

We must reorganise for socialism

The hopes our communities had for rapid improvements in living standards have been betrayed by the ANC government. After twenty years of ANC rule, millions are still waiting for a house and adequate water, sanitation, electricity and roads. For many, including the millions living in informal squatter settlements, living conditions have got worse. What are the ANC governments and councils waiting for? They have been in power for over twenty years!

The ANC leadership and its armies of councillors and MECs have failed us because they sold-out to the super-rich capitalist bosses. So has the ANC supporting SA National Civic Organisation (SANCO). The ANC government runs society in the interests of the rich, not in the interests of working class and poor communities. Through corruption, tenders and other kick-backs many in the ANC are rewarded for betraying our communities. The capitalist bosses and the ANC elite see building houses and providing services as a cash register to raise their own living standards.

Capitalism cannot deliver for our communities because it is based on inequality. Low wages for us means big profits for the bosses. Just 46,800 millionaires (0.01% of the population!) have wealth of 184 billion dollars between them – you still have to multiply that by ten to know how many Rands they have!

Things will get worse unless we struggle. The capitalist economy the ANC defends is in crisis. They want to fix that crisis by making the working class and poor pay the

price. The ANC government wants to reduce spending on social provision whilst the bosses will defend their profits by cutting wages and retrenching workers. The ANC government has already said that people under the age of 40 will no longer be entitled to RDP housing. The ANC government lowers taxes on big business. The ANC government has still not introduced a minimum wage. The ANC government lets big business make retrenchments.

More of the same capitalist poison will not help our communities. Our communities need to get organised to fight for jobs, houses and service delivery. We need to link this struggle to the struggle for a different way of running society – we need to struggle for socialism! A socialist society would be run in the interests of the working class and poor with wealth used to benefit all in society not just the super-rich capitalist bosses at the top. That is why we need to organise our communities upon a socialist programme and socialist methods of mass democratic struggle. Basing ourselves upon socialist ideas and a socialist method is vital if we are to recognise why we have the problems we do and how to solve them.

If we do not fill the vacuum in our communities with mass organisation and socialist ideas we will see people resorting to crime as they struggle to survive in a war of all against all including drug addiction, burglary, muggings, theft and violence against women. It will also mean continuing outbreaks of xenophobic violence. But if we are organised we can stop this.

Support building a mass workers party with a socialist programme

Our communities are only one of three 'theatres' of working class struggle. There are also the struggles of the workplaces and the higher education campuses. The struggles in these two theatres are fragmented too. The split in the Cosatu trade union federation with the expulsion of the metalworkers' union NUMSA has increased the divisions in the workplaces. On the university campuses, the ANC aligned youth movements are not used to advance the struggles of students but to launch political careers. To overcome these divisions we call for the formation of a socialist trade union federation to unite the workplaces in struggle and support for the Socialist Youth Movement to unite the struggles of the campuses.

But then the three theatres of community, workplace and campus struggles in turn need to be united. The only vehicle for this can be a mass workers party with a socialist programme that fights for political power so that the working class can create a socialist society. The civic movement must support the creation of such a party and participate in all genuine steps towards one.

Part of laying the basis for such a party will be the 2016 local elections. Community structures should stand candidates against the ANC and the other parties that support capitalism standing upon this socialist civic programme.



t: 081 366 7375

w: workerssocialistparty.co.za

e: workersandsocialistparty@gmail.com



WASP

Workers & Socialist Party

Socialist Civic Programme

- Build a country-wide socialist civic federation
- Fight corruption – organise community control
- Struggle and socialism for service delivery

Organise our communities

Many communities have already begun to organise themselves. In the vacuum left by the ANC, many independent civics, crisis committees and community forums have been created. But these heroic efforts at organisation remain isolated. The outbursts of community anger that lead to headline grabbing service delivery protests almost every day are also isolated and uncoordinated. We need to bring discipline and organisation to the determination of our communities.

That is why we are calling for a country-wide socialist civic federation. Through such a country-wide structure we can raise a united programme of demands. A country-wide civic movement could lead national campaigns for house building and job creation. A country-wide civic movement could coordinate service delivery protests turning them into a mighty national movement fighting for the development of our communities. Instead of isolated local protests that government can easily ignore, hundreds of communities can protest on the same day, on the same issue, making the same demands. Where communities need to struggle on a specific local issue, the entire federation can be mobilised in support.

Where communities are already organised, their structures should participate in the new federation. If communities are not organised, the federation must help them to get organised. We do not need to wait. Neighbouring community structures should begin to establish local socialist civic federations which can in turn be linked up at municipal, provincial and national level.

But these local community structures must not be talking shops. They need to be action committees. They need to extend mass democratic community control over the life of our communities. This is how we can begin to immediately fight against corruption and unfair practices that are stitched-up behind closed doors – nothing for communities without communities! It is also how we can begin to immediately fight against the crime that blights our lives.

Organise our communities for struggle

- Build democratic, accountable mass community organisations in every community.
- For accountability and complete transparency in our community organisations. Leaders to be accountable and recallable. Mass community meetings to decide on all major issues.
- Link-up all community organisations in a country-wide socialist civic beginning at local, municipal and provincial level.
- Organise disciplined community struggles and begin to coordinate those struggles through the civic federation.
- Build up to a community general strike and national service delivery day of action including a national

march, reaching out to other sections of the working class for support – the trade unions, the youth etc.

- Nothing for communities, without communities. Scrutinise the work of local councillors and local councils. Delegates from community structures to observe all council meetings and report back; organise lobbies and protests outside meetings where this is refused.
- Oppose tenders, outsourcing and privatisation in public works; demand that councils open the books on all tenders to inspections by representative of community structures.
- Organise a mass challenge to corrupt and ineffective councillors in the 2016 local elections.

Where will the money come from to fund this programme?

The government will cry that they do not have any money. But South Africa is a rich country. There are sufficient resources to fund this socialist programme. We must fight to end the corruption that is estimated to have cost R700 billion over the past twenty years and the plundering of SA's wealth by multi-nationals. But more than this, we need to base ourselves on socialism to advance these demands. When the government says they have no money, what they mean is "because we want to keep capitalism we have no money"! That is why we say we have to fight on this socialist programme for a socialist society! Get the money by nationalisation of the banks, the mines, the commercial farms, big factories and big businesses. We must struggle for nationalisation and for nationalised industry to be under the democratic control of workers and communities. This will unlock the wealth necessary.

Our Socialist Programme

Create jobs, share out the work fairly

- Country-wide civic federation to campaign and fight for a fully-enforced national minimum wage; mass job creation programmes so that everyone who wants a job can have one; labour registers that can match job vacancies with workers; and a mass apprenticeship programme with a guaranteed jobs at the end to tackle youth unemployment. Campaign and fight for a basic income grant.
- Community organisations to establish labour desks and build links with trade unions.
- Community labour desks to draw up registers of the unemployed and their skills; all local businesses, including foreign businesses, must employ a quota of workers from these registers, the number depending on the circumstances of the business. These registers to be regularly inspected by representatives of the community to protect against corruption.
- Community labour desks to organise rotas for casual workers, South African and foreign, to ensure all have a fair chance to earn a regular wage.
- Community labour desks to campaign for compliance with anti-labour broking legislation.
- Stop greedy bosses abusing foreign workers and undercutting wages! Trade unions to organise foreign workers. Community organisations and local businesses must agree community-wide minimum wages enforced by community organisations.

Business competition

- Country-wide socialist civic to campaign and fight for state supported cooperatives of small farmers and small businesses; a public wholesale goods network to provide cheap bulk supplies; provision of affordable credit to existing small businesses and those wishing to open a small business; price controls and guaranteed markets.
- Community organisations to create forums to encourage cooperation between local and foreign business networks in defence of their common interests against big business.

Housing allocation

- Country-wide socialist civic to campaign and fight for a mass house building programme to provide everyone with a decent home with adequate and cheap electricity, water and sanitation; build tar roads to replace every gravel road.
- Housing waiting lists to be under the democratic control of community organisations. Kick out corrupt councillors and gangster building developers!
- Fair and objective criteria to be used to prioritise housing allocation, including current housing situation, number of dependents and length of time on waiting list. Need must determine allocation. Housing waiting lists to be regularly inspected by representatives of the community to protect against corruption.
- Fight evictions and forced removals. Campaign for cancellation of all rent and rates arrears for working class communities.

Environment & health

- Community organisations to campaign for full involvement in the design of houses and the planning of communities. Communities should have the final say on the implementation of all development plans.

- Community organisations to campaign for oversight of environmental planning to combat pollution, the dumping of toxic wastes and the health impact of industrial activity.

Electricity

- Community struggle to fight electricity cut-offs! Campaign for cancellation of all electricity arrears for working class communities.
- Country-wide socialist civic to campaign for massive investment in renewable energy to address the ESKOM electricity crisis.
- No to pre-paid electricity meters. For a sliding-scale of tariffs – the more you earn the more you pay. Adequate and free basic electricity provision for unemployed and pensioners.

Education

- Country-wide socialist civic to campaign and fight for free, high-quality and accessible public education.
- Community structures to re-establish parent-teacher-learner committees to place education under democratic community control; mobilise to block School Governing Bodies being used as rubber stamps for anti-working class policies.

Crime & Xenophobia

- No to crime and drugs. Campaign and fight for high quality, free, drug rehabilitation programmes for addicts. Community organisations to exercise oversight and review drug-policing policies to combat corruption and the waste of resources. Report all drug dealers and other criminals to the police and campaign for their removal from the community.
- Participate in the Community Policing Forums and fight for community oversight of policing to combat corruption, harassment and the waste of resources; organise community-watch programmes under the democratic control of community organisations with the mass participation of the community.
- Organise mass community mobilisations against gangsterism and organised crime.
- Organise to stop xenophobic violence. Organise community-watch programmes under the democratic control of community organisations with the mass participation of the community to protect foreign residents and foreign businesses against xenophobic violence.

Women and gender rights

- Country-wide socialist civic to campaign and fight for equal pay for equal work; fight for paid parental leave for all workers (men and women); fight for free, state-funded and high-quality pre-school education for all. Link up with the trade union movement.
- Campaign for training on gender-based violence for all law enforcement and court officials.
- Community organisations to campaign against domestic violence and rape in communities; community-watch programmes to take up defence of women with the full participation of women; campaign for shelters and housing to give everyone the freedom to leave abusive relationships.
- Community organisations to campaign against hate crimes against LGBTI people, including corrective rape; community-watch programmes to take up defence of LGBTI people with the full participation of LGBTI people.