



The Democratic Socialist Movement answers the anti-strike propaganda of the government and the capitalist press:

*They say:*

*"The 8,6% demand is simply not affordable" and "It's a choice between improving the wages of state employees and continuing to address the service delivery needs of poor communities and the unemployed,"*

*(Public Service Minister Richard Baloyi 19.08.10)*

We say:

## THERE IS MONEY!

...both for decent wages and conditions at work, for jobs and for service delivery. But most of the wealth is squandered on luxuries and used to assist the capitalists to get richer at our expense, through eg tax breaks. The ANC was elected to close the wage gap yet ministers earn R1,7m a year – almost 30 times the average wage of a teacher and the public sector wage gap is 91 to 1. Minister Baloyi says a democratically elected government has the same right to use luxury cars as the apartheid regime and claims that "every additional cent spent on salaries means less money for essential services".

**- R140bn** on the World Cup

including on empty white elephants stadiums too expensive to use.

**- R450bn** has been allowed to be smuggled out of the country in capital flight, 23% of SA's wealth, in 2007 alone. For this economic crime the bosses are being offered an amnesty!

**R5,2bn**

- what the 8,6% increase would cost government.

**- R97bn** was

spent on government's travel, hotels, conferences, parties and "team building" exercises, etc, in

**- R14,5m** in salary and bonus payments to Eskom's

2007. executive committee members last year – a 50% increase on the year before.

**- R35bn** for the Gautrain, the luxury train for the rich to travel between Sandton and the airport.

**- R160 000** + travel and accommodation for attending 10 meetings while keeping their other jobs to each of the National Planning Commissioners

**- R70bn** tax breaks given away to the capitalists by lowering corporate tax from 45% in 1994 to 28% today.

**- R65m** on "upgrading" President Jacob Zuma's Nkandla home. by the Defence Department.

**They say:**

“The unions’ demands “mean we cannot employ more teachers and nurses.””  
(Baloyi)

**We say:**

## Workers are defending jobs!

The workers are the ones defending the health and education services by demanding decent wages and conditions. The government is in any case planning to freeze all vacant posts to save money. It is hypocritical to say we must choose between higher wages and unbearable conditions that workers are fighting to put an end to.

**We say:**

The bosses portray workers who fight for better wages and conditions as selfish and privileged – but 70% of employed South Africans earn less than R2 500 a month. The average wage for teachers is R4946/ month; for nurses it is R5163/ month. If their argument was true, the cheap labour system that underpinned apartheid and that continues today should have led to full employment. But only four out of ten adults are employed and the average wage earner supports 8-10 people. Accepting lower wages is not going to create jobs for the mass of unemployed people – it will just pull all working class people, employed and unemployed, down in a race to the bottom.

**They say:**

“The government can either “cater only for the already employed” or “open the doors for the unemployed to enter the economy””

(Jason Urbach from the “Free Market Foundation”)

**They say:**

“The offer is already way above the inflation rate...”  
(Government spokesperson Thamba Maseko 21.08.10)

**We say:**

## No to poverty wages!

Lower inflation means a lower rate of price increases not lower prices. Inflation hits the poor harder than the rich. The 25% tariff hikes granted to Eskom are widely expected to lead to food and other price increases throughout the economy. Inflation-linked wage increases keep incomes at their current low levels and do not lead to a better life for all.

**We say:**

It is not illegal for essential services staff to strike but minimum service level agreements must be negotiated. The government has consistently sabotaged the minimum service level negotiations so that they claim all essential service workers are banned from striking. The government is responsible for preventing an agreement to ensure critical services are maintained during strikes.

When there is no strike, patients still die like flies in understaffed, overcrowded, underequipped health facilities. At Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital in Soweto, 140 patients are normally admitted a day “and an average of 17 die every 24 hours, even with treatment” – it is the government which is pursuing murderous policies: safeguarding the interests of the capitalist system which means poverty, unemployment, malnutrition, abuse and disease coupled with underfunded and unequal health- and education systems for the working class majority.

Still, we must be seen to be conducting the strike without unnecessarily endanger patients’ lives. The success of the strike does not depend on a complete shut-down of the health service, but on the establishment of at least elements of workers’ control in the running of aspects of the health service during strikes. Strike committees at hospitals should engage management to agree eg on emergency admission policies and the staffing of critical facilities like ICUs.

**They say:**

“It’s illegal for doctors, nurses and other essential services staff to strike” (order by the Johannesburg Labour Court 21.08.10) and “the workers are murderers”

(Health Minister Aaron Motsoaledi)

**We say: if capitalism cannot afford decent wages, then**

**WE CANNOT AFFORD CAPITALISM!**

**For a mass workers party on a socialist programme:**

The public sector strike represents a turning point in the political situation as the Zuma-led ANC is proving beyond any doubt that it is just as ANTI-working class biased as Mbeki’s one. The rank-and-file must force Cosatu out of the class collaborationist trap of the Tripartite Alliance, or else it will disintegrate, a process that is already underway. As the working class we need our own voice – a new mass workers party that can unite workers, the unemployed, struggling communities, youth and students into an independent force that can fight for decent pay, jobs, education and services – and for the socialist transformation of society: taking over the massive wealth of mines, banks and the monopolies into public ownership under democratic management and control by workers and communities.