

# Appeal from Ukrainian Trade Unions

Appeal for international solidarity!

A major dispute is developing in the industrial city of Kryviy Rih in south east Ukraine. Trade unions from both federations, the confederation of free trade unions of Ukraine (kvpu) and also the federation of trade unions of Ukraine (fpu) have united in their demands and held a join conference to launch the campaign.

Their dispute is with the steel giant Arcelormittal, part of the Mittal steel company which is a world-wide corporation. the workers in Kryviy Rih are calling for international solidarity in their struggle. International support is important and has assisted the Ukrainian unions against the mining company Evraz and more recently to defeat the trial of 94 miners for protesting. Ukraine solidarity campaign will be publicising the campaign and calls for assistance in this campaign. We publish below a report by kvpu on the conference to launch the campaign.

## **Trade unions have united to protect the interests of workers of the pjsc "Arcelormittal Kryviy Rih"**

On march 27, the conference of the labor collective of the pjsc "Arcelormittal Kryviy Rih" that was announced at a rally organized by nine trade-union organizations on 14 march was held in Kryviy Rih. At the conference, the representatives of the labor collective of the pjsc "Arcelormittal Kryviy Rih" made requirements to the Chairman and CEO of steel group "Arcelormittaland" Lakshmi Mittal and to the CEO of pjsc "Arcelormittal Kryviy Rih" Paramjit Kahlon.

Employees organized this Conference, despite the efforts of

the administration of the enterprise to disrupt its conduct. At the same time, the administration organized an alternative conference in the office of the enterprise. Moreover, before the Conference of labor collective delegates faced with the public disinformation campaign and pressure.

At the Conference, all primary trade unions at the PJSC "ArcelorMittal Kryviy Rih" have united to protect their members' social and labor rights. They demand to raise wages, to provide safe working conditions, to stop reducing personnel and persecuting trade unionists.

The trade unions hoped for a dialogue with the administration, but management didn't want to talk about workers' problems. Taking this into account, the labor collective conference voted for ousting from offices the Director of the Personnel Department Elena Pilipenko and her deputy Iryna Futruk.

Delegates of the conference approved the composition of the joint representative body of trade union organizations at the enterprise, which will represent employees in a collective labor dispute with the employer. It was also decided to begin preparations for a strike if the management of the "ArcelorMittal Kryviy Rih" rejects the demands of the workers and conciliation procedures doesn't bring any results.

The Chairman of the Independent Trade Union of Miners of Ukraine (NPGU) Mykhailo Volynets claimed during his speech at the Conference: "It's a significant situation when employer's action and attitude has united almost a dozen different trade unions for defending the employees' rights".

Demands of the labor collective of PJSC "ArcelorMittal Kryviy Rih":

1. To raise the average monthly salary of employees to 1000 EUR from 01.04.2018.
2. To ensure safe working conditions for all workers.

– To conduct a comprehensive examination of all buildings, structures, equipment and mechanisms of the enterprise by the state organization in accordance with the approved schedule.

– To develop a comprehensive plan of measures for the examination of all floors, roofs, and construction of the PJSC “ArcelorMittal Kryviy Rih”.

– To develop measures for elimination of standards violation with specific deadlines.

3. To carry out an expert examination of all buildings and constructions of the converter shop and to give a report on the results of the inspection to the labor collective and the trade union organizations.

– To make an overhaul of the roof overlapping of the unit No. 2 of the converter shop until 01.04.2018.

4. Stop the policy of reducing job places and outsourcing the workers.

5. To ensure the implementation the state construction in the ablution placement

6. To cease the antisocial and anti-union policies of the administration.

– To dismiss those who are responsible for conduction of such policies.

Further information from: [Ukrainesolidaritycampaign.org](http://Ukrainesolidaritycampaign.org)

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# Numsa's New Year Message

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NUMSA News Special edition

20 January 2018

Message to NUMSA members in welcoming 2018

## **Welcome 2018!**

The National Office Bearers of NUMSA wish all NUMSA members a fighting and revolutionary 2018, to advance and defend the interests of the working class and to struggle for Socialism. Even with the miserable wages we receive from the bosses, we hope all our members had some well-deserved rest and some fun, during the festive season.

2018 is upon us. It is time to go to work to defend our livelihoods and to advance the struggle for Socialism. We can do this if we defend and grow NUMSA, return the United Front to what we intended it to be, defend and grow SAFTU and urgently put all our revolutionary energies in creating and growing the Workers Party. These are our revolutionary tasks in 2018.

2017 was indeed a difficult year for workers and challenging for NUMSA, whose task at all times is to defend hard won gains of workers and wage relentless struggle to improve workers benefits and conditions. The socio-economic conditions of the working class have constantly worsened under the current political leadership of all political parties in South Africa.

This is a fact. StatsSA has the figures supporting this fact about the state of the working class and the poor conditions under which we toil. It is another institution under attack, with the recent unceremonious departure of its CEO, as it has the proof of the dismal performance of our government as a

result of poor policy choices by the ANC for the past 24 years. StatsSA puts unemployment figures at 27,7 percent but it does not count those unemployed workers that are considered discouraged because they have lost hope of finding a job. If we add include these discouraged workers, unemployment is over 36 per cent and as a result over 30 million South Africans live in abject poverty with no food on their table.

Those in employment are often underpaid and unprotected. Some in South Africa are determined to peg the national minimum wage at R3 500, which is well below a living wage. If your employer does not believe that a worker deserves a living wage, then this is in fact a racist stance. Black economic empowerment begins with a living wage.

We know that it is tough for workers all over the world. Since the 2008 global economic meltdown; capitalism has been in crisis. The old international capitalist order of the industrialised world is being challenged by a new capitalist disorder with the rise of emerging nations. This, together with rising inequality and deindustrialisation in the developing world, is creating a new dialectic of capitalist privilege. We are part of a globalised world and our sectors and ultimately our jobs are affected by global capitalist sourcing and production which is constantly seeking higher profits, especially with regard to multinationals. We cannot just look at the situation in the country in isolation of the global dynamics of the sector and in the supply chain. We must keep up to date with and be vigilant of changes, so that we are not caught off guard and fight to protect workers, we must be both a shield and a spear.

In our country changes in capital accumulation strategies globally is destroying jobs. We are suffering the consequences for these changes in plant closures and disinvestments of companies such as General Motors, retrenchments and attacks on collective bargaining by hostile right wing employers who continue to pursue the old apartheid mentality which views

workers and their trade union with contempt.

## **The mess that we bring into 2018**

Company closures are destabilising entire sections of our economy. We have seen this in components plants and suppliers that are linked to car manufacturers such as Johnson Control. This deindustrialisation is now our reality. If we are going to recover from this, it will take decades to rebuild and those jobs are not coming back in our lifetime. And it's not just our manufacturing sectors, the whole economy is down having slumped into a technical recession in 2017. Two of the three international rating agencies have downgraded the South African economy to junk status and a third has put the country on review pending a junk status downgrade early in 2018.

Why are we in this mess? The blame lies with the ANC government supported by COSATU and the SACP that arrogantly continues to implement these policies that are hemorrhaging jobs and destroying the economy. Now it is clear that the whole country was put on terms as we see that the white monopoly candidate Cyril Ramaphosa has been victorious at the ANC conference and immediately the confidence of the capitalists in South Africa improves, seen in the strengthening of the Rand.

Remember in 2013 NUMSA was ridiculed for calling on the ANC led Alliance to remove Jacob Zuma. Getting rid of Thabo Mbeki and putting in place Jacob Zuma did not result in a break in the neoliberal agenda. We are distracted from the shocking state of affairs in this country with no compassion for our people, who remain the working poor, exploited by the ruling class. Our distraction is the soap opera antics of the alliance-made politicians with Jacob Zuma cast in the leading role; he is an embarrassment, moving from one scandal to another.

The alliance partners, the SACP and COSATU, has stood by these

politicians. Worse still they have defended them, absolved them from wrong doing as they did with Zuma over the Nkandla debacle, been the bouncers when anyone within the alliance spoke out. We witnessed in 2017 an imploding of the ANC led Alliance; unable to contain the rot internally, infighting among themselves spilled into the public arena. We are vindicated when we witness the SACP, its cronies threatened from within the Alliance and compromised to such an extent that the party had no option but to scrape together its last vestiges of credibility by joining civil society marches that demanding 'ZUMA MUST GO'; the very same stand that the SACP publicly tore into NUMSA for taking.

NUMSA has been ridiculed for making radical economic demands in the interest of economical marginalized and dispossessed. The Alliance cast aside the Freedom Charter which could have been the blueprint to restructure the South African economy. Instead they have refused to address the land question, and the fundamental critical demand of ownership and control of the economy in the hands of the people. Instead they have allowed our economy to remain in the hands of white monopoly capital and have implemented backward, right wing, conservative, structural adjustment programs in the form of GEAR and the NDP. The NDP does not advance manufacturing or industrialization in order to create jobs. They want people to create their own employment as entrepreneurs, opening window cleaning services or hair dressers. It does not touch the huge wealth of this country that is kept out of reach of the black majority. So the mineral energy and finance complex that makes up the South African economy as we know it has remained untransformed.

The ANC government dumped the Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP), a policy that affirmed the black majority in development carried by a democratic state. Had we remaining committed to transformation in a manner that change power relations, we could have uprooted racism in South Africa.

Instead the ANC-led alliance and government chose to listen to the terrible imperialist advice from the West despite knowing what this advice has done on the African continent. African countries are trapped in poverty and debt having listened to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, World Trade Organisation (WTO), they took instructions from multinational capitalist CEOs at the World Economic Forum. Their message is always the same, that government has no business in business. Their actions go even further, undermining the autonomy of governments to determine their development path and creating an environment that makes it virtually impossible for democratic trade unions to exist.

The West served the interest of white monopoly capital, saying that the state's role is not to intervene in the economy, its role was merely to level the playing field and allow the private sector to drive development. By taking this inferior advice, government has destroyed state capacity. It is ironic the apartheid Nationalist Party, before its defeat in the liberation struggle, actually used the state for the Afrikaners – the apartheid state intervened in the economy by building critical institutions such as Eskom, Telkom, Transnet, Volskas Bank, Iscor. In other words the apartheid state was directly involved to create jobs for its Afrikaner folks. The racist regime served the Afrikaner well and because it was in the best interest of the Afrikaner, municipalities and provincial government during the nationalist party regime employed black workers in public works that had capacity to build gravel roads, tar roads, four room houses that were both owned and rented stock. All of this created jobs and the ANC leadership chose to be the best Man in the wedding of capitalist accumulation Umkhaphi Emtshatweni.

These jobs were destroyed by the ANC government's tendering system that has plunged us into a very deep crisis of cronyism and corruption. Billions have been lost from the national fiscus and this government cannot deliver basic services.



NUMSA has challenged this path of development, where the government champions outsourcing and casualisation and has stripped state assets. We warned the ANC that a social crisis would unfold unless they dumped these policies and address the land question, restructure the South African economy, nationalise all South Africa's minerals under worker control and ensure that they are beneficiated to champion a job led industrial strategy. Almost 60 percent of our population lives in poverty, a number that grows exponentially each year. Today South Africa is world leader in service delivery protests because there is a crisis in service delivery.

NUMSA was dismissed from COSATU for warning the ANC that continuing with these policies would frustrate South Africans and they would lose political power to the racist Democratic Alliance, the political axis of the exploitative class the party of big business, led by Maimane. As predicted all the metros were lost to the DA in the last election. Other rivals have risen from the inability for the ANC led Alliance to critically engage on the shortcomings of leadership. Julius Malema was a lapdog for Zuma but when he dared to question policy direction of the ANC, he was kicked out of the ANCYL and he monopolised on the discontent to create the Economic Freedom Fighters.

Indeed all revolutions that fail to address the property question, that fail to affirm its indigenous people to own and control land, The economy after colonisation and ravages of oppression and exploitation, always end up being victims of corruption and dictatorship that continue to serve and benefit imperialist powers.

This has been the fate of the ANC. ANC National Chairperson Gwede Mantashe admits that the biggest issue is corruption but fails to take responsibility for the policy environment that has allowed this to fester. Instead he says they will be able to defeat corruption because they now have a rich ANC President in Ramaphosa. Mantashe insults honest working class

men and women by insinuating that they cannot give good leadership, that only the rich can lead and exposes the ANC as having no revolutionary agenda to liberate the working class. Contrary to his excitement the most corrupt class is the capitalist class it has elicited billions out of this country both legal and illegal and Stenhof is the case in point.

In the build up towards the 2017 ANC Conference there was a big noise about 'Radical Economic Transformation'. Yet in 2012 NUMSA and the ANCYL won the nationalisation debate in the commissions leading to the Mangaung ANC Conference but the resolution was changed unilaterally by the ANC leadership to keep it off the table. At this point, we began to lose faith that democratic processes could take forward pro poor and working class agenda in the ANC.

Despite radical economic resolutions taken at the 2017 Conference, it is clear that the ANC will never pursue radical economic transformation and any NUMSA member who believes this "usenga inkunzi" (is busy milking the bull). The nationalisation of the Reserve Bank, expropriation of land is given lip service to rally popular support but this is immediately tempered by assurances to white monopoly capital that there is no commitment to actually carry out any of these resolutions.

There will be no radical economic transformation from the ANC because we were sold out by the ANC before 1994, in a deal with white monopoly capital that they will continue to own and control the economy and the land. This deal was negotiated by Ramaphosa and Rolf Meyer of the Nationalist Party regime. Are we supposed to be proud of a worker leader that was willing to leave behind his class? Since then Ramaphosa has been busy becoming rich, his personal riches and opulence made possible by the policy environment he helped to put in place. He has become a servant to maintain the dominance of white monopoly capital accumulation, a very rich one but a servant none the less.

There should be no confusion within NUMSA ranks that Ramaphosa represents the interest of the white monopoly capital. He is a blood billionaire whose business has tentacles in all sectors of the economy. He is a greedy capitalist, a South Africa Trump. We will not forget that Ramaphosa was a Director at Lonmin and his call for a strong action by the police resulted in the slaughter of workers exercising their constitutional right to strike in Marikana, a year later he let Lonmin workers and their families starve in the longest strike in South Africa's history simply for demanding a living wage.

Ramaphosa has been allowed into the ranks of the mining oligarchy and now champions the racist wage of super exploitation of black labour as an accumulation strategy for white monopoly capital in South Africa. Billionaire Ramaphosa and his sellout collaborators at NEDLAC insult workers with a national minimum wage of R20 an hour or R3500 a month. This is an insult to those workers who were brutally killed by the state at Marikana fighting for a wage of R12,500.

The excuses of the Alliance partners cannot be tolerated any longer. The National Democratic Revolution has not been delayed, it has been abandoned. An entire generation has been raised in the absence of a revolutionary agenda, the hoax of the 'born frees' enslaved to poverty. The SACP leadership flip flopping without a political vision for the future of workers and the working class. SACP party leaders decided to back capitalist billionaire Ramaphosa for President of the ANC and the country. This had nothing to do with working class interests, these leaders were booking their ticket on the next gravy train to parliament. Zuma dealt with this betrayal by removing these leaders from leadership positions in the NEC and the final blow was the removal of SACP leader Blade Nzimande from the cabinet. Their current bravado challenging Zuma is not motivated but a sudden interest in the working class, but a show for Ramaphosa of their availability to once again sell out the working class.

In fact, both factions in the ANC serve capitalist interests, a deal has been reached to made to maintain dominance of these capitalist forces. The real losers are the working class, we are on our own. The ANC will not improve the life of Africans who are economically marginalised and dispossessed, it just does not have such an agenda or interest.

Ramaphosa and ANC economic transformation committee led by Enoch Ngodongwana will never agree to implement the Freedom Charter; they will not nationalise the commanding heights of the economy, put all our minerals and mines under worker control and champion a job led industrial strategy. They will never repeal the property clause in the constitution and agree to expropriate land without compensation into state hands under worker control this does not mean there will be no NUMSA members or shopstewards of NUMSA who will support this forces correctly so that NUMSA as a union is not a political Party so freedom of association and political affiliation is protected and its an individual choice but we are upfront that truth is truth.

They will not dump the destructive policies of GEAR and the NDP. At the beginning of 2017 Ramaphosa accompanied by Pravin Gordon went to Davos to the World Economic Forum to promise global capitalist leaders that the ANC will maintain and champion austerity measures.

This is not new, GEAR has been all about putting in place austerity. They imposed belt tightening that closed nurses colleges, agricultural colleges, teachers training colleges. It closed irrigation schemes in poor villages and destroyed a state led agricultural sector. They clustered poor municipalities through a process of demarcation and reduced budget allocations so most working class communities have no meaningful local development plans, leaving those in ghost towns and rural villages condemned to a life of poverty.

They will not agree that all the boards of corrupt State Owned

Enterprises must be reconstituted and that labour must have representation on those boards. They will not agree to dump tenders, fill all vacant posts and create more jobs in the public sector to build once more the capacity of the state to provide services. They will not agree to nationalisation of the Reserve Bank change the Reserve Bank's inflation targeting policy which maintains high interest rates that destroy jobs for the sole interest of protecting the value of white wealth. They will not move away from serving the IMF, World Bank and the World Trade Organisation. They will not break with legacy of Mbeki that was supported by Trevor Manuel, Tito Mboweni, and Pravin Gordon, of austerity measures and privitisation.

### **Our demands**

NUMSA calls on the Ramaphosa and the ANC to boldly endorse free and compulsory education for all children who pass matric as education is the key to liberate society. This is only possible if the South African government is prepared to tax the rich; instead corporate tax reduced in South Africa during Trevor Manuel's tenure as a Minister of Finance from 48 % to 28. If we nationalised the mines under worker control and used our minerals to diversify and industrialise then we would have money for free and compulsory education but Ramaphosa dare not touch the interests of his mining oligarchy.

NUMSA demands that the ANC government end reckless spending and abandon the Nuclear Deal. We have enough electricity capacity out of Medupi, Khusile, Ngula. Instead and as a matter of urgency the focus must be to fix the problems at Eskom so that the utility can deliver a competitive electricity tariff both to electrify communities and the economy. The whole Eskom board and all other boards of SOES should be fired and replaced with a competent board that has representation from government, business, labour and civil society.

Their first task must be to employ a competent, qualified and

skilled CEO. All Eskom coal mines that were ceded to mining companies must be taken back and others nationalized to supply Eskom with quality, cheap coal. Eskom should return to its original mandate of delivering cheap electricity to the economy and to electrify communities. This can only be done if Eskom moves away from commercialisation. NERSA must also be dealt with and restructured as many companies are going to be affected with negative impact on jobs because of the five percent.

NUMSA members and all workers in SAFTU must be prepared for national strikes and stay aways in 2018 to fight back against the attack on workers.

We must ban labour brokers once and for all. We must honour those massacred workers in Marikana who demanded R12500 by working against the R3 500 or R20 an hour minimum wage.

We remain resolute in our demand for a national minimum wage but it must break the backbone of the apartheid colonial wage not perpetuate the racist capitalist accumulation strategy achieved through the super exploitation of black and African labour. NUMSA demand that as a starting point, workers should receive a national minimum wage for now of R12500 and is should be compulsory for all employers to negotiate through centralised collective bargaining.

Ramaphosa is using his position politically and in business to champion an agenda at NEDLAC to tamper with the right to strike. He wants to bring back an apartheid practice that before workers can embark on a strike they must first ballot. We defeated it then and we will defeat it again. We must be prepared to take rolling mass action and we will also challenge it in court as an attack on our constitutional right. Such actions prove that Ramaphosa and the ANC leadership are anti worker, and anti-trade unions. defend your right to strike. We know the DA is fully behind this counter reactionary agenda which is why we will never understand how

our members can be confused and vote DA or why a political party that claims to be revolutionary like the EFF would cooperate with DA.

## **Building the Workers Party**

We cannot accept the continued betrayal of the working class. NUMSA has led the way in the United Front, we have launched a new federation SAFTU which is both a spear and a shield for workers, and now we are forging ahead, resolved to form a Workers Party which is firm in demanding socialism in our life time to end economic exploitation, poverty, unemployment and inequality. NUMSA Central Committee of NUMSA in December 2017 appreciated the work we doing to put together structures and supports the launch of the Workers Party in 2018. This year we will not just register the Workers Party but we will let you know the following details:

- a) The name of the Workers Party and the joining fee.
- b) Its constitution will be revealed very soon.
- c) Its national core will be introduced. Remember the Workers Party will be completely separate from NUMSA. NUMSA will remain an independent worker controlled union that supports the formation of the Workers Party.
- d) We shall very soon announce how many members are needed form to a branch of the Workers Party.
- e) We shall reveal its regalia in terms of T-shirts, and we shall be calling on our members to volunteer and make financial contributions to build the Workers Party. A Socialist Revolutionary Workers Party that is challenge the present exploitative system of capitalism will not be funded by the capitalist class.

This is not a gravy train Workers Party it's a party to deal with working class miseries. The party will work for and

support NUMSA and SAFTU members and the working class in general. It must have clear policies when it is launched that deal with the miseries of the working class. To have a situation where one in three people are unemployed is completely unacceptable. Politicians that stand by while companies close are not friends of the working class. Why must the working class vote into power political parties who champion policies that subject workers to poverty by destroying their jobs. These parties will refuse to take decisions that will protect jobs, yet workers continue to vote these butchers into power. We cannot expect exploiters and oppressors to hand us our freedom.

Many of us have comrades and family, who worked for a company that was closed. We are witnessing plant closures and massive retrenchments when every worker supports five people or more, so job losses put communities in distress, with many homes struggling to meet basic needs. As 2017 was coming to an end we called on all NUMSA nine regions to give us a list of companies that have retrenched and plant closures. The picture looks extremely bleak. This is a ticking bomb, pushing our people to despair and desperation. We have to defend our production capacity and jobs by championing industrial policy that meet the needs of our people.

Inequality is a national crisis, South Africa is the most unequal nation in the world. More than 40 million South Africans have no food. Members of NUMSA and SAFTU know that this is not just a number, these are our people, our children, our mothers and fathers that are caught up in the everyday struggle of what will they eat. Those of us that have jobs are the fortunate one but tomorrow it may be our turn to be retrenched. We can no longer trust the ANC with our members' lives. It's time to take a stand and fight for workers, for their right to work and to demand that the state must be the employer of last resort.

The Workers Party we talking about should go back to basic of



building organisation of peoples' power what we used to call M Plan. NUMSA, the United Front and the Workers Party should launch a campaign going door to door, street by street, collecting information about in each household. If each member of NUMSA and SAFTU did this on their street, we would have a detailed understanding of our communities and their needs. Workers Party activists will need to call general meetings in communities to hear from the people in a democratic fashion what do they suggest must be done to address their plight, to find solutions making sure people have somewhere to eat and something to eat. Street and area committees whose task and mission must be to bring to an end to crime and restore pride, dignity and hope in our communities. This form of community organising existed in the past when we were fighting Apartheid and the Nationalist Party and unionists volunteering in their communities as activists were vital to the success of these efforts not this today's opportunistic culture of renting the masses to fill stadiums and still render them to be victims of poverty until the next January 8th statement of the ANC.

The Workers Party is going to need honest leadership including young men and women. We have to take head on patriarchy, where women are oppressed, looked down upon at work, at home and in the community. The Workers Party as well as NUMSA and SAFTU must champion women as equal to men, promote women's active participation and inclusion in structures and in leadership positions.

### **Building NUMSA and SAFTU**

NUMSA can only be strong and deliver on these noble aspirations for workers and the working class in general if it succeeds as a union to successfully represent workers against the bosses so quality service by organisers and by all of us in the leadership of NUMSA remains compulsory in 2018.

NUMSA is committed to improve turnaround time to resolve workers problems. We must not frustrate workers; when a

problem is reported, we must report on progress and discuss what is the way forward within a reasonable time period. Where employers are taking workers for a ride NUMSA must constantly take the side of workers and fight for them. We must continue to win hearts and minds of workers. We need the confidence of our members because NUMSA has many enemies and opportunists that are looking to prey on our members, wanting to snatch them away with promises they can't keep. NUMSA is loyal to its members and needs loyal members for us to go from strength to strength.

There is a political agenda to deal with NUMSA. Our members in many of the state owned enterprises are being tested by a deliberate attack on our union recognition rights. We are the majority union in PetroSA with full organisational rights, but this is the exception. We are facing resistance in a number of others such as Eskom, SAA and Denel. Transnet is refusing to deduct NUMSA members' dues. We call on our members in state owned enterprises to hold the ground we have won, we are committed to organising your workplaces as they are key to our industrial development and we will convene a national shopsteward council in 2018 to strategise on how we can fight back.

In 2017 we have had running battles with employers who consciously take cue from Cyril Ramaphosa national minimum wage. They want to vary down NUMSA members' benefits and conditions in the key collective bargaining sectors of motor and engineering to be paid at R3500 or to half their wages. We reached a wage agreement of 7 percent increase with the majority of employers within SEAFSA and we are expecting to gazette this agreement so that it is extended to all employers in the sector. NUMSA has negotiated at plant level with some companies, achieving even higher agreements, for example 9 percent at Scaw Metal and 9.5 percent at Nampak. In 2018 we are ready ourselves for battle with those employers that are hell-bent in making sure that the signed agreement in the

engineering sector is not extended to include plastic employers and those affiliated to NEASA.

In 2017 we had good cooperation with the Department of Trade and Industry and the Economic Development Department. We secured anti-dumping measures and an increase on tariffs for 8 products at Arcelor Mittal to protect jobs. Despite this Arcelor Mittal has served us with section 189 A notice and we closed the year defending our members. We did not back down and overcame this challenge with Arcelor Mittal withdrawing the notice and agreeing not to close the plant in Vereeniging and Newcastle.

We saved over 300 jobs at Scaw Metal by putting workers on a training lay off scheme. Transnet had ordered wheels from Italy instead of from Sacw, creating the threat to jobs. IDC that had a majority stake in Scaw, sold this to investors in the hope that the company can be turned around but the new investors want to break up the company. Numsa is challenging this, we believe that Scaw Metal can be saved intact and that the company has an important role to play in the future development of our country.

NUMSA has never accepted the closure of Evraz Highveld steel we pleased to report that our consistent fight has results. There is the possibility for reopening Evraz, Mapochs mine and Venchem.

We campaigned against closures of five power stations in Mpumalanga. NUMSA is not against reduction of emissions but we call for just transition that must first guarantee jobs security for workers. In terms of renewables, there must be a social owned renewable sector. It is against this backdrop that NUMSA rejects the introduction of nuclear at the present moment as the country cannot afford it and it will destroy many jobs in the manufacturing sector as our electricity costs are already uncompetitive. Instead we should invest in gas as a strategic niche of Petroleum South AFRICA (PETROSA),

defending existing jobs of PETROSA workers and creating more jobs. There is a lot of gas in South Africa and Mozambique this can be mutually beneficial to both countries.

All car manufactures are not compliant with the BEE score card; these companies are MBSA, VWSA, BMWSA, NISSAN SA, FORD SA, TOYOTA SA and GMSA which is now ISUZU SA. Government revised BEE requirements and car manufacturers must ensure that 25 % of their core business is given to black individuals or black workers. Instead companies make a mockery of the BEE objectives by outsourcing. We are currently negotiating with MBSA to resolve the BEE score card issues but the final position on this matter can only be taken at a Workers Indaba so that NUMSA acts on the mandate given by members. So far we have succeeded in getting MBSA to withdraw plans to break up the plant into separate legal entities.

NUMSA has engaged employers and government through DTI to begin to plan the future of the Auto industry called Vision 2035. The plan forces car manufacturers to stop dumping and to champion localization in a way that will create jobs both in the car manufacturing and the component sector. Employers have turned against the plan, unwilling to give up on existing incentives that they are using to maximize profits.

NUMSA must address the needs of level five workers that want to break the ceiling on their career path. We are seeking a solution to this through negotiations with employers at the Industry Policy Forum. Another challenge we face is the gap in wages between auto workers in the assembly car plants and component supply and logistics workers. The NUMSA Central Committee calls on all members and shop stewards to recruit workers in companies where we work and we must include workers in service providers to our companies, including security services, material handling, logistics, canteen workers, component suppliers and cleaners. We must make sure that they are well represented and that NUMSA bargains for them. We cannot win gains for our members whilst there are other

workers in our workplaces that are exploited. It is our revolutionary duty of NUMSA members to ensure that these workers are represented by our union.

The union has employed an actuary to restructure and transform retirement funds so that workers money can be deployed strategically in a manner that benefits workers whilst they still work to address some of their needs such as housing and still be available to workers when they retire with good value. We are working with the NUMSA investment company on the formation of an industry medical aid. our aim is to pool our contributions, reduce cost and ensure that our members' have access to good quality health care. At the same time we need to demand a national health insurance scheme and quality healthcare facilities and services accessible to every South African.

The most important victory we secured in 2017 which NUMSA members in all sectors and all workers in the entire country must continue to celebrate and defend as the victory of NUMSA on behalf of its members and all workers a victory COSATU and all its affiliates failed to secured against labour brokers, is a victory NUMSA secured against one labour broker company called Assign services which set a precedent for all labour broker companies that after three months all workers who work in South African companies must and should be automatical made permanent employed.

Whilst we were still busy celebrating this victory this blood sucker employers decided to appeal this labour court ruling in the constitutional court we pulling all the stops we are taking to senior legal counsel lawyers to go and fight for NUMSA members and all workers in the country to defend this working class victory but we also call on our members to come to court on that they to demonstrate support for such a ruling and call on the constitutional court not to temper with the previous ruling that fairly makes workers permanent after three months. NUMSA members and all exploited workers must

under labour broking slavery must continue to celebrate this victory against scrupulous labour broker employers, ANC and DA leadership that refused to ban labour brokers.

### **What must be done**

Our members must be honest and loyal to NUMSA by raising their concerns about their union inside their union, with the intention to better NUMSA. Building NUMSA means workers must be united to defend workers and improve their benefits and conditions. NUMSA at all levels starting with the President and the General Secretary must be committed to this task.

We need to recruit every unorganised worker in companies where we work under banner of NUMSA and take up the fight against exploitative and scrupulous bosses. An injury to one must be an injury to all, at plant level, at sector level and even at international level.

NUMSA members and shop stewards must organise and advance working class interests, in our churches, shebeens, burial societies, in our choirs, sports clubs, and hairdressers. We must advance a struggle to end economic exploitation by building our union.

We must also build the United Front to take up the struggle to say no to privatisation of municipal services and challenge poor service delivery in our communities, fighting back against crime, corruption and violence against women. This might necessitated that once more forming of street and area committees.

NUMSA members must remain critical of their union and its leadership and must continue to make every NUMSA shop steward accountable to members, every NUMSA leader accountable including the President and General Secretary. Our members must not be confused by yellow unions, our union is alive and well, we are a fighting union, a militant union but most of all we are a democratic worker controlled union. Numsa will

always uphold organisational renewal through worker democracy leadership. Members are free to contest leadership including that of the Numsa secretariat and the General Secretary through democratic process upheld in our union constitution. The winners of these democratic processes will lead Numsa and the losers must respect elected leadership and continue to make valuable contribution to our union.

In 2013 as a result of being sold out by the ANC led Alliance, NUMSA resolved at the Special National Congress that it was time for the working class to organize itself as a class for itself by forming a and building a movement for socialism meaning it must lay building blocks to form a Worker's Party. This was resolved and further endorsed at the 2016 NUMSA National Congress. "We know as a matter of fact as our union announce its honest intention of correctly, sticking to its resolved to catalyse formation of the Workers Party which will continue to be both a shield and a spear for workers to raised working class revolutionary consciousness to take up the struggle against capitalism and all social ills which it breeds such as crime, poverty, violence and abuse of children and women, inequalities and unemployment, economically marginalisation, land hunger for the majority which is black and African."

Be assured that our support for the formation of a workers Party is to ensure that there is political representation of working class interests. NUMSA is South Africa's biggest trade union, we are worker controlled and we intend to remain so. We have no intention of becoming a political party. There are those who will continue to attack this initiative because they fear what is to be born. Defend our union against attacks by government and the ANC led alliance; workers deserve political representation that has not compromised the working class. This workers Party when its final launched it will be completely separate from NUMSA will be in in the street with workers and the poor.

In 2018 we are building NUMSA and continuing to grow as a fighting giant to resist and reject any attack on workers. 2018 will be a year of action for gains in our workplaces. At the same time we shall continue to build and strengthen the United Front and we shall launch the Workers Party. All those who want to join a revolutionary Workers Party, whose mission and task is to overthrow capitalism and build a system that detest greed of capitalism which is socialism are free to do so. NUMSA is part of this initiative to build the Workers Party but membership is voluntary. NUMSA remains committed to recruit all workers, regardless of their political affiliation. We must be extremely be vigilant and jealously guard unity in NUMSA as a home for all workers regardless of their political affiliation and we should not allow opportunists to create confusion in our ranks and for those who have made their business to attack this revolutionary mission to succeed.

NUMSA President Andrew Chirwa in closing the NUMSA 10TH National Congress in December 2016 had this to say about this important but difficult journey to build an alternative Workers Party and the need for workers to pursue class struggle against capitalism for a socialist republic of South Africa.

“There is no alternative to organizing the working class for the revolutionary struggle for them to be their own liberators, their own masters. We have no choice but to take on this huge revolutionary task. The alternative is permanent misery, poverty, unemployment and suffering extreme inequalities. All this of course leads to brutal and painful short lives, for the majority of the working class. We must create the revolutionary mass vanguard political party to lead the struggle for socialism in South Africa. The alternative is the continued savagery and barbarism of capitalism, and civil wars.”

Let us be victorious in 2018. I leave you with a quote from



Lenin which better represent the NUMSA moment and the urgent need to turn the NUMSA moment into a working class revolutionary movement in the form of a Workers Party, "What Is To Be Done? Dogmatism And 'Freedom of Criticism'" (1901).

"We are marching in a compact group along a precipitous and difficult path, firmly holding each other by the hand. We are surrounded on all sides by enemies, and we have to advance almost constantly under their fire. We have combined, by a freely adopted decision, for the purpose of fighting the enemy, and not of retreating into the neighboring marsh, the inhabitants of which, from the very outset, have reproached us with having separated ourselves into an exclusive group and with having chosen the path of struggle instead of the path of conciliation. And now some among us begin to cry out: Let us go into the marsh! And when we begin to shame them, they retort: What backward people you are! Are you not ashamed to deny us the liberty to invite you to take a better road! Oh, yes, gentlemen! You are free not only to invite us, but to go yourselves wherever you will, even into the marsh. In fact, we think that the marsh is your proper place, and we are prepared to render you every assistance to get there. Only let go of our hands, don't clutch at us and don't besmirch the grand word freedom, for we too are "free" to go where we please, free to fight not only against the marsh, but also against those who are turning towards the marsh"

**Viva NUMSA Viva!**

IRVIN JIM

NUMSA General Secretary

Workers Day Celebration, Durban 2017

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# News from Namibia

We are pleased to publish the combined newsletter of TCL miners and United Fishermen.

[United Fishers and Tsumeb Workers news](#)

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## Issue 5 of Die Werker out now.

Out now! The latest issue of Namibia's Proletarian Newsletter.

In [this edition](#):

1. Fishermen
  2. Miners
  3. Reparations
  4. Jeremy Corbyn
  5. Letters
  6. land
- 

## Urgent International Appeal

Help fund our work in Southern Africa

*Dear Comrades,*

WE are launching an ambitious [Appeal](#) to members and supporters to raise funds for our work in Southern Africa.

It is there that the global re-awakening of the workers' socialist movement is most concentrated and advanced, and where material resources are most needed if the movement is to make the progress which it can and should make.

The Workers Revolutionary Party in Namibia has won a position where all oppressed and exploited groups in the country turn to it for help in their struggles.

This is possible because of the party's thoroughgoing understanding of the role the South-West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) government plays as a caretaker for imperialism, based on corrupt rule by a narrow tribal leadership imposed in a deal between the Soviet Union and various imperialist powers in the early 1990s. This regime is both a mockery of democracy and a copy-book example of milking public assets in collusion with imperialist financial interests.

The heart of the WRP(N)'s work is among the country's miners. The Party's leadership has worked closely over many years with the TCL miners in their campaign to get back the pensions stolen from them when the company which employed them was liquidated. It has united with the most advanced leaders of the current mine-workers with the aim of making their union (Mineworkers Union of Namibia – MUN) an effective and class-conscious weapon of the country's working class. Meanwhile, the WRP collaborates with other present and former miners and smelter workers campaigning to protect their homes threatened by financial chicanery by former mine-owners in cahoots with the government and in pursuing claims against their employers for work-related illnesses.

The WRP(N) also stands four-square with:

Railway workers trying to track down the theft of state property;

Road workers protesting against bullying, malpractice and

neglect of health and safety by their foreign employers contracted to develop the country's road network;

Fishery workers on the Atlantic coast who have been on prolonged strike against diminishing wages, overwork and dangerous conditions. From being the best-paid workers in the country, they have become among the lowest-paid, while government-sponsored corruption lets foreign businesses ransack the rich fisheries around Walvis Bay;

Home-owners defending their homes against collusion between crooked lawyers and financiers who try to dispossess them;

Young people demanding access to homes;

Small farmers protecting their traditional lands against seizure by business interests;

Ethnic groups who suffered under German colonial rule seeking access to the compensation pocketed by SWAPO ministers;

Bushmen too now have a WRP(N) member among their leaders.

Former soldiers seeking access to their pensions, also stolen by SWAPO ministers;

Former Peoples Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) fighters seeking acknowledgment of and compensation for the deaths and other sufferings inflicted on them by the SWAPO leaders during liberation.

The WRP(N) won two parliamentary seats in the 2014 elections, but is denied the official resources which should accompany this electoral success. The party has had to spend a good deal of time fighting off a state-inspired sham "breakaway" which seriously impeded its work.

Nevertheless it held a very successful second congress in 2015 and is now developing a network of branches and conducting a serious programme of theoretical education in Marxism for the

new forces coming into the leadership of the Party.

And the WRP is now in touch with the United Front established by the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) and is preparing to collaborate in its work.

### **A decisive political break in South Africa**

NUMSA launched the United Front initiative in connection with the decisive break with Stalinism in which it is engaged. NUMSA has correctly declared the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the ruling African National Congress (ANC) to be bourgeois parties and called for a Movement for Socialism to build a Marxist workers' party.

What they have established is a genuine United Front bringing community groups together with trade unions led by the working class. Its purpose is to stand up for real working class communities in the context of extreme inequality, exploitation of workers, unemployment (especially among young people) and mass poverty.

NUMSA's aim in building the United Front (and a Marxist workers' party) is to transform the National Democratic Revolution of 1994 (which left the working class out of the picture and maintained the imperialist exploitation of South Africa intact) into a socialist revolution led by the working class.

The United Front has appealed directly to Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International for political, practical and material assistance in standing United Front candidates in South Africa's local elections on 3 August.

We are sure these developments inspire and encourage our sympathisers and supporters as they do us. We have a target of £5,000 and very little time. Please give generously.

## **How you can donate**

1. Use the button on the top right hand corner of the *workersinternational.info* home page marked 'donate', making clear that your donation is for the Southern Africa Appeal.

2. To transfer from your bank account, send donations to:

Unity trust Bank

Account: *The Correspondence Society*

sort: 60 – 83 – 01

account: 20059400

3. Send cheques made out to Correspondence and marked on the back "Southern Africa Appeal" to : PO Box 68375, London , E7 7DT, UK.

Yours in solidarity,

***Bob Archer***

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## **New edition of The Worker/ Die Werker**

IN THIS EDITION

Roads

Marikana support by Namibian miners

Truth & Justice

Letters

Editorial

Available in both English and Afrikaans [here!](#)

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## **Political victory for Polish**

# Miners

The [Polish miners' strike](#) ended last Friday evening (they went back to work on Monday) with a political victory and an economic compromise. The managing director has left, the sacked trade unionists have been re-employed.

Information and video published on the Syndicat Solidarnost Tuzla website and the Zagreb Workers Front website (see: <https://www.facebook.com/Radnicka.Fronta/posts/915345861833247>)

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## Miners Strike and repression in Poland

*Jan Malewski, 13 February 2015 (Translated from <http://www.europe-solidaire.org/spip.php?article34332> )*

Polish miners at the Jastrzebie Colliery Company (JSW) have launched an [appeal for international solidarity](#) signed by Boguslaw Zietek, president of the “August 80” trade union (1). We would be grateful if you could disseminate it as widely as possible.

The strike started on 28 January when the managing director of JSW, Jaroslaw Zagorowski, sacked 9 trade unionist at the “Budryk” mine for organising a solidarity strike with the miners at another company, KW (Kompania weglowa [“mining company”] Europe’s biggest mining business, which wanted to close four pits and sack the miners. This strike, was successful, with the backing of the whole population. The four

mines were not closed and there were no sackings, according to the agreement with the government signed on 17 January. At that time the government made a commitment that there would be no reprisals against the strikers and those who solidarised with them...) The managing director has also suspended the collective agreements signed two years ago when JSW was converted to a PLC with shareholders. Among those sacked was Krysztof Labadz, leader of the "August 80" union and of the 46 day-long strike in 2007-2008.

All trade unions supported the strike – "Solidarnosc", ZZG (the mining branch of OPZZ), FZZ (Forum of trade unions), WZZ "Sierpen 80" ("August 80" Free Trade Union), "Kadra" (Cadres), etc. etc. There is a united strike committee made up of the five main unions in the region.

Negotiations were carried out via a mediator, a former deputy prime-minister, but the managing director was not there and the company was reluctant. Besides reversing the sackings (agreed in principle during negotiations but not signed) and respecting the collective agreement (partially agreed but not signed), demands included the sacking of the managing director Jaroslaw Zagorowski, who the miners no longer want to see and who they accuse of trying to bankrupt the firm so he can buy it back cheaper.

On Wednesday police fired 37mm rubber bullets on miners gathered outside the JSW company HQ, injuring 20, some of them seriously. As the police fired, miners shouted "Are you trying a re-run of Decmber 1981?" (General Jaruzelski's coup d'etat). A video of the rally the police fired on shows that they did so without any valid reason against a gathering of miners who were singing (2).

The confrontation actually does look very serious. Miners' families (women and children) demonstrated on Thursday, saying that even if they went hungry they would hold out to the end.

19 miners are on hunger strike. According to management, there are more than 5 000 confirmed strikers, but the mines are at a standstill (a lot of miners have taken annual leave days, since they cannot manage 16 days on strike ...)

The court at Gliwice has just declared the strike illegal and threatened to make the strike leaders (including the 9 sacked trade unionists) pay JSW's "losses", which the company states amount to several million euros ... Krzysztof Labadz is among those worst affected ...

On Thursday, Boguslaw Zietek told the Polish Press Agency "We live in a country run by bandits, thieves and Mafiosi who are more powerful than the government". That gives a pretty accurate picture of the mood.

Jan Malewski

1. See [1] on Europe Solidaires Sand Frontieres (ESSF article 34331), [Un appel urgent des mineurs polonais : Ne tirez pas sur les ouvriers !](#).
2. See <https://www.facebook.com/video.php?v=669643963153352&set=vb.100003232629300&type=2&theater>

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# **An urgent appeal from Polish miners: Don't shoot at workers**

Boguslaw Zietek, "August 80" free trade union,

12 February 2015.

Don't shoot at workers!

Don't use state institutions against protesters!

On 12 February the courts ruled illegal the strike by several thousand miners at Jastrzebie Colliery Company (Jastrzebie Spolka Weglowa, JSW) in southern Poland. On the same day, a demonstration of miners' wives and children marched through the town supporting their loved ones in struggle.

The authorities will stop at nothing to break this strike, which has already gone on for 16 days. Special police detachments sent against the miners have tried to crush the protest with unheard-of brutality, using anti-riot weapons firing 37mm anti-riot rubber bullets, water cannon and tear gas without any good reason.

More than 20 miners have been wounded, some of them seriously. At the same time prosecutors have started charges against the protest organisers, threatening them with financial consequences bound up with "losses" the company suffers affected by the strike. Among those charged are the trade unionist Krzysztof Labadz, one of the leaders of the strike at "Budryk" mine which lasted 46 days seven years ago.

The striking miners are demanding the sacking of the company managing director, Jaroslaw Zagorski, whose management has brought to company to the very brink. Even though the government holds more than half the shares, it will not give way. The miners and their families are determined. They are defending their jobs but also the right to protest of all Polish working people.

We call on trades unions and social organisations across Europe to support our struggle and to send us letters of support. Only international solidarity, as with Greece, can force back the diktats of the neo-liberals who rule us. Only together can we face up to their anti-social offensive in Europe.

Boguslaw Zietek,

President of the Free Trade Union "August 80" (WZZ "Sierpen 80").

Send solidarity messages to: [darekzal74@gmail.com](mailto:darekzal74@gmail.com)