

# PASOP BHASOBHA

WARNING

## **ESKOM LIES: PRE-PAID METERS & OPERATION LUNGISA**

*ESKOM is spending big money on newspaper advertisements saying pre-paid meters are good. ESKOM says Operation Lungisa, the project to install pre-paid meters, is good for you. This is a warning from the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee to you:*

### **DON'T BELIEVE ESKOM'S LIES PRE-PAID METERS ARE BAD NEWS FOR YOU OPERATION LUNGISA IS A DISASTER**

#### **1. No consultation with communities**

The installation of pre-paid meters, Operation Lungisa and the Service Delivery Framework were never discussed with residents. They just made an announcement. This is a top-down decision, the people who are directly affected and who must pay were not consulted. The decision to install pre-paid meters was taken by the ANC-SACP government Minister Jeff Radebe, ESKOM, ward councillors and SANCO. None of these people came to the township to ask residents what they think and feel. This includes the so-called stakeholders who drink tea in ESKOM boardrooms and claim to speak for the people but who never get a mandate or give any report-backs. We voted the ANC government into power because we wanted the people to govern. We want to be part of decision-making. But today it is the rich and powerful minority who make all the decisions just like in the days of apartheid. They decide we pay and suffer. We reject this dictatorship by the ANC government, ESKOM, councillors, SANCO, sell-out stakeholders and the capitalists they serve.

#### **2. ESKOM does not talk about disadvantages of pre-paid meters**

In ESKOM's newspaper adverts nothing is written about the disadvantages of pre-paid meters. All we hear is how good the card system is. We are only told one side of the story. ESKOM's adverts are biased, they are half-truths, they are lies, they don't give residents the whole picture. This is because it is ESKOM who will benefit the most from pre-paid meters not residents and consumers. ESKOM wants pre-paid meters because of profits. ESKOM will retrench all the meter readers and save on its wage bill. ESKOM will no longer have to worry about the poor complaining about high bills. Things will be simple for ESKOM because those with no money will simply not get electricity. ESKOM will no longer worry about communities organising and fighting against cut-offs and for affordable electricity. ESKOM will divide and conquer with its pre-paid meters. It will be everyone for himself or herself and all the profits to ESKOM. Only ESKOM and the rich will benefit from pre-paid cards and Operation Lungisa.

### **3. Pre-paid meters lead to self-disconnection**

The danger of pre-paid meters is that consumers will now cut off their own electricity. If you have no money you will not use electricity. You cut off yourself when your money is finished in the card. Many people are unemployed, many workers are getting starvation wages, many workers are casuals. How will these people buy electricity? Only the rich will have electricity. The poor will use electricity only to put the lights on. Already many poor families use coal and paraffin for cooking and ironing even though they have electricity in the house. Pre-paid meters force residents to do ESKOM's dirty job of cutting off. You cut off yourself. This is unfair, inhuman and an insult.

### **4. ANC broken promises about free electricity**

President Thabo Mbeki promised us free water and free electricity. This promise has not been fulfilled till today. This promise was an election ploy, a trick by the ANC to get votes. Now that the councillors and MPs and MECs are in parliament and on the gravy train all the promises are forgotten. In ESKOM's advertisements we are promised 45 kWh free electricity per month. We are told that this will last you for 2 days. What happened to the government figure of 50 kWh free electricity, who reduced it to 45? What can we do with so little electricity? The ANC has no intention of giving people free electricity. It was just making an empty promise. The official policy of the ANC government is "cost recovery" and "nothing for mahala" and "profits, more profits". ESKOM and the ANC make the rich richer and the poor poorer in South Africa.

### **5. No choice for consumers with pre-paid meters only betrayal**

In the ESKOM advert it says that consumers are free to say no to pre-paid meters. But the very next sentence says if you don't want a pre-paid meter you must pay 3 months deposit as a guarantee to ESKOM. Who is fooling who? This is not a choice at all. They are forcing everyone to agree to pre-paid meters. There is no freedom of choice under the ANC government. Democracy is a sham when it comes to ESKOM's profits. The government wants to sell ESKOM to the capitalists. It wants the capitalists to make profits from ESKOM. We are sick and tired of being betrayed by people we elected and who rule in our name. It is our blood that spilled on 16<sup>th</sup> June 1976 while Mbeki was studying bourgeois economics at the London School of Economics. It was our rent and electricity boycotts that opened the doors of Robben Island. The ANC government has betrayed the working class, it is working for the bosses. It forgets where it comes from.

### **6. Our demands are not addressed by the pre-paid meters**

We demand electricity for all. We demand free electricity. We want the arrears to be scrapped. We want an end to bribery and corruption. We want big business to pay more and subsidise the poor. We want an end to privatisation. We want job creation and not retrenchments. We want permanent full-time jobs not casual work and contracts. But these demands are not addressed by pre-paid meters, Operation Lungisa and the Service Delivery Framework. Instead things are getting worse for the majority of the people. We will continue with our Operation Khanyisa on pre-paid meters. We will continue our boycott. Don't pay for electricity profits. We will continue with mass action. We will fight until everyone, families, schools, churches, rural areas can have electricity. We will fight until we have a government and a system that puts people before profits.

**MABI AMANGA ESKOM**

**DON'T PAY**

**BOYCOTT**

**VIVA OPERATION KHANYISA**

**NO TO CUT-OFFS**

**NO TO PRIVATISATION**

**UNITE**

**UBUNTU**

**PEOPLE BEFORE PROFIT**

**Issued by the SOWETO ELECTRICITY CRISIS COMMITTEE/  
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