the capital, Bogotá



CHILE: Students protest in Santiago against the privatisation of tertiary education, threatened by incoming conservative President Sebastian Pinera



VENEZUELA:
Cheering
President Nicolas
Maduro at a
massive May Day
rally in Caracas.
Maduro, a former
bus driver, then
in the midst
of an election
campaign, had
just announced
an increase in the
minimum wage
– the third this
year – to offset the
impact of rampant
inflation resulting
from US sanctions
against Venezuela

PUERTO RICO: A protester blinded by pepper spray is helped from central San Juan, where thousands of Puerto Ricans gathered to protest austerity measures forced on the US-owned island by the Trump administration - cuts in public sector wages and benefits and in pensions, closing all public schools and new regulations allowing workers to be fired without cause



HAITI: Workers in Port-au-Prince chant slogans critical of President Jovenel Moïse's government



USA: Street vendors in Los Angeles join thousands of unions, faith communities and immigrants' rights groups to march against President Donald Trump's harsh anti-immigrant policies



USA: Marching through the Seattle CBD to protest the Trump administration's anti-immigrant and anti-union policies



CUBA: New Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel (left) and his predecessor Raul Castro greet hundreds of thousands of supporters marching under the slogan "United in our socialism" at Cuba's main May Day rally in Havana. Castro, who retired as president in April, remains head of the Communist Party of Cuba



CAMBODIA: Cambodian textile workers demanding permanent employment contracts and better working conditions at the Tonle Sap river bank in Phnom Penh



BANGLADESH: A marcher wears chains to demonstrate his exploitation in a May Day march through Dhaka, demanding an increase in the minimum wage and improved working safety



INDIA: Trade union members and communists march through Bangalore, capital of Karnataka state, on May Day



JAPAN: Led by a caricature of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, workers march through Tokyo demanding better working conditions - and Abe's resignation



KOREA: In North Korea (left), thousands of workers celebrate May Day outside the Rungrado 1st of May Stadium in Pyongyang, while in the south (right), about 30 000 workers in Seoul hold a rally demanding better working conditions



PHILIPPINES: Protesters in Manila burn a caricature of a dragon with President Duterte's face on their May Day march. They demanded that he stick to election promises to re-introduce employment benefits



NEPAL: Nehawu's Mzwandile Makwayiba (centre front) - in his capacity as president of the World Federation of Trade Unions - leads a May Day march through Kathmandu



FRANCE: Police detain protesters after about 1 000 masked anarchist protesters joined the traditional May Day march through Paris - then smashed a McDonald's outlet and set fire to cars and shops



FRANCE: Anarchist protesters join the traditional May Day march on the 50th anniversary of 1968 protests that triggered a general strike throughout France



UKRAINE: Unionists and supporters of the country's left-wing parties march through central Kiev to mark May Day



RUSSIA: About 100 000 members of Moscow's Federation of Trade Unions march through Red Square to a May Day rally organised by the Communist Party of the Russian Federation



BRITAIN: Thousands of marchers gather in London's Trafalgar Square, with a focus on the racist and anti-immigrant policies of Theresa May's government



SPAIN: May Day marchers in Barcelona demanding gender equality and opposing government austerity measures which have slashed unemployment benefits



ITALY: Zionist supporters (in blue berets and red jackets) block a march in Rome in support of Palestinians' "March of Return" protests



PORTUGAL: Members of Portugal's CGTP union federation f food Lisbon's Avenida da Liberdade demanding an end to new labour laws



TURKEY: Police arrest demonstrators attempting to reach Taksim Square, traditional venue for May Day gatherings in Istanbul



IRAN: Marchers in Tehran march on May Day to protest USA threats to impose sanctions on Iran, following Donald Trump's unilateral scrapping of Washington's nuclear deal with Iran



PALESTINE: Israeli Arabs march in support of the Palestinian "March of Return", a protest marking the 70th anniversary of the Nakba (catastrophe), when Zionist forces expelled 750 000 Palestinians



Iraqi Communist Party members march in Baghdad. The party is part of the Sairoun Alliance, the biggest grouping in Iraq's parliament



CYPRUS: Workers and members of the communist AKEL party prepare to march to protest neoliberal policies that are making Cyprus the most socially unequal country in the EU



NIGERIA: Bank workers, part of the Trade Union Congress of Nigeria contingent, march through Abuja's Eagle Square



GREECE: Workers from the PAME union federation food central Athens, protesting "imperialist intervention in Syria" and expressing solidarity with the workers of Turkey and the people of Palestine



ZIMBABWE: Leader of the opposition MDC (T), Nelson Chamisa, addresses a Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions May Day rally at Dzivarasekwa Stadium, Harare

President Vladimir Putin leads the million-strong march (far right) to Red Square, carrying a picture of his father, who served in the Soviet Navy in the Second World War. Putin's elder brother Victor died during the Nazi siege of Leningrad



Marching for the 'Immortal regiment'

For Russia, and many of the former socialist countries, the celebration of Victory Day on 9 May, dwarfs May Day. This year, in Russia alone, about 10-million people marched, on the 73rd anniversary of Nazi Germany's formal surrender on 9 May 1945. They marched carrying pictures of parents and relatives who were part of the "Immortal Regiment" that fought and eventually defeated Nazi Germany.

During the Soviet period, Victory Day marked the end of what was officially known as the 'Great Patriotic War of the Soviet People'. In Western accounts it is undifferentiated from the rest of the Second World War, sustaining a narrative that tends to play down the Soviet contribution and putting it on a par with those of the US, Britain and other Allies.

But as Kim Philby, the British communist who spied for the Soviet Union, wrote in his autobiography in the 1960s, "It is a sobering thought that, but for the power of the Soviet Union and the Communist idea, the Old World [Europe], if not the whole world, would now be ruled by Hitler and Hirohito [the leader of Japan, allied to the Nazis]."

Sixty million people died in the Second World War, with Soviet military and civilian losses accounting for nearly half the dead: Some 26,6-million Soviet troops and civilians were killed in the war against Hitler. Germany lost 5-million troops and 1,5-million civilians. Though the sacrifice

and bravery of individual British and US troops and civilians (419 000 and 450 000 respectively) cannot be underestimated, the role in the war of the British government under Winston Churchill was ignominious. Churchill played for time before opening a second front against the Nazis, from Britain through France. He was banking on the Nazis and Soviets so weakening one another that little would remain of either, and a post-war settlement would take place with an enfeebled or decimated Soviet Union.

But even Churchill acknowledged afterwards that it was the Red Army that "tore the guts out of the Nazi war machine." The vast Eastern Front was the main battlefield of the war in Europe – at times 80% of the German army (backed by Italian, Hungarian and Polish units) was deployed fighting the Soviet Red Arm.

It not only saw the most intense fighting of the war, but was also the stage for much of the Nazi effort to exterminate Jews and communists. German defeats at the battles of Stalingrad and Kursk were the key turning points of the war, after which the Nazis were on the run, all the way back to Berlin, where they finally surrendered. Stalin's assessment of the war was tinged with bitter realism. Of the different contributions, he is reputed to have said, "the Russians gave blood, the Americans gave money, and the British gave time." ●