

Defend our Movement: Advance the gains of Polokwane!

Expose and Isolate the Black DA!

A message to all workers from the COSATU Central Executive Committee

November 2008

Dear comrades and friends

The launch of the so-called “*Congress of the People*” [1] (“COP”), planned for 16 December 2008 poses major challenges to workers and the national liberation movement. If it is not effectively challenged, this new party could confuse and divide voters. It could cause enough damage to reduce the African National Congress majority in the national Parliament and in some provinces. That could put the brakes on our policies to create jobs, cut poverty and improve the lives of the majority of South Africans.

COSATU and its ANC and SACP allies must respond vigorously. We must take concrete measures to defend our movement from this project. If the “COP” succeeds, it would roll back the gains workers and the poor have made since 1994. It would divide and weaken the organisations that have for so long been the shield and spear of the working class.

That is why we are writing this letter - to arm our members, our allies and the people as a whole with an understanding of what class the new party represents, and how it should be exposed and isolated.

Why is COSATU so concerned about this splinter?

COSATU's concerns about the “COP” do not arise because we think it will attract a lot of voters or succeed to form a new Federation. Rather, we are concerned because we know that even small splinters can cause great damage to our movement. We have a duty to ensure that workers are not distracted from our agenda of transformation, especially when we are so close to making a breakthrough.

COSATU has undoubtedly earned its stripes in the battlefield, touched the central nerve of the nation and reaffirmed its role as the conscience of the nation and the voice of the most marginalised sections of our population. COSATU has more than two million members and the support of millions more South Africans. Over the past 23 years, it has a proud record of battling to defend working people and improve their lives. More recently, COSATU and its leaders suffered deep scars from the recent battles for the direction of the ANC and our revolution.

Everyone in society knows COSATU's record in struggling for:

1. Policies to address the extraordinarily high levels of joblessness left by apartheid, as well as the casualisation of labour and the declining quality of jobs.
2. The expansion in public services for the poor, with strong opposition to privatisation and commodification including pre-paid electricity meters that place huge burdens on the poor.
3. The eradication of poverty and the deep inequalities that blight the lives of so many of our people.
4. Honest, accountable government, with the elimination of the new culture of corruption and the use of state institutions for self enrichment.

5. Internal organisation democracy in the movement, countering the culture of suppression of debates and autocratic, hierarchical leadership.

The ANC is the oldest liberation movement in our African continent. For 96 years it has sought to unite the African people. It fought against the efforts of the colonial and apartheid governments to divide the majority based on different languages and cultures. For 96 years, the ANC has fought to unite black people (Africans, Coloureds and Indians) into a single formation of the oppressed. For 96 years, the ANC has led the struggle for a creation of a united, non-racial, democratic and prosperous South Africa.

This struggle to liberate black people in general and African people in particular came into being in response to subjection of our people in the context of discrimination based on race, gender and class. The claims of our people are summarised in the demands of the Freedom Charter. The National Democratic Revolution is the struggle for the fundamental change and thoroughgoing transformation of our society foreseen in the Freedom Charter. From this standpoint, our struggle is far from over.

For all those 96 years, our enemies have used every means at their disposal to divide our people and their movement, but have always failed. As former ANC President Comrade Thabo Mbeki said “many of those who are convinced that the ANC must be weakened and defeated are convinced that individually and collectively the opposition parties do not have the strength and capacity to achieve this goal. They are therefore permanently on look out for the enemies of our movement that would have the possibility to accomplish this objective, whom they would obviously encourage and support. A favourite hunting ground for these enemies is within the ANC itself, the alliance and the broad democratic movement. The popular thesis is that the strongest and the best opposition to the ANC will come from within the organisation, as well as the broad democratic movement.”

What is the Split about?

Now we see precisely what President Mbeki predicted is taking place - an attempt from within the ANC by a splinter group, allied with sections of big business, to achieve what the imperialists, apartheid state and big business within and outside have been unable to do in 96 years: to divide and defeat this great movement of the people.

Two big events provoked Terror Lekota's breakaway.

- The first was the victory of the democratic majority within the ANC at the ANC's National Conference at Polokwane in 2007. We reclaimed our organisation and voted for new policies and leaders.
- The second was the recall of Thabo Mbeki from his position as President of the Republic in September 2008.

But its roots go much deeper – to processes at work within the ANC and South African society for many years. This breakaway represents a coalition of conservative forces, whose leadership lost the argument and the vote at Polokwane. They are now attempting to pursue the agenda of a section of the capitalist class. Having failed to impose this agenda on the working class through the former leadership of ANC and government, the capitalists now aim to do this by other means.

Just like right-wing groups today in Venezuela and earlier in Chile, they have enlisted the support of most of the media and big business. They are mobilise sections of the upper middle strata, and even some poor communities with genuine grievances against ANC leaders. They want to attract them to a new conservative party – a “black DA”. As in Venezuela, they even set up new, sweetheart unions to use against the people

But whatever demagogic promises they may make to the poor and the middle class, their real goal is to dislodge a progressive ruling party that still has the support of the majority. They seek to impose an agenda supported by international capital and their local allies.

It is no accident that almost all the “COP” leaders, including the former trade unionists, are now wealthy businessmen. They and some of their families are beneficiaries of the narrow BEE policy that seeks to give a small number of Africans shares in big companies. It is also typical that the SA National Convention met in wealthy Sandton and delegates stayed in posh hotels – a far cry from the tents, rain and mud of Polokwane. They are led by members of the whisky-drinking, cigar-smoking, class that profited from policies we now call the “1996 class project”- the grouping in government who imposed the neo-liberal, pro-business and pro-rich GEAR policy on South Africa in the late 1990s.

What is the 1996 Class Project?

This term refers to a clique in the ANC government that effectively cut a deal with big business after 1994. Big business can tolerate democracy as long as the clauses of the Freedom Charter that call for a more equitable economy, nationalisation and shared wealth are not implemented. This meant that the economy would not be transformed and the power of monopoly white capital remained.

A deal was struck that South Africa would embrace free market dogma. The unilateral introduction of GEAR, the programmes to privatise and commodify the state-owned companies and basic services, and the general refusal to restructure the economy all form part of this agenda.

Today, the new dissidents are a coalition of elites who benefited immensely from the 1996 Class Project. They used the leadership positions they held in the ANC, and in some cases in the SACP and COSATU, to accumulate wealth and dispense patronage. They created a personal following in some components of our movement.

The policies of the 1996 Class Project led to the retrenchment of hundreds of thousands of workers. Commercialisation of Eskom and other parastatals cost tens of thousands of jobs, as these enterprises cut their labour force by more than half. The Telkom privatisation alone led to the loss of over 15 000 jobs. Between 1994 and 2001 the public service lost over 100 000 positions. Some of these were due to outsourcing and privatisation, especially in hospitals and the state forests, where 10 000 jobs went. This was combined with the effect that the slashing of government’s budgets had on the economy as a whole, and the loss of jobs in the private sector.

These retrenchments contributed to today’s disastrously high unemployment figures. Public services suffered catastrophically as well. We are still paying the price for outsourcing in the public service - in filthy, unhygienic and dangerous public hospitals, understaffed and underfunded public schools and shoddily-built, substandard “RDP” houses.

The casualisation of jobs and the use of labour brokers have led to a disastrous drop in the quality of employment. Secure, permanent jobs have been replaced by temporary, insecure and low-paid forms of employment with minimal or no medical cover or provident funds.

Through the 1990s and 2000s, the share of labour in the national income declined. Poverty continues to afflict millions. Crime, which is bred by these economic conditions, remains a huge problem for working class families.

The pro-capitalist agenda that resulted in all these problems was promoted most enthusiastically by the very people, who, with their allies in capital, are now mobilising for a new political party.

This project required the demobilisation of the mass movement, including the ANC members, and reducing them into spectators and voting cattle. It sought to restructure the ANC and make it a “modern political party”, while marginalising the alliance with COSATU and the SACP.

If they could, capital and its allies would have preferred to continue this strategy from within the ANC and government. But the delegates to the ANC Polokwane Conference, representing South Africa’s poor and marginalised majority, put a stop to it. They rejected both the policy and leadership of the 1996 Class Project. They passed resolutions that reflected the ANC’s long-standing pro-poor and pro-worker orientation. They set the ANC back on course to renew its historic task of taking forward the NDR.

The right Wing backlash after Polokwane

The faction that had been driving the pro-capitalist line within the ANC did not accept their defeat at Polokwane. They met again just one week after the conference. They decided to continue contesting from within. They decided that they would contest all remaining regional, provincial, youth league, women league conferences. If they won, they would move a vote of no confidence against the leadership that had just been democratically elected.

This strategy failed.

For a while the defeated minority in the ANC also tried to exploit the “two centres of power,” They refused to co-operate with the new ANC leadership. They hoped to use their government positions to undermine the ANC’s attempts to implement the pro-poor Polokwane resolutions and to unite the ANC.

In this context, Judge Nicholson gave a damning indictment of government manipulation of legal processes against ANC President Jacob Zuma. At the same time, former President Thabo Mbeki continued to avoid the ANC leadership. These factors brought matters to a head, and the ANC recalled Comrade Mbeki from office.

In light of these developments, some supporters of Comrade Mbeki, led by Lekota and Shilowa, saw that the ANC would no longer give them a route to power. So they decided to form a new splinter party. In cahoots with other opposition parties, it would fight for their class project outside, and indeed *against*, the ANC and the Alliance.

They know however that to win any kind of support they cannot openly proclaim support for a blatant pro-capital class project. So they seek demagogically to exploit whatever social grievances they can find amongst the people. They don’t want us to remember that these grievances result from the very policies they themselves imposed while they were in government.

If this agenda succeeds, it would disrupt and cripple the organised working class and our liberation movement. It would blunt our weapons and turn the trade union movement into a conveyor belt for the interests of big business.

This agenda seeks to replace the ANC - which has always been a broad liberation movement with a bias towards the working class - with a neo-liberal, centre-left, bourgeois political party. It follows directly from the efforts of the splinter group’s leadership in the past to demobilize the ANC. They sought to turn it into a narrow electoral political party, where our people would act only as voters during election periods, leaving the “leaders” free to use state power to amass private fortunes and support big business.

Why COSATU supports the ANC

We summed up our views on the ANC and the Alliance in the pamphlet we wrote for the 2004 elections on “*Why workers should vote for the ANC*”:

“Since COSATU was founded almost 20 years ago, we have understood that our struggles to improve our wages and conditions of employment are intertwined with the political struggles to end apartheid and ensure transformation benefits the poor more than just the rich. Even though COSATU is organisationally strong, we would be weaker if people who are hostile to workers dominated parliament and who pass laws that favour the bosses at the expense of the poor.

“That’s why COSATU has always worked with organisations that are biased towards the workers and the poor. That is why we formed an Alliance with the UDF, and later with the ANC and SACP. Our united action was the keystone of the struggle against apartheid....

“We still need unity of all progressive forces today. We cannot hope to improve conditions for workers if we do not support programmes to create jobs, improve skills, and raise living standards for all our people.”

Worker rights

The booklet pointed out, that together with its Alliance partners, the ANC has ensured, since the democratic breakthrough, that workers enjoy the following constitutional guarantees:

- the right to fair labour practices,
- the right to form and join trade unions, strike and picket,
- the right to conclude union security agreements such as agency and closed shop,
- the right to collective bargaining.

The ANC-led Alliance blocked the inclusion of a lock-out clause in the Constitution. The Constitution also contains other rights that are important to workers including the right to water, housing, health and education; the right to access information; accountability of public enterprises; and procurement policy for social objectives.

The 1995 LRA gave labour rights to all workers, including domestic, farm and public sector workers, for the first time. It ensures that employers cannot dismiss workers for being members of a union or for legal strike action; requires employers to consult on retrenchment; and set up the CCMA to provide easier and faster dispute settlement. It encourages centralised bargaining, which protects more vulnerable workers, and establishes centralised bargaining in the public service.

Amendments to the LRA in 2000 gave workers in larger companies the right to strike against retrenchments and improved the possibility for solidarity strikes so that workers can protect each other

The Basic Conditions of Employment Act (BCEA) provides for minimum conditions for all workers, including – since 2001 – contract and outsourced workers, as well as farm, domestic and informal workers. Its key provisions include:

- The ban on child labour.
- Sick, maternity, annual and family leave for all workers.
- Overtime payment when the workweek exceeds 45 hours.
- Limits on how many hours workers must work every day, with time for lunch breaks.
- Extra payment for weekend and holiday work and night shifts
- Employers must provide written contracts and notice for dismissal.

Under the BCEA, the Minister of Labour, in consultation with business and labour representatives through the Employment Conditions Commission, can and has set minimum

wages and conditions for workers who are weakly organised such as the domestic, security and farm workers.

The Employment Equity Act prohibits unfair discrimination, which is discrimination that cannot be justified in terms of the requirements of a job (for instance, for particular skills). In addition, it requires designated employers – essentially those with over 50 workers – to develop an employment-equity plan. This plan should set targets for improving representivity, and define ways to reach them. This law is an attempt by the ANC government to redress the discrimination workers experienced under apartheid. But it has faced extreme resistance, especially from private employers.

The ANC government introduced a number of important initiatives to benefit workers and improve health and safety standards. Above all, occupational health and safety legislation gives workers the right to monitor health and safety in their workplaces through joint committees with employers. Unions have the power to monitor occupational safety, and workers can refuse to work in dangerous conditions. The ANC government has also provided that all workers should have equitable access to compensation funds for injuries suffered on the job.

The Skills Development Act:

- Makes all employers pay a levy equal to 1% of wages, for training. An employer can get most of the levy back to pay for skills development.
- Establishes sectoral training authorities – SETAs – with union representation on their boards. The SETAs must ensure that workers' training can be used for different employers in the sector, so that workers are not locked into a job.
- The Skills Development Strategy is linked to a National Qualifications Framework, which makes it easier for workers to get formal qualifications. Every sector should have qualifications that equal different levels in the formal education system. They should have procedures to recognise prior learning – that is skills and knowledge workers have gained on the job when they could not take formal courses

The NEDLAC Act established NEDLAC as a negotiations forum that would let organised labour, organised business and government engage on all major economic policies. This Act is critical because:

1. It gives workers a voice on major economic policies.
2. It ensures that the rich and powerful cannot just lobby government, but must engage openly and transparently.
3. It makes sure that policy is discussed with the people it affects, which ensures better policy decisions.

NEDLAC hosted the 2003 Growth and Development Summit, where COSATU won important agreements to create jobs and fight poverty.

What do the opposition parties say?

In the 2004 pamphlet "*why workers should vote for the ANC*" we pointed out that "All the main opposition parties, in particular the DA, IFP and NNP are dedicated to the "deregulation of the labour market."

What does this mean in simple terms?

If these parties came to power, they would remove all laws that protect workers from abuse by employers. These parties all want to limit workers' rights in the constitution, the LRA, BCEA, National Skills Act and Employment Equity Act. They would weaken our labour laws so that workers can be fired easily and without following procedures or having fair hearings. They would let employers can refuse to negotiate. They would do away with centralised bargaining.

If these parties came to power, workers would have no right to overtime or leave. Workers would have no maternity or family responsibility leave. They could be made to work on Sundays and other holidays without extra pay. These parties want to end the minimum wage introduced to protect domestic and farm workers and other vulnerable groups.

In short, the main opposition parties would all push us back to the apartheid days, when employers could use their power however they wanted.

We therefore concluded that it is only the ANC that is a reliable ally of workers in advancing our interests. The emergence of Shikota on the political scene doesn't change this one bit. If anything, the fact that they represent an agenda of crude accumulation through the state and parasitical capitalism makes it even more likely that they will support the anti-worker agenda of other opposition parties. Already they are talking about having an alliance with these parties.

COSATU has long recognised the existence of a conservative clique within the ANC, which is now laying the basis for the Shikota party. This conservative grouping wants to impose pro-capitalist class programmes. It has consistently argued that government must deal with what it calls the "unintended consequences" of labour laws that give workers rights and protections. This is code for their belief that protecting workers causes unemployment and slow job creation - a belief for which there is absolutely no evidence.

COSATU has no reason to change its support for the ANC. On the contrary, the Polokwane Conference and events since then have greatly strengthened our belief that the ANC is the only party for worker. Together with us, it will protect our hard-won worker rights. It is also committed to developing and implementing the policies we need to defeat unemployment, poverty and inequality.

The new spirit of openness in the ANC

Even before Polokwane, while we were very critical of many government policies, we never failed to give the ANC credit for all the positive advances they have made. Still, a group of ANC leaders in government tried to deny the seriousness of the problems COSATU had identified, and was campaigning about. Now, however, there is a much more balanced approach in the ANC. This is seen in a recent article in *ANC Today* by Comrade Jeff Radebe, who wrote:

- "Since 1994, our movement has made major strides including:
- The longest economic growth, leading to the creation of a 2-3 million people middle-class.
- Our state-led social distribution programme translated into significant reduction of severe poverty - 12 million receiving social grants
- 2.6 million RDP housing for 13 million people;
- 18.7 million now have access water and 10.9 million with sanitation."

But unlike the dissident leaders, Radebe does not pretend that there were not also problems with ANC government policies. "Despite all these achievements," he writes, "unemployment still remains high, many of our people are trapped in poverty, 3-million hectares of land in former Bantustans remain fallow, with increasing migration from rural to urban areas."

Like COSATU, he welcomed the opportunity that Polokwane, and the Policy Conference that preceded it, has given us to conduct a serious examination of the past 14 years and address the shortcomings, particularly in the areas of unemployment, rural development, food security, and food production.

There is now far more scope than previously for open and frank discussion on the best way to tackle these problems and it has already resulted in a clear shift towards policies which will enable the next ANC Government to undo the damage caused by mistaken market-driven policies like GEAR and start to bring down the levels of unemployment and poverty.

The Polokwane resolutions, supplemented by the decisions of the two Alliance Summit meetings held in May and October 2008 provide a firm basis for an election manifesto. If implemented, it will pave the way for the next phase of the NDR.

What does Polokwane represent – why must workers and the poor defend it?

The 2007 ANC Conference at Polokwane saw a grass-roots revolt by the ANC's mass constituency. They targeted particularly economic policies that had clearly failed to solve the massive levels of unemployment and poverty and growing inequality, as well as against a deepening culture of unaccountable leadership, and marginalisation of the mass movement. So Polokwane was a major breakthrough, after years of comrades in the ANC, COSATU and the SACP fighting against these policies, and practices.

Delegates at Polokwane were determined to reclaim the organisation and return it to its historical traditions of being a dynamic movement, driven by its mass constituency, and biased towards the working class and the poor. Polokwane has brought the ANC closer to the people, and has created hope among ordinary workers.

A dimension of Polokwane, which is perhaps as important as the content of the resolutions, is the political shift that signals the determination of the new leadership to ensure that government advances ANC policies. If previous progressive ANC policies were consigned to the dustbin, Polokwane now for the first time holds out the possibility that these policies will be translated into government policy and implemented. As is well known, government has ignored a number of previous ANC conference resolutions.

In the run-up to Polokwane, there were concerted efforts by former ANC leaders in government, as well as government technocrats, to ensure that government positions were endorsed by delegates. Despite this, delegates decided to chart a new course. One of the clear messages from Polokwane was that defiance by government of the ANC mandate would no longer be tolerated. Delegates strongly asserted that there should be only one centre of power.

What progressive policies were agreed at Polokwane?

On the policy front, it is useful to summarise the main elements of the Polokwane resolutions, which represent a progressive breakthrough. On those areas of specific concern to COSATU and workers, key areas of advance include:

1. The emphasis on creation of decent work as “the primary focus of economic policies,” and the commitment to tailor all government policies and institutions, including macro-economic policies, to achieve this objective.
2. The economic transformation resolution states “the central and most pressing challenges we face are unemployment, poverty and inequality” and proposes policies to deal with these challenges.
3. A shift from the notion of growth as the solution to everything (and an emphasis only on intervention in the “2nd economy”), to an acceptance that the current growth path as a

whole has to be fundamentally shifted, to be redistributive and to create. The resolution calls for “an effective strategy of redistribution that builds a new and more equitable growth path.”

4. An agrarian development programme that must bring decent livelihoods to those of our people who were historically most oppressed – farm workers and people in the former homelands. The resolutions seek to ensure that land reform becomes a programme that creates livelihoods on a mass scale for our people, in contrast to programmes that calls only for enrichment of a few black commercial farmers. They talk of the need to ensure that infrastructure and government services do more to support development of impoverished rural areas.
5. A thoroughgoing democratisation of our society, from the state to the economy to communities on the ground. State bureaucracy must become more responsive to the masses. It has to listen to the concerns of our communities and the working class as a whole, and our organisations must be treated as the legitimate voice of our communities, not as one more in a queue of special interests.
6. Clearer elaboration of the notion of a progressive developmental state, which has a bias towards the working class and a more democratic and less top-down character. The state should not, as in the past, be neutral between big business, on the one hand, and working people and the poor, on the other.
7. A partial move away from the emphasis on the market and competitiveness, and greater emphasis on the role of the state in driving the economy, a state-led industrial strategy, an expanded role for state ownership, and a more interventionist approach to the country’s mineral riches.
8. The original policy document submitted to Conference contained repeated references to the “correctness” of government economic policy, its continuity, and denied the need for any shifts. These references were removed from the Polokwane resolutions;
9. The resolutions attempted to consolidate certain progressive shifts that had emerged in recent years, in relation for instance to the role of the state in the economy, the retreat from privatization etc. Delegates also challenged some areas of government policy, such as rural development, and economic policy, which contradicted, or failed to advance, the logic of this emerging development strategy.

The Economic Transformation Resolution

The Economic Transformation Resolution also calls for: decisive action against current patterns of **ownership and production** especially the “monopoly domination of our economy”; co-ordinated **government wide economic planning** to align policies; a commitment to building the human capacity of the state, including by “ensuring **adequate numbers of personnel** to ensure delivery...” **intervention by the state** in key sectors of the economy, to transform the structure of the economy, ensuring that national resources, including land minerals, and water are exploited to maximise growth, development and employment; strengthening the **role of SOE’s**, and ensuring that state entities respond to “a clearly defined public mandate and act in terms of our overarching industrial policy and economic transformation objectives” while emphasizing the development of **SMME’s**, stating that “we should ensure that fundamental worker rights are protected in small enterprise”;

The Resolution on **Industrial Policy** commits government to: “[Transforming the structures of production and ownership, including through] Active and well-resourced industrial and trade policy aimed at creating decent work through expansion of labour absorbing sectors,

diversifying our industrial and services base, pursuing an active beneficiation strategy, building sustainable export industries, and expanding production for domestic and regional consumption. In general, industrial policy should lead our overall approach to sector development, whilst trade policy should play a supporting role and be sensitive to employment outcomes.”

On **Macro-economic policy**, the resolution is very general and only calls for “**Macro-economic policies that support and sustain growth, job creation and poverty eradication on a sustainable basis.**” However, the clear intention of the delegates, and the progressive thrust of the resolution on issues such as redistribution, employment etc, supports the viewpoint that delegates wanted a realignment of macro-economic policy. Delegates raised concerns about monetary policy, interest rates, inflation targeting, the role of the reserve bank, and aspects of fiscal policy, including the budget surplus.

Contractionary monetary policies, high interest rates, inflation targeting etc, do not “support growth, employment creation and poverty eradication”. Nor does a relatively conservative budget, and fiscal surpluses. Nor are conservative fiscal and monetary policies “sustainable”, if they choke off growth in the economy; retard employment; increase the cost of living; deepen inequalities etc. Equally, these policies increase the vulnerability of our economy, deepen the trade deficit and balance of payments imbalances, increase financial speculation, undermine investment in infrastructure and service delivery, and therefore are *unsustainable*. Therefore, the formulation lays the basis for a more detailed Alliance consensus as to what type of macro-economic policies would advance the stipulated developmental objectives.

Social Transformation

The Social Transformation Resolution, although having certain problems, does include the following welcome features:

- an emphasis on attacking poverty and inequality; commitment to extend the Child Support Grant to 18 years, and equalise the pensionable age at 60;
- Commitment to expand no fees schools to 60% by 2009; commitment to progressively introduce free education for the poor until undergraduate level;
- The commitment to make education and health the “2 key priorities” of the ANC;
- Strengthening the public health care system including the introduction of the National Health Insurance – special tax dedicated to fixing the crises in the public health care and public hospitals, hospital revitalisation, and ensuring adequate provision of funding;
- Roll out of comprehensive health care, including the provision of ARVs;
- Explore the possibility of creating a state-owned pharmaceutical company to provide affordable medicines;
- Provide alternative housing stock, including rental; curb the cost of construction; coordinated planning of human settlement, and acceleration of land acquisition etc;

Rural Development

The Resolution on Rural Development, Land Reform, and Agrarian Change constitutes a major intervention, and strategic shift from current government policy. It rejects existing policies on rural development as woefully inadequate, and proposes the formulation of a new, comprehensive rural development plan, a White paper on rural development, land reform and agrarian change, and a legislative programme to implement these changes.

It resolves inter alia to:

- Embark on an integrated programme of rural development, land reform and agrarian change;
- Empower poor communities and build the momentum behind agrarian change and land reform by supporting the self-organisation of rural people;
- Build stronger state capacity and devote greater resources to the challenges of rural development, land reform and agrarian change;
- Ensure that the state regulates the land market effectively with a view to promoting the goals of rural development and agrarian change;
- Change all policies that create a bias in favour of large-scale, capital intensive, environmentally damaging agriculture and under-utilisation of land and which constrain the emergence of a vibrant, pro-poor rural economy;
- Support the growth of rural market institutions including through the provision of infrastructure and by helping rural communities and small farmers to access markets, build links with formal sector value chains and coordinate their activities;
- Where necessary, expropriate property in the public interest to achieve equity, redress, social justice and sustainable development;
- Work together with the progressive trade union movement, government agencies and civil society to realize the rights of farm workers and farm dwellers, combat human rights abuses and super-exploitation, and provision of support and advice to communities living on farms;
- Ensure that the allocation of customary land be democratised in a manner which empowers rural women and supports the building of democratic community structures at village level;
- Find ways to stabilise food prices in order to prevent inflationary surges, protect food security and combat hunger;
- Accelerate the roll-out of rural infrastructure, particularly roads but also other services including potable water, electricity and irrigation and ensuring in particular that the former Bantustan areas are properly provisioned with an infrastructural base for economic and social development.

Organisational Democracy

The Resolution on Organisational Renewal also deals with the relationship of the ANC to governance, as well as the Alliance. In this regard there are a number of important statement and proposals:

- (There must be) greater coordination between work of the ANC structures and governance work, to give strategic leadership to cadres deployed in the state and to improve capacity to hold cadres deployed accountable.
- Constitutional structures (must) strengthen caucuses as instruments for robust oversight, mutual accountability, collective leadership and discipline among cadres deployed to government, parliament, legislatures and municipalities.
- Improve capacity of ANC structures to monitor and evaluate the implementation of policy by cadres deployed in government. A monitoring and evaluation mechanism should be developed and include annual assessment of public representatives by branches and regions and mid-term performance evaluations by provinces and HQ.

- The National Policy Conference should become a consultative platform for policy review in the run-up to National Conferences and a consultative body for the development of the Election Manifesto in the run-up to elections.
- The Policy Institute should be actualised as a matter of utmost priority
- We should strengthen list guidelines and processes for public representatives to enhance democratic participation, ensure that we select and deploy the best cadres for public office and involve the broader community in our candidate selection processes.
- Champion the introduction of a comprehensive system of public funding of representative political parties in the different spheres of government and civil society organisations. (Implement) an effective regulatory architecture for private funding of political parties and civil society groups to enhance accountability and transparency.
- Confirm the relevance of the alliance, united in action for the joint programme of social transformation. Enhance coordination amongst alliance partners, and strengthen the organisational capacity of each individual component.

Transformation of the State

The Resolution on Transformation of State and Governance has some progressive dimensions, including proposals to:

- abolish *floor crossing*;
- the creation of a *single public service* needs to involve an engagement with relevant Alliance structures;
- introduce *measures to combat corruption* both by “those who corrupt as well as those who are corrupted”. The resolution however is short on detail;
- on *post-tenure employment rules* for elected representatives and public servants, the NEC needs to urgently develop a framework to regulate “the flow of skills between the public and private sector”. The resolution proposes elements, which must guide this framework.

International

The Resolution on International Relations proposes, inter alia:

- that the ANC, should ensure “changes of colonial patterns of economic relations, and creates possibilities for equitable and balanced North-South relations, transformation and beneficiation of African natural resources, sustainable flows of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), market access for products from the South to generate employment, and contribute to poverty eradication”;
- the Resolution calls for a legislated code of good business practice, for South African companies doing business in the continent, and for the ANC to interact with countries in Africa to: encourage them to strengthen their labour and trade laws; and encourage the private sector/business to comply with the standards of the International Labour Organisation (ILO);
- on Migration, Immigrants and Xenophobia, the ANC needs to review the current policy, legislation and systems; harmonise policies in SADC; and embark on programmes to combat xenophobia;

- convene a meeting of progressive parties and movements in Africa, as a run-up to holding a global meeting of all progressive movements; and formalize relations with progressive movements particularly in Latin America and Asia;
- to support various international struggles of oppressed peoples;
- to reject current moves by the USA to enlarge its military presence in Africa by establishing the African Command military Centre (Africom).

It needs to be stressed however, that while this progressive trend was definitely dominant, there are a few problematic elements in the Polokwane resolutions, as well as a number of ambivalent areas, which can be interpreted to mean different or even opposite things. This has been analysed in detail in a document adopted by the COSATU CEC in February this year, and can be found on the website at www.cosatu.org.za/press/2008/feb/press31.htm

The Alliance Economic Summit

Guided by the Polokwane resolutions and the Freedom Charter's call that "The people shall share in the country's wealth", the Alliance Economic Summit in October 2008 agreed amongst other things that existing government economic policies needed to be reviewed and that "decisive action is required to transform the patterns of wealth production and distribution. Macroeconomic policy needs to support economic development and employment creation. Interest rate policy, while continuing to be directed at containing inflation should also be sensitive to its impact on the productive economy and employment. The priority, in line with the Polokwane resolutions, is to create decent jobs and combat poverty and unemployment".

The Summit declared "industrial policy can play an important role in ensuring decent standards of work and a growing income for workers. Practices such as labour broking and casualisation should be reviewed, given the damage they cause to labour standards. Regulation should be introduced to address this matter".

It also noted with concern "the high levels of executive pay in the corporate sector and State Owned Enterprises as well as the huge income inequalities in the labour market and called for consideration of ways to promote more equitable income outcomes" and "implement the decent work agenda, as defined by the ILO."

The Summit agreed that "resource-based policies should ensure maximum downstream economic activities through beneficiation to increase the level of jobs in the local economy and this framework should embrace minerals, agriculture and the marine sector. Infrastructure needs to be biased towards growing increasingly diversified and complex manufactured exports rather than encouraging the export of un- and semi- beneficiated exports of bulk commodities."

The Summit also raised the need to reintroduce legislated prescribed asset requirements, to compel retirement funds, which control nearly R3 trillion in workers' assets to direct a certain portion of their investments into socially productive investment, such as co-ops, community investment programmes and providing infrastructural and financial help to small businesses.

The Summit agreed on the need for a high level planning, evaluation and monitoring capacity in government. Its preferred option was a Planning Commission, headed by the Presidency, with the power to align the work of all Departments of government and organs of state to government's developmental agenda. The Commission would promote the alignment of government budgets with developmental planning, set broad targets through medium- and long-term plans, conduct strategic risk assessment.

Should COSATU be getting involved in politics?

The Shikota splinter group, in divide COSATU, and isolate workers from the ANC, is creating questions about why COSATU is involved in politics. It argues that workers should not be forced to adopt a particular political line. The Shikota grouping is even allege that unions have been “hijacked”, and Willie Madisha has been quoted as saying that unions should be “non-political.”

This is exactly the line that employers and the apartheid state have always taken to weaken the working class and its organisations. But there may be some workers who have genuine questions on this issue.

Firstly, the obvious point needs to be stated that workers, through Congresses and other structures of the labour movement, democratically determine the political direction of the Federation and affiliates. They can shift that direction where they believe it is necessary.

In the event, a series of surveys of workers taken by the Sociology of Work Programme at Wits University since 1990 have found that the political and economic policies of COSATU are totally in line with the perspectives of the vast majority of workers. They found that democratic mandating processes ensure that the leadership stays in tune with members’ wishes.

In short, the issue is not how political unions are, but how democratic they are. The question that could be asked is whether the policies of unions outside of COSATU are in all cases democratically determined, and in line with *their* memberships’ wishes?

Secondly, COSATU’s power politically, and its militant mass organisation, has enabled it to engage from a position of strength in a whole host of forums- whether in Parliament, in the Alliance, in NEDLAC or in bilateral with government. The entrenchment of worker rights in the Constitution, the achievement of progressive labour legislation, and many other gains have been the result of the political militancy of COSATU.

Thirdly, leaving aside the question of the content of the political policies of COSATU, the critics need to ask whether the “non-political unions” been more effective in advancing the bread-and-butter interests of their members than COSATU affiliates? Without being complacent - and COSATU and our affiliates are the first to be self-critical about weaknesses which need to be addressed in servicing of members, improving organisation etc. - our track record speaks for itself.

Surveys show that union members, particularly those in well-organised, democratically controlled and militant unions, are better off in terms of issues such as wages, overtime, retirement fund and medical aid benefits, health and safety etc than those in weak unions, and workers who are not members of unions. This power is asserted both at the workplace, and at national bargaining forums.

Furthermore, COSATU’s organisational militancy, and strategic political stance, has been more effective in advancing workers economic interests at a national level, than those unions that have taken a passive stance or have confined themselves to the workplace.

For example, COSATU campaigns led to privatisation policies being abandoned; to the adoption of more expansionary fiscal and monetary policies and more involvement by the state in the economy; to policies geared to employment creation, such as the public- investment programme, the expanded public works programme, greater employment in the public service, and the extension of social grants to the poor; and the establishment of free basic services as a right. The politically conscious and mobilised stance of COSATU has achieved far more for workers than if we had confined our action narrowly to the workplace.

Finally, COSATU has never said or forced its members to be members of the ANC and or SACP. We respect their right to be members of parties of the choice. Indeed a lot of COSATU

members belong to other political parties. COSATU members through democratic means at their union congresses have simply made a political choice to be in Alliance with the ANC and SACP, as the overwhelming majority of members believe that these are the organisations that are most able to advance the interests of workers.

As the CEC said in its message to workers at the last elections: “Our support for the ANC does not mean we are ignoring workers who belong to and support other parties. As a union federation, we serve all our members, regardless of their political standpoint. We are a home for all workers. Our main goal is to unite all workers so that, together, they can improve their wages and working conditions and defend their jobs.”

What is Shikota offering the working class?

Polokwane and the Economics Summit mapped out a clear pro-working class agenda. What does the Shikota breakaway propose as a way forward for workers? No policy, just splits, and confusion.

In response to the Polokwane revolt against the conservative policies of the 1996 class project and for democratic control of our movement, we now have a breakaway splinter that is objectively anti-working class in its character. True, it tries to dress up in the nice looking clothes of the Constitution and the Freedom Charter. Moreover, it has not broken away on the basis of a clear policy platform or openly stated policy difference with the ANC. Even though the Shikota clique would have us believe that they left the ANC out of “principle”, everyone knows that they left because they lost the debate in the movement, not to mention their leadership positions.

At the core of Shikota’s strategic agenda is to disorganise the organisations of the working class, and draw support from them both at political and workplace levels. They think that the only way they can do this is to lay claim to the traditions and symbols of our movement, such as the Freedom Charter, and to pursue an active agenda to split our organisations. They suddenly despise the ANC yet they want to keep its symbols. That is why they now call themselves the “Congress of the People.”

This strategy of kill and cannibalise our movement is a kick in the teeth for everything our people have tried to build up over many decades, centred on unity of our people and building our organisations as our shield, and our spear. The unprincipled and opportunist nature of this splinter is not new in the history of our movement. Our movement has faced many such challenges, and will face more in the future. But it is particularly disgraceful that a grouping, with no openly stated ideological or policy reasons for leaving the movement, is prepared to sacrifice the unity of workers’ organisations, which so many have struggled and even given their lives for.

Splitting the union movement

It is not accidental that the splinter party is attempting to use many former trade unionists to penetrate, divide and weaken our revolutionary federation. Some of these people have been politically inactive for years and are now businesspeople.

The people behind this class agenda know that they must start by weakening and dividing COSATU, which they have identified as a pillar upholding the strength of the ANC. COSATU is the most organised formation of the Alliance, present literally everywhere in the country. So it is a strategic target for all who seek to weaken and destroy the ANC and the NDR.

Former COSATU President Willie Madisha held a meeting with NUMSA and NUM shop stewards in Gauteng. He says unions from a number of federations are working together to establish a new federation that would “outnumber COSATU”. At their ANC breakaway National

Convention in Sandton, Madisha said: "We are going to have the biggest union in the country. And that is not going to take time. Give us six months and you will see."

The issue is not whether attempts to create an alternative federation will succeed or not. We know that this is an impossible task. The issue is also not whether Shikota can mobilise large numbers – we know they cannot.

But we must always be concerned about the potential for conflict amongst workers and for disruptive activities. In this regard we recall the following incidents from our history.

- In 1986, hardly a year after the formation of COSATU, the IFP, funded by the apartheid regime through Adriaan Vlok's departmental funds, established a right-wing labour federation, the United Workers Union of South Africa (UWUSA), as a direct counter to COSATU. The apartheid regime was extremely worried about the existence of a revolutionary trade union federation and sought to counter that potential power with a sweetheart federation of a special type – one with no affiliated unions. It did not succeed to destroy COSATU because essentially it was not a genuine union. Its agenda was purely and narrow political. A few years down the line it died its natural death.
- In 1997, the five *madoda* in Rustenburg and the small union calling itself *Mouthpiece*, linked to the IFP, caused mayhem. Their activities led to the killing of the NUM Carletonville regional chairperson, Comrade Selby Mayise, and other shaft stewards in Carletonville, when they convinced workers to join unprotected strikes in demand of death benefits and provident funds.
- NUMSA in Volkswagen faced a similar challenge in 2000 when a man not even employed by the company worked with *indlu yengwevu*, which was a faction within the plant, and managed to mobilise thousands of NUMSA members to embark on an unprotected strike. Their demands had nothing to do with improving conditions of employment but they had grievances against certain shop stewards. Thousands of workers were dismissed as a result.
- OGAWU, which is was a splinter union formed by a former CEPPWAWU President, opportunistically took the matter up and lost in every court including in the ILO. OGAWU tried to use this to counter-organise not only CEPPWAWU but also SACTWU and other unions they thought were vulnerable in the Port Elizabeth area. It failed!
- In 1995 Turning Wheels – a small union - mobilised truck drivers who were otherwise members of SATAWU. It staged a highway blockade near Mooiriver that lasted days.
- Recently 3000 workers were led by a small crisis committee of a mere seven people in the uranium mine near Klerksdorp. All these workers have been dismissed. The NUM must now fight for their reinstatement – the crisis committee is nowhere to be found.

In all these examples the small crisis committees and/or unions never existed outside the strikes. But the impact on the union, the Federation and even the economy was huge.

This is why we need cool heads and a clear strategy to deal with the threat politically. To patiently explain to workers, including those who may be confused or have genuine grievances against the movement, why this splinter is so dangerous to the unity and fighting capacity of the working class. Only when we have done this political work will the splinter group find itself isolated and without any support amongst workers. They will then go the route of all other such divisive splinters we have dealt with over the last 96 years - into the dustbin of history.

Splitting the Alliance - the wedge drivers

One thread that runs through all the groupings that have broken away or engaged in factionalist activity in our liberation movement is their anti-communism and anti-worker, anti-trade-union attitude. Often they express themselves in exactly the same way as the apartheid regime. Like their predecessors, the 2008 dissidents have turned their anti-communist volume ever louder, coinciding with the campaign to project the ANC as having been “captured” by communists and COSATU.

In his closing remarks to the ANC Morogoro Conference in 1969, the then President of the ANC, Comrade Oliver Tambo, responding to anti-communist sentiments in the movement, warned about the dangers of such elements within our movement:

"Be vigilant comrades... Beware of the wedge-driver, the man who creeps from ear to ear, carrying a bag full of wedges, driving them in between you and the next man, between a group and another, a man who goes round creating splits and divisions. Beware of the wedge-driver, comrades. Watch his poisonous tongue".

The history of splits in the movement and the card of anti-communism

Early splits

Comrade Jeff Radebe summarises the first experience of splits in his article to the ANC Today Volume 8, No. 42, 24-30 October 2008, as follows:

"In the past 60 years or so, but particularly during and after the Second World War, there was a radical push for the leadership of the ANC to adapt to the changed political landscape both locally and internationally. Inspired largely by the independence of India, this demand for change grew in intensity. The ANC Youth League led by Lembede, Majombozi, Sisulu, Tambo and Mandela, demanded radical change - mass action, mass mobilisation of the people of South Africa, as opposed to the main political activities of the leadership of the time which was characterised by representations, deputations and petitions to the colonial masters and apartheid regime.

"This culminated into the watershed 1949 ANC National Conference with the adoption of the Programme of Action, inspired by the ANC Youth League conference resolutions of 1948 and saw the replacement of the conservative leadership of Dr Xuma by Dr Moroka, with Walter Sisulu being the first ANCYL leader of the 1944 generation to occupy a very senior leadership role as ANC Secretary General.

"There were unhappy and disgruntled supporters of Dr Xuma who broke away from the ANC and formed the African Minded Group led by Selope Tema. This breakaway was linked to policy change brought by the Programme of Action, and the changes and the direction of the newly elected leadership.

"The roaring 1950's saw the emergence of the ANC as a mass movement organising the first national strike in 1950 and followed by the 1952 Defiance Campaign. At this point, the ANC needed to articulate a clear vision as to where we are going as a people and ascertain the correctness of some of the actions being taken."

Sound familiar?

Splinter 2: The PAC in 1959

The leaders of the PAC broke away from the ANC after having failed to be elected into ANC's leadership positions. The PAC broke away because of the non-racial character of the Congress Alliance, and most significantly its hatred for communists.

The PAC also tried to build a right-wing union movement to counter SACTU activities, especially during the underground days. A key figure in these attempts was one of the leading

PAC founders, Nelson Nana Mahomo, who was secretly working with the CIA-sponsored African-American Labour Centre (AALC) established in 1964. The AALC focused on building reactionary trade unions as part of an offensive to separate African trade unions from progressive liberation and independence movements.

Just like the current grouping failed to (re)capture the ANC in Polokwane, the PAC claimed to be the true custodians of the "ANC of 1912".

The PAC has since witnessed multiple splits and is now practically a dead organisation, an illustration of what happens when organisations are founded on opportunism to fight for positions, instead of acting on a principled programme.

Splinter 3: The Gang of Eight of the 1970s

Yet another reactionary grouping was started by eight leaders who tried to capture or split the ANC in the 1970s on a platform of, amongst others, attacking the role of communists and whites in the broader liberation movement. This group came to be known as the Gang of Eight, and was expelled from the ANC in 1975.

The SACP Central Committee had this to say about this group in a 1976 statement: "The issues on which they have chosen to attack the liberation movement are as old as the struggle itself. The slander that the ANC is run by the Communist Party is not something new; the racists and those who act as their agents have always spread it. And it has always been designed to weaken the people's struggle. As early as the 1920's, liberals like Ballinger helped destroy the ICU by raising the banner of anti-Communism, and spreading scare stories about 'Communist take-overs'. In the late 1950s, the breakaway PAC group also used the white liberal parrot-cry that 'the Communist were running the ANC' in an attempt to destroy it".

In one of its statements, the Gang of Eight spewed the same anti-communist bile that we see re-emerging with the 2008 conventioners. "The SACP relies entirely on using the ANC as its front organisation," they said in the early 1970s. The gang also ended up attacking the outcomes of the Morogoro conference, yet its members participated in that conference, at which their narrow nationalist positions were defeated.

Sound familiar?

The Gang of Eight launched its offensive when the apartheid regime was tightening repression against our people especially in the wake of the 1973 workers' strikes, and increasingly labelling the ANC as a front for the communists. But the Gang of Eight is now an almost forgotten footnote in our history of struggle.

Splinter 4: Inkatha yeNkululeko YeSizwe

Another organisation formed initially with the consent of the ANC, albeit under different conditions, was Inkatha yeNkululeko YeSizwe, now refashioned as the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP).

The IFP, founded in 1975, was quickly captured by an anti-ANC elite made up of some of the most backward elements within the ranks of traditional leaders, senior bureaucrats and business beneficiaries of the then KwaZulu Territorial Authority, a forerunner to the KwaZulu Bantustan.

At the heart of the IFP's offensive was rabid anti-communism, unashamedly reflecting similar accusations by the apartheid regime that "the ANC was a communist front." The IFP perhaps went further than many of its predecessor splinters from the ANC by fully collaborating with the apartheid regime in unleashing violent counter-revolutionary warfare against the liberation movement, culminating in its attempts to try and derail the 1994 elections.

In 1986, hardly a year after the formation of COSATU, the IFP, funded by the apartheid regime through Adriaan Vlok's departmental funds, established UWUSA as a direct counter to COSATU. Similarly the 2008 splinter from the ANC is also planning to establish a labour federation directly aimed at weakening and undermining COSATU.

Splinter 5: The United Democratic Movement

In the 1990s, after Bantu Holomisa was expelled from the ANC, he worked with former National Party Minister Roelf Meyer to form the United Democratic Movement (UDM). Like the other splinters, its concern is also with the communists, as Holomisa said in a speech in October 2008:

"South Africa doesn't deserve a one-party state, and we certainly don't deserve to be governed by ANC puppets controlled by communists who don't even have the guts to participate in elections."

Holomisa sought to organize some disgruntled trade unionists in NUM associated with the "Five Madoda", which caused such chaos in the mines around 1997. The UDM is now an insignificant regional party.

Splinter 6: 2008 - a Black DA?

The latest splinter from the ANC joins this long list of anti-communist and anti-working class crusaders.

We are therefore not surprised that the 2008 splinter group has found common cause with the likes of the DA, IFP, UDM and other opposition parties. One common factor that draws them together is their anti-communist and anti-working class, anti-trade-union political outlook. This ganging up is further proof that there is more in common between the dissidents and the likes of DA than with the Polokwane resolutions and mandate. Will this reactionary grouping go the way of its political ancestors?

This brief history summarises a longer article carried in Umsebenzi Online Volume 7 no 19

What does Shikota claim to stand for?

The difficulty in comparing the policies of the ANC with the "COP" is that the breakaway party has yet to reveal in any detail what its policies will be. The declaration of the "National convention" issued on November 2, 2008, was a collection of empty platitudes. One journalist at their press conference summed it up when he asked: "Is there anything in your declaration that any other party would not agree with?"

We can however look at the declaration and contrast it with the track record of Lekota and his friends when they were in office. The declaration says the new party:

- Seeks to mobilise all South Africans in "defending our democracy and the constitution" and to defend it as the supreme law of the Republic.
- Undertakes to redouble efforts to build and strengthen a "cohesive society that celebrates diversity by upholding the fundamental values of respect, integrity, *ubuntu*, compassion, openness, and solidarity."
- Asserts that "no citizen can be above the law," whatever their circumstances; rejects the implied threat to rule of law in the behaviour and actions of certain political players in our country, resolves to defend the right of equality before the law, and further resolves to defend the right to freedom of association, of speech and free political activity.

- Believes in political system premised on “open, transparent and regular dialogue” with all South Africans and the regular refreshing of the mandate for our political representatives.
- Believes organised citizens should be able to take direct responsibility for some of their concerns and to “exercise effective oversight over the leaders” they choose at elections.
- Believes that our electoral system should allow for ongoing dialogue on political, economic and social issues through more direct and diverse electoral structures and process, and resolves that electoral reform must take place where all the public representatives must be elected directly to improve public accountability.

Democracy, it says, must mean more than just voting once in five years; it must include participation in active economic life, in security of our people from crime, joblessness, poverty, lack of education and diseases especially HIV/AIDS.

Questions to the Shikota Black DA

As COSATU has already said in its pamphlet *Questions for our Born-Again Democrats*, “this is hypocrisy of the highest order. The public record of these people reveals them to have opposed in practice every one of these principles”. The pamphlet went on to demand that they answer questions on these twelve key areas.

Area 1: Organisational democracy and political tolerance

Leaders of this splinter have claimed to be fighting against undemocratic organisational practices, and promoting political tolerance. But we ask:

- Why have they refused to accept the democratic process at the ANC’s National Conference in Polokwane?
- Why were Terror Lekota and his allies the most brutal enforcers of the undemocratic practices of the former ANC leadership, through the use of patronage, politics of fear and labelling, and abuse of state institutions?
- What kind of democracy is it when key policies are imposed from above? Yet in which ANC Conference, NGC, NEC or branch was GEAR ever discussed before being declared non-negotiable? In which ANC Conference, NGC, NEC or branch was AsgiSA discussed before being publicly announced?
- Is their real reason for refusing to fight *from within the ANC* (against what they claim are “undemocratic practices” post-Polokwane) that the membership has democratically removed them from positions of power?
- Are they going to reintroduce this undemocratic culture into the party they plan to launch?

Area 2: Policy - in whose interests?

So far, Shikota have completely ducked the question of what is the policy basis, if any, for their disagreement with the ANC or the Polokwane Resolutions, and why they have not raised these differences within the ANC. We can only assume, based on their track record and the elitist pro business agenda they have come to represent, that they will continue to advance their pro-rich and anti-working class platform, which no doubt will be dressed up in quasi-liberal DA-babble. So we must question on economic policy:

- Is your unhappiness with the ANC that it has decisively shifted away from the pro-rich, anti-RDP and anti-Freedom Charter policies launched with GEAR, and now wants to move government in a pro-poor direction?

- Why did you not object when the RDP was abandoned in favour of the neo-liberal GEAR strategy that led to massive job losses, poverty and widening inequalities, and left white monopoly capital in the same dominant position as under apartheid?
- Why did you not oppose privatisation of basic services, which led to retrenchments, higher tariffs and poorer service?
- Why did you not oppose the commodification of basic services that led to the poor working class communities being forced to buy their water and electricity in advance through the installation of prepaid meters whilst the rich continue to use their service on credit?
- Will your party propose a return to the 1996 GEAR project, which has created such devastation in our country?

On the issue of electoral reform, which is the only policy they have felt safe to talk about, given the interests of their constituency, they have come up with a completely opportunistic and contradictory mixture of ideas. Shilowa now claims to be in favour of a constituency-based electoral system, which he concedes he consistently opposed while he was in the ANC, despite COSATU's long standing campaign for a reform so that we have a mixture of the constituency-based and proportional electoral system. We ask:

- Isn't this sudden change pure opportunism, to tap into workers' and the broader public's unhappiness with the current electoral system?
- Does this sudden support for a constituency system reflect the fact that a democratised ANC now has the power to ensure accountability of its MPs to the electoral mandate, as opposed to previously when a clique in government imposed its own agenda?
- Linked to this, if they genuinely support the principle of constituency accountability by MPs, why are they opposing it for the President, who in terms of our constitution can be recalled by Parliament or the ruling party?
- Is it because Comrade Mbeki was recalled, or do they want a US-style presidential system in which the President is beholden to rich and powerful interests, and unaccountable to elected representatives of the people?
- Is accountability selective?
- Will such policy contradictions be a feature of the new party?

Area 3: Defence of the Freedom Charter

The Shikota group opportunistically claim to support the Freedom Charter and have even had the cheek to take their name from the event which adopted it, because they know how close it is to the hearts of our people. Yet they are responsible for consistently attempting to drive the movement away from the ideals of the Charter, and have argued that it is a historical document no longer relevant to our times. In fact one of this grouping's key ideologues argued in an Alliance meeting in 2001 that the Charter was outdated and should be abandoned. Therefore they need to answer:

- Why do they only talk about one clause of the Charter: "All Shall be Equal before the Law" - which as we show below they have violated - but remain silent on the other clauses?
- Is it because these other clauses are against their class interests? Why are they silent on key clauses such as "the people shall govern" (which requires respect for the outcome of democratic processes), "the people shall share in the country's wealth" (not the wealth shall be owned by a small elite), the land shall be shared amongst those who work it (not

appropriated by a few for game lodges and wine farms), and that “there shall be work and security” (not we shall pursue policies which lead to mass unemployment, casualisation and hunger)?

Area 4: Rule of law and protecting the institutions of democracy

This grouping’s support for cronyism, unaccountability and abuse of state institutions to advance narrow political objectives is well known. As recent events including the Nicholson judgement showed, this extended to abuse of state institutions, including the NPA, to hound and prosecute their political opponents.

The Pikoli, Selebi, Zuma and other episodes show a complete contempt for our democratic institutions, and demonstrate that indeed, all have *not* been equal before the law. Therefore we need to ask:

- What makes this group think that we will trust them with our democratic institutions, when they have totally failed to defend them in the past?
- What have they done, during their term of office, to fight corruption and cronyism?
- If their party comes to power, will they again support these practices?

Area 5: The arms deal and the SANDF

Two of the main movers in this group are the former Minister of Defence and his former Deputy Minister. Yet not once have they stood up against the undemocratic imposition of the arms deal on the country. On the contrary, they defended it. Further they have been guilty of the perpetration of undemocratic and authoritarian practices in the SANDF. So we need to ask those thinking of joining this new grouping if they are happy being led by people:

- Who defended the arms deal at all costs;
- Who, as Ministers, told defence force unions that they were prepared to issue instructions for the army to fire live bullets on workers during the 2007 public sector strike;
- Who refused to allow the unions in the SANDF their democratic right to affiliate to COSATU;
- Who dismissed female SANDF members who got pregnant whilst in service;
- Who supported discrimination against security force members living with HIV/AIDS, and defied the court when they ordered the SANDF to stop this type of discrimination?
- Will they support an independent judicial commission of enquiry into the arms deal?

Area 6: Splitting the labour movement

A number of key figures in the Shikota group historically come from the labour movement. In the past they have solemnly committed themselves to advance a fundamental goal of labour - the unification of workers and the creation of one federation in the country. They undertook to do nothing that would divide workers or undermine worker unity. We therefore ask:

- Why are they now irresponsibly attempting to stoke divisions in the labour movement and undermine union structures, and talking of setting up a federation to oppose COSATU?
- Is this because they need the electoral muscle of workers and want to use them as electoral fodder in setting up their black DA?
- Or is it to weaken workers in the interests of their businesses and those of their friends?
- Have they now completely abandoned any pretence of supporting the interests of the workers and the poor?

Area 7: Ethnicity

Figures in this grouping have professed to oppose what they claim is the promotion of ethnicity in the post-Polokwane leadership, despite all objective evidence to the contrary. This is ironic given the emergence of a worrying ethnic dimension, foreign to our politics, which in part was fuelled by the undemocratic ethos that crept into the post-1996 ANC. In fact the Shikota grouping, more than any other, was associated with ethnic mobilisation, both in the ANC, and the labour movement. Therefore we need to ask:

- Does this grouping, including Terror Lekota, now distance itself from the ethnic-based mobilisation they promoted in the past in the ANC and labour movement?
- Should we believe that such unprincipled behaviour would not again be promoted in their new party?

Area 8: HIV/AIDS

Hundreds of thousands of South Africans have died unnecessarily from AIDS, in large part as a result of the denialism of the previous leadership with which this group is associated. At least 330 000 people have died - a number big enough to fill Ellis Park stadium six times over. Thabo Mbeki said in September 2003: "Personally, I don't know anybody who has died of Aids. I really, honestly don't." So we ask:

- Why is it that not a single leader of this Shikota grouping ever spoke out when they were in government against the former President's denial that HIV causes AIDS?
- Why did they never condemn President Thabo Mbeki when he claimed that he had not known anyone dying of AIDS at a time when government statistics showed that over 900 were dying of AIDS every day?
- Why did they never raise their voices when the former Minister of Health, Manto Tshabalala Msimang, sent out confusing messages about beetroot and garlic at the time when ANC policy demanded access to antiretrovirals?
- Why did not a single one of them come to the defence of the former Deputy Minister, Nosizwe Madlala Routledge when she was fired by the former President for standing up for the health of our people?
- Can we expect a continuation of this denialism and amoral behaviour when they form their party?

Area 9: Zimbabwe and democracy in the region

We have all watched in disbelief as the previous leadership in government, of which the Shikota group were part, allowed and even tacitly encouraged the undemocratic conduct of leaders in the region. In part, it appeared that this support was based on fear that a successful challenge to authoritarianism in those countries would lead to a challenge to undemocratic practices in our country.

The hardship, repression and hunger which many of our neighbours have experienced, especially in Zimbabwe and Swaziland, is in no small measure as a result of this policy of "quiet diplomacy" which the Shikota group supported. We received no support from them for our attempts to mobilise in solidarity with our neighbours. Rather we were subjected to all types of insults and lectures. Therefore we ask:

- Will they continue to follow this approach of political denialism in the region, and continue to turn a blind eye to the suffering of our African brothers and sisters?

- Are they aware of the linkage between these short-sighted policies, their disastrous economic policies and the eruption of xenophobic attacks earlier this year?

Area 10: The Constitution and “Second Generation Rights”

Apparently bankrupt of any policies to sell to the electorate, the Shikota group now claim to want to support the Second Generation rights in the Constitution. Perhaps they think this vague enough to be safe, especially for their elite constituency.

But when unpacked these second-generation or socio-economic rights are the very rights which the labour movement and our allies fought for in the Constitution, and which the economic policies of this group have consistently frustrated. Rights to health, water, housing, education, social security, among others, have been frustrated by the commodification and privatisation of many of these areas. We therefore ask:

- Are they going to abandon economic policies that effectively deny many of our people access to these basic rights? Will they advocate scrapping pre-paid meters, which they introduced when they were in power?
- Will they abandon their opposition to a Basic Income Grant?
- Will they agree that provision of these services needs to be brought under public ownership?

Area 11: Funding of political parties

COSATU, IDASA and many civil society formations have for many years argued that the political parties should disclose their sources of financial support. The Shikota grouping, formerly in charge of the ANC, rejected this demand out of hand when they were in government. Now they opportunistically claim to support this demand, yet they have yet to disclose the sources of their own funding.

We ask:

- Who is bankrolling the Shikota party? Only super-rich Wendy Luhabe, Shilowa’s wife, has openly declared that she is the source of funding, but did not disclose how much she provided. Her riches come, in part, from the R100-million interest-free loan she received from the government’s IDC, whose board she chairs.
- Who has enabled Shikota to afford to rent the Sandton Convention Centre and provide accommodation for a few thousand people over night?
- When Shilowa declared recently “money is not going to be a problem,” where was the money coming from – and was any of it from outside the country?
- What is the interest of those bank-rolling the Shikota party?
- Are they not awash with money because the conservatives in business see their mission as holding a potential for their historic mission to defeat the ANC and frustrate the NDR?

Area 12: Managing differences in the Shikota party

The Shikota grouping is led by the people who refused to subject themselves to democratic processes. We want to know from them:

- How will they manage differences in the Shikota party? Will they encourage splits every time their members lose contests for leadership positions in the party?
- Will they encourage members to form a breakaway every time there are genuine organisational problems in the organisation?

- How will they resolve policy differences? If any grouping loses a debate will they encourage such a grouping to form a new political party?

We are still waiting for answers! If they were to answer all these questions truthfully, they would reveal that they have no programme to address the challenges facing the working class - unemployment, poor quality jobs, poverty, inequality and crime. They can only offer more of the same policies that have failed to solve these problems in the past 13 years. The fact is that Shikota belongs to people opposed to the pro-worker and pro-poor resolutions from Polokwane, in favour of pro-capitalist and pro-rich policies.

The movement's response

How then should we take on this new challenge? Appeals to the "COP" leaders to accept the discipline of the ANC and fight for their views within its structures have fallen on deaf ears. They have walked out and declared war on our organisations.

It doesn't help to denounce the rebels in terms of personal abuse, however justified we might feel emotionally. We have to tackle them politically - as COSATU has already done in its statement, *Questions for our Born-Again Democrats* – and expose their class agenda.

But we must also recognise that some supporters of the 1996 Class project's policies remain within the ANC leadership and government, and they do not intend to join Shikota. A political critique of the "COP" inevitably implies a criticism of those still within the ANC who share their outlook.

We do not want any further splits in the ANC. Rather, we want an honest discussion and contention. We did not leave the ANC before, when our views were being silenced. The worst possible response to the new party would be to muffle our political criticisms and pretend that it is purely a disciplinary matter, in the hope that this will persuade others still on board not to jump from the ANC ship. We need to be open and direct in our criticism of this agenda, remain firm on our democratic principles, even while we demonstrate flexibility in our political tactics. As always, we must isolate the opposition and maximise our allies without compromising our strategic objectives.

It is better to confront these political differences now, lest we leave the membership of COSATU and the ANC confused and demoralised because they cannot see the real agenda of the new party.

We should accept that not all of those who were in the past associated with the 1996 class project want to leave the ANC. These comrades are welcome to remain in the organisation, provided they commit themselves to the democratic discipline of the ANC as well as to the Polokwane resolutions and mandate.

The Way Forward

The Shikota "COP" will never agree to the policies adopted at Polokwane. Their big business friends will demand that they stick to their 1996 Class Project policies and remain on the road that has led to high unemployment and poverty and growing inequalities.

Members and cadres of our movement, while not ignoring the splinter faction, must not be distracted by the emergence of this new grouping. We must focus on the key challenges facing our revolution, including preparing for an overwhelming ANC electoral victory in 2009.

The task before us now is to ensure that the progressive policies of the Alliance are fully incorporated into the ANC election manifesto and then implemented by the new ANC government led by Comrade Jacob Zuma next year. It will open up the next phase of the national democratic revolution and create a better life for all South Africans.

We also need to develop strategies to deal with changing conditions, including strategies to reach out to the youth, especially young workers, the new middle strata, professionals etc. We need to be more creative in dealing with hostile media and other groupings, and find ways to communicate our perspectives more effectively. Above all, we must remain focused on the key strategic and policy questions, and avoid being diverted from the real issues or scoring own goals that give ammunition to the other side. Unlike our adversaries we don't need to rely on disinformation or coercion to advance our agenda - we have the strength of our organisation, our policies and our revolutionary morality.

A lesson we need to learn from this saga is the importance of consolidating and deepening democracy in our organisations, so that we never again allow a clique to hijack them. Unlike the Shikotas, we must fight to advance our positions democratically within our organisations, not walk away when there are problems.

We also need to ensure that we address organisational weaknesses and real grievances that members may have against our organisations. We need to acknowledge that people do have real grievances, including against the ANC, that are partly although not exclusively the legacy of 12 years of damage resulting from mismanagement of the organisation and deliberate demobilisation of the masses and the ANC structures. There is little doubt that the Shikotas will exploit every little crack and grievance in our movement.

A necessary part of this task is to politically expose and isolate the "COP" from any source of mass support. The way to make certain that workers reject their advances is through ensuring that political discussions take place in every workplace and community to expose their agenda. We should neither over- or under-estimate the threat.

This splinter grouping will never destroy the revolutionary determination of the South African people to complete the NDR. It will never break the will of the South African workers to transform the lives of their families and communities. Unless we take decisive action to prevent it, however it could cause serious disruption, and confusion. It could delay the next phase of the NDR and leave people mired in poverty for many more years.

The struggle against the "COP" is the struggle of revolution and fundamental transformation, against neo-liberalism and derailing of our historical mission of national liberation. It is the struggle for a mass participatory democracy against an elite "democracy" for the few. It is the struggle for people to have real control over their economic and social destiny, against a system, which reduces democracy to a hollow vote, with no ability to control the real decisions, which affect our lives.

The Alliance has chosen the high road, the Shikota "COP" the low road.

Which one will you choose?