



RURAL COMMUNITIES WILL SUFFER THE MOST IF THE SA POST OFFICE EMBARKS ON MASS RETRENCHMENTS OF WORKERS

20 February 2023

Press statement

The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) has noted the statement released by the Communications Workers Union (CWU), regarding the possible dismissal of 6000 workers at the South African Post Office (SAPO). Workers have been served with a section 189 and 189 (A) notice where the Post Office contemplates retrenching 6000 workers. We condemn the ANC and also the DA for continuing its attack on the working class. We are including the DA in this criticism because the ANC is unashamedly implementing DA policies of privatizing all SOE's. The DA confirmed in the 2022 State of The Nation Address, that President Ramaphosa was singing from their hymn book of the DA when he said,

*"We all know that government does **not** create jobs, **businesses** create jobs".*

We feel it is important to ensure that the working class is not misled on this issue. In Cyril Ramaphosa the DA has no need for a black leader because Ramaphosa is a willing stooge of the DA, and he is determined to implement their reactionary policies. The main agenda which Ramaphosa is driving, which benefits the DA, is the privatization of all SOE's.

The mass retrenchments at SOE's have become a hallmark of governments' economic policy which is to collapse state owned entities and slash jobs in order to enable the private sector to play a greater role in providing those services. Workers and their benefits are used as part of the litany of lame excuses, which are used to justify job cuts. As we speak the private sector is consolidating its position in the postal and courier market.

We have seen a consistent attack on all SOE's. SAA, SAA Technical, Mango, Denel, Eskom and now SAPO are all victims of the ANC and the DA's neo-liberal macro-economic policies. The consequences are dire for workers at all these SOE's because thousands of jobs are shed in the process.

At the same time, it is disgraceful that no consideration was given at all to rural communities and how this will affect them. For many rural communities in the most far flung corners of this country, the post office is the only way for them to connect with the outside world. The post office in many towns is the hub of the community because it assists with pension pay-outs and other services. The post office is where commercial activity takes place and the retrenchments, if they are implemented, means that many of these offices in rural towns will be shut down, or the service will be radically compromised. We can expect that the payment of SASSA grants will be severely affected by the job cuts. The private sector is only interested in driving profits and they have no interest in serving the indigent or the poor because that is the responsibility of the state, and unfortunately, the ANC, has washed its hands of the working class. The ANC has no interest in serving the masses.

The loss of six thousand jobs means six thousand families will be affected, and we know that the majority of African workers support at least seven unemployed family members, therefore the impact on society at large will be devastating. It is even worse that this is happening against the backdrop of a 43% unemployment rate, (according to the expanded definition), coupled

with high levels of poverty and the worst levels of inequality in the world. Massive job shedding is something that we have unfortunately normalized under the leadership of the ANC, it has become 'normal' to live in a sea of unemployment.

The ANC has no plan to save the working class because its ideology is fully entwined with that of the DA. Both these organisations serve capital and capitalist interests, and they have no interest in ensuring that the working class majority benefit in any way. Both the ANC and the DA are very comfortable with seeing the masses suffer, as long as it is mostly poor black people who are suffering, because the people they both serve are the owners of capital, who are mostly white.

Solidarity and unity of the working class is more important now than ever, in order to fight against massive job shedding and it must defend the livelihoods of all workers. This is why it is important for NUMSA to issue a message of solidarity and support to workers at the SA Post Office during this time. The working class is on its own and it must unite to defend itself against this unrelenting attack.

Aluta continua!
The struggle continues!

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