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Why we're in the mess we're in

WORSE: BEFORE IT PERHAPS GETS ANY BETTER

It's the socialist direction we've taken over the past few years.

Magnus Heystek

Moneyweb

My first paid job was handing out leaflets for a hairdressing salon, then mowing lawns, working in a sports shop and then as a waiter at Joburg's then-Blue Room.

It helped to pay back my RAU bursary and to save up to pay R600 for an old car.

But according to what SACP secretary general Blade Nzimande said last week, I should've been outraged, toyi-toying in my uniform for being "exploited" by the "brutal capitalists" who owned the salon, sports shop and restaurant.

I was too grateful to have a part-time job to even consider it.

Nzimande told the SA Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union national congress: "Private accumulation of wealth on a capitalistic basis is not meant to improve working conditions and workers' standard of living. The hospitality sector ... represents two of the typical examples of the worst forms of exploitation facing workers on a daily basis.

"In many restaurants, for instance, there are workers who make more money than their wages from tips ... This same phenomenon is found ... at the malls, where there are car guards who rely exclusively on tips from motorists."

Has Nzimande or any of his fellow communists ever had to balance the books of any enterprise, even a spaza shop? Even a micro enterprise is subject to the discipline free enterprise imposes: you have to make a profit to stay in business.

There's no safety net, no go to bank for a bailout, no government agency to the rescue. Ask anyone who's self-employed.

I feel radical free enterprise is the only hope to get the economy growing. An economy growing at, say, 5% is the fastest, surest way to ensure radical economic transformation.

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