

# **Numsa says: We built COSATU!! No Numsa Expulsion! No Numsa Suspension!**

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Today, Tuesday 8 April 2014, over 500 Numsa members, shopstewards and staff picketed outside the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) special Central Executive Committee (CEC). Their message was clear, WE BUILT COSATU: No Numsa Expulsion! No Numsa Suspension! The picket was held in response to a faction within Cosatu wanting to use the meeting to expel or suspend Numsa from the federation.

The picket was addressed by Numsa national office bearers and the national office bearers of all 8 Cosatu affiliates who are in support of Numsa.

We have never acted against the interests of the federation nor in any way are we interested in dividing the working class! We offer eight reasons as to why we should not be suspended or expelled.

- **We built Cosatu!**

Throughout its existence, Numsa has been a dedicated and disciplined affiliate of COSATU. History can reveal that few unions in Cosatu today can match Numsa's contribution in the federation's campaigns, struggles and contributions towards leadership collectives. We are always the first to go in and the last to come out in battles that Cosatu declares. We have always taken ownership and provided leadership of decisions of the federation.

- **We remain an autonomous affiliate of Cosatu!**

As a union we have played our role in building Cosatu as an independent affiliate of the federation guided by Numsa's

constitution and our own worker-controlled and democratic structures. We pride ourselves of being a union that walks where others fear to tread. While others may be surprised it is not the first time that our union has called for a break from the ANC. We resolved this in 1993. When we did not win our position in Cosatu, we subjected ourselves to the discipline of the federation. What is the difference now?

- **Democratic centralism does not mean that affiliates cannot ask difficult questions!**

The fact that Cosatu has policies does not mean that affiliates cannot question existing policies. If affiliates don't have the opportunity to question policies how else would policy change within the federation take place? As Numsa we strongly believe that it is our right to question and criticise Cosatu policies and practices where these do not advance the interests of the working class. This is what our Special National Congress has done. It is the role of the others to prove us wrong, instead of threatening to purge us.

- **Nothing in existing Cosatu policies says that the federation will all the time endorse the ANC!**

The 2015 Plan of Cosatu calls for an evaluation of every election and to base our strategy on elections on what we have achieved in the implementation of the previous Election Manifesto. According to Numsa, no such evaluation has taken place on the 2009 ANC Election Manifesto. Most of the promises made then remain unfulfilled and we have seen few advances for workers and the poor.

- **Unions are creative animals!**

Our call for a critical review in organising strategies and approaches is in line with the 1997 recommendations of the Cosatu September Commission that argued that unions need to recognise the shifts and changes in how global capitalist production is organised. Cosatu itself has spoken about mergers and cartels between metals, mining, energy and chemicals. We as Numsa cannot be accused of taking a lead

in what are federation-wide decisions.

- **No dues for flouting the constitution!**

Nine unions in Cosatu have called for a Special national Congress in line with the federation's constitution. This has been persistently denied. How can we continue to pay dues to an organisation that flouts its own constitution?

- **No levy for liquidators!**

There had been a persistent campaign by the SACP over the past 18 months to attack Numsa and undermine its leadership. There have also been both open and clandestine attempts by the SACP to split our union. How can we continue to provide political support and resources to an organisation that has made it its mission to liquidate Numsa and its leadership?

- **We believe that the unity of workers and of the working class is sacrosanct!**

For us the unity of the working class is sacrosanct. Expelling or suspending Numsa will lead to a split in Cosatu. The only beneficiaries of this split will be the bosses. To us Cosatu was not an end in itself. It was an instrument of struggle. It is for this reason that we understood Cosatu as one step towards one country one federation. Our call for a revolutionary, militant and independent union movement and against a "yellow federation" is about safeguarding the capacity of workers and the working class more broadly to act in its own interests.

We built Cosatu!

Reclaim COSATU for Workers' Unity!

Defend Numsa! Defeat Factionalism!

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