

Numsa's New Year Message

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NUMSA News Special edition

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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

An analysis of the crises of Southern Africa

A situation characterised by increasing burden of parasitism on the working people

Southern Africa is in the throes of economic and political crises in **South Africa, Zimbabwe, Namibia and Angola**.

In South Africa there's a louder and louder clamour even from the ranks of the ANC itself for President Zuma's removal on the misleading conception of so-called State capture. Zuma's relationship with the Guptas is put forward as 'State Capture'.

(The fact is that the ANC State was always a comprador State for the ruling classes of South Africa. In this sense the State was 'captured' long before the Guptas. Police Chief Jackie Selebi's undignified relationships with organised gangsters uncovered in 2010 and the Marikana Massacre of miners in 2012 amongst general caretaking were adequate proof of the aforesaid.)

Nevertheless, the South African State is all but bankrupt and the mismanagement of central institutions such as ESKOM (the power utility), which is now under investigation for 'State Capture', and the State's endangering and intrinsic inability to develop adequate infrastructure for capitalism are undoubtedly major issues behind the demand instigated by the ruling classes.

In the midst of the South African crisis, the Zimbabwean Army for all intents and purposes deposed Robert Mugabe due to internal squabbles in the ZANU-PF seemingly on the question of succession. However, the real reason (like in the rest of the sub-region) is clearly dwindling or depleted resources and a

frenzy to be close to the last remaining State finances and to serve international capitalism under austerity, which insists on as few servants as possible.

(Unemployment is estimated in the bourgeois press at 95%. But since the 'estimate' is coupled with 'underemployment', it is actually impossible to 'estimate'. This 'statistic' was probably dreamed up in order to further revile Mugabe. What probably is true is that in one fell swoop working people have been rapidly turned into mostly temporary and seasonal contract workers. But this trend is anyway happening in the rest of the sub-region.)

Likewise, in Angola the new president Joao Lourenco, who took over from Eduardo Dos Santos in August this year, is reported to have dismissed Isabel dos Santos as chair of the state oil company Sonangol on Wednesday, 15 November. She is said to be \$3,5 billion 'strong' from oil income. Given that oil is said to comprise 90% of exports and the bulk of production, that payment is in dollars, but that there is a perennial shortage of FOREX (dollars), it will probably never be known how much she and others are truly 'worth', as the dollars seem to disappear before reaching Angola. (Exports in 2015 were estimated at \$37,3 billion and imports at about \$22 billion. There should have been no problem with foreign valuta.)

President Lourenço had reportedly already dismissed the heads of several other state companies, including the three state-owned media companies. Bottom of Form Sonangol is reported to be a partner with some of the biggest international oil companies, including Exxon Mobil, Chevron and BP.

When MPLA (People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola) took over in 1975, they 'nationalised' all corner shops and retail outlets, replaced them with severely under-stocked 'Peoples Shops' and set up 'black markets', without price control, which allowed government ministers and officials to make profits many times over the purchase price of the items.

These so-called black markets had hundreds of metres of shelves loaded with every conceivable item and openly operated with consumables and imported goods.

The same frenzy to loot as in the other countries of Southern Africa saw the MPLA ignore the many high-rise buildings under construction when the Portuguese had to leave in 1975. Until very recently they were left with their cranes still standing and the deteriorating infrastructure. Not even drainage was considered, let alone aesthetics.

If one considers the reports that from 2001 to 2008 Angola was one of the fastest growing economies in the world, with an estimated average of 11% growth, of which increased oil production constituted 17% of growth per year, it indicated a seriously sick situation in which the rest of the economy, especially agriculture, actually contracted by 6% per year: negative growth of 6% growth in essential economy sector. Agriculture is said to remain by-and-large subsistent.

Officially Angola has 26% unemployment, but some Angolans put it much higher, even 70%. There is no way to determine the true figure.

No doubt stirring popular anger had a say in these newest developments just as in Zimbabwe.

However, if there is any change, it will be to strengthen the grip of the IMF, World Bank, the European Union and the United States. But, given the nature of oil companies, the looting will undoubtedly continue in Angola, leading to a much harsher situation for the more than 50% of impoverished Angolans and the rest who are employed.

Namibia has seen the State go into bankruptcy due to uncontrolled looting since 1990. By 1996 they had figured out how to loot Pension Funds, in cahoots with mining companies such as Rio Tinto Zinc and the Goldfields South Africa. They further discovered how to loot State Finances through sham

building and construction projects with costs inflated by multiples.

Buildings and construction projects at absurdly inflated costs litter the entire country and the capital city, Windhoek. The most notable of these was firstly the State House. The original cost estimate was a few hundred million rand, but it was finished at the astronomical price of 19 billion rand. Besides being the residence of the President, it was designed to house cabinet offices and conference halls. These offices are now standing unoccupied.

The second most cynical project was the Neckartal Dam, which was contrived before 2011 as an irrigation scheme in the far south of the country. The Southern African Institute for Environmental Assessment (SAIEA) had submitted a report that the project was not viable as the dam would require highly specialised skills and largescale capital investments to produce high value produce for the overseas market, which was the purported object. It was further pointed out that the nearby Naute Dam's capacity was not utilised to the full. The project continued irrespective. It was initially costed at R3,02 billion, but it escalated to R5,7 billion in 2017, when the uncompleted construction ground to a halt due to State bankruptcy.

The particularly ludicrous procedures for contrived building and construction were as follows: Cabinet would decide on the project and determine the price; the consultants and quantity surveyors would work out the bill of quantities to correspond thereto; the fees of engineers, consultants and contractors would rise proportionally with the multiply-inflated initial price. The feasibility study would be made last. Members of the Cabinet and State officials would collect relatively small kickbacks. State assets worth billions would be sold for kickbacks of a few million. (The resultant bankruptcy ['illiquidity'] is thus not temporary, but permanent, as future assets such as for example State land were depleted.)

For the past year major projects like highways from Windhoek and construction generally have ground to a halt, but it is clear that the IMF, World Bank and the European Union have moved in for direct 'State Capture', albeit clandestinely in order to shield the Comprador State from a public perception of not only its uselessness and debilitating ineptitude, but encumbrance to true freedom.

The form and national peculiarities of each Southern African State may differ, even remarkably in some instances. For example, Zimbabwe, Angola, and Mozambique waged relatively effective guerrilla struggles, driving the colonial rulers to the negotiating tables, but nevertheless ended up as bourgeois (pseudo Stalinist) States. African National Congress (ANC) and South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) were foisted on South Africa and Namibia directly as Comprador States with parodies of armed struggles. The similarities are nevertheless much more essential than the differences. These situations could only be reached by a brutal and ruthless eradication of any local opposition: In 1977, MPLA obliterated 5000 youth in Luanda; Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) eradicated opposition by assassinating for Herbert Chitepo and working-class youth in exile, and thereafter an estimated 30-60,000 and perhaps many more civilians in Ndebele in Southern Zimbabwe. It made many disappear, and massacred farm workers during its 'land-grab'. ANC waged a war within South Africa against the working class and its leadership, and, SWAPO and ANC waged terror against youth in exile.

But the content of the crises remains essentially similar: that is, bankrupt States seeking to be bailed out by 'white monopoly capitalism'.

The cash-strapped South African electricity utility ESKOM and South African Airways (SAA) now openly seek private partners ('white monopoly capital') to overcome inefficiency and to piggy-back on what is presumed to be an effective and competent private sector and the self-regulation of the

market. The absurdity is still argued that making State enterprise attractive for private investors makes it profitable. Which begs the question: if a State enterprise is profitable, why sell it off?

Nevertheless, TELKOM's 46,000 employees are already targeted for reduction, although not the astronomical management incomes and lavish international lifestyles and obscene expenditures. A third of the employees are to be reduced.

In Namibia, the SWAPO government is appealing to the World Bank for help in getting private partners for the State Owned Enterprises.

Privatisation is demanded despite two major publications on the effects of privatisation in Eastern Europe, Africa and South America in the 1990s. UN researchers show that nowhere in the world has privatization yielded the vaunted results. Instead it has created mass unemployment, social destabilization and hardships.

The signs are clear that international financial instances have already moved into place and already demand 'austerity'. In Katima Mulilo, the CEO of the Municipality stated that 'urban land' is not for 'poor people' and bulldozed settlements in order to save money on services. In Okahandja letters have been issued to settlements giving notice of bulldozing.

In general, the comprador States are clearly putting on their nicest clothes to woo imperialism back to take over their State functions as there is little to loot anymore. But, this has set off intense proliferation of factions in the States and squabbles amongst them. (This explains the nice and friendly *coup d'état* in Zimbabwe)

Given the desperation of the working people in the deteriorating economic situation and their falling living standards, within the context of a crisis of leadership they

cling to each hope generated by demagoguery of the compradors to bring change. And yet, there are many sceptical observers amongst them.

In Zimbabwe, many notice that it is the same old edifice which proclaims new salvation.

Likewise, in South Africa and Angola, working people are observing the situation with caution.

CRISIS OF LEADERSHIP

Working people find it hard to respond to the looming threat. Whilst no doubt their largely amorphous stirrings are the main pressure for the compradors to feign a hope for real change, they are also in crisis, a crisis of leadership.

This crisis is historic in context.

Especially in South Africa and Namibia, the working classes have generated their own leadership in the union struggles which started in 1971/2 in Namibia and lit the veld fire of workers' struggles in South Africa since 1973.

Whilst these struggles led to real union rights by the 80's, the ANC and SWAPO have led physical attacks against the working class and its leaders since 1976. By 1984 they had succeeded in disbanding or killing the union and workers' leadership and corralling workers' organisations behind the nationalists through the Confederation of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the National Union of Namibian Workers (NUNW). In 1990 in Namibia and 1994 in South Africa, this union leadership abandoned the workers for an alliance with what they now call 'white monopoly capitalism'.

Since 1992 when The Labour Act which contained significant rights for workers was promulgated in 1992. Since then the SWAPO regime, together with corporate lawyers, started dismantling labour rights, first through endemic corruption in

the law courts, then using the introduction of illegal practices such as contract labour, and then by rewriting the Labour Act in 2007 to put it in line with neo-liberal requirements of a total onslaught on labour rights.

This same process was followed in South Africa with the Labour Relations Act of 1995 and its later amendments and conventions introduced illegally such as contract labour.

These developments suggest that the working people must generate a new and independent leadership both at union and political levels.

They need a union leadership which leads them in the struggle against the erosion of rights gained through three decades of bloody struggle. They still have union rights to organise and strike. But, they need a conscious and alert struggle against the facilitation of the comprador class to enable capitalist corporations to erode workplace rights by slave conventions.

There is no point living with your head in the political clouds while working people need to understand their historic tasks through fighting for concrete rights.

The meaning of fighting for political power on a mass scale can only come from the fight for the protection of past gains and rights against slave labour conditions, which the IMF, the World Bank, the EU and the US are set to further entrench through the compradors of Southern Africa.

Hewat Beukes

19 November 2017

Notes:

The bourgeoisie of Southern Africa was a comprador class for imperialism before and after 1994. (Compradors are traders in a colony or semi-colony who facilitate their county's pillage by imperialism.)

The Apartheid State was able to build a pseudo welfare state on the backs of the working people, who with their families comprised 90% of the South African nation.

The entrance of black governments heaped a further burden on the working people. Not allowed to dig into corporate capital and assets, they took hold of working peoples' assets and life savings.

The entrance now of direct control by the imperialists heaps the ultimate burden on the working masses of Southern Africa.

They will not be able to bear any further burdens.

Editor's Note: this is an edited version of a document that is already circulating on social media.

Sloganeering and coat-tails – A response to some South African activists

John Appolis, Ahmed Jooma and Shaheen Khan have kindly passed on texts they have produced dealing with the current political situation in South Africa, as well as a contribution to discussion by Oupa Lehulere.

I must apologise for the delay in responding to these texts. It is not easy to orientate oneself from a great distance away.

I have to confess I am still at a loss to understand why the various authors continue to place their hopes for the future in an alliance with this or that faction of the "official" liberation movement, the ANC, when the country has seen major irruptions of the working class into public affairs. The events around the miners' struggle and Marikana unleashed a

huge wave of industrial action. All this was reflected in the December 2013 Special Conference decisions of Numsa and the progress made since then in consolidating a combative new trade union federation.

The fact is I find the arguments presented in these texts unconvincing and misleading.

Ahmed and Shaheen compare the current situation in South Africa with that in Germany in 1932, on the eve of the Nazi seizure of power. On this basis, they recommend that workers and young people in South Africa should fall in line behind the Democratic Alliance, the South African Communist Party, the various anti-Zuma factions of the African National Congress (ANC) and the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) of Malema in the "Zuma Must Go!" bandwagon. To ward off the danger of being overwhelmed by all of that, they append a wordy "socialist" programme and cross their fingers behind their back.

Revolutionary tactics cannot be deduced from a cook-book. Empiricists identify any phenomenon abstractly (that is, they reduce it to a name, a suitable label, leaving out all its complexity, internal and external contradictions, motion, indeed its very life) and place this definition confidently in the appropriate pigeonhole. When another phenomenon arises with superficial similarities to the first, they say: "Ahah!", sort through their files, triumphantly fish out the label and the attached recipe and tie it to the new situation.

They forget the warning traditionally drummed into medical students: "Therapy is easy; diagnosis is difficult". Patients who present with apparently similar symptoms may be suffering from very different diseases, and require quite different treatment

Without writing a full-on history of Germany between the World Wars, it is useful to recall some essential details about the situation in which revolutionary Marxists called for a United Front of working-class parties to stop Hitler from coming to power.

For all her problems, Germany under the Weimar Republic was a highly-developed modern, industrial, imperialist state. There was a very numerous and politically-conscious working class which had built not only

its own mass, nominally Marxist, Social-Democratic Party (SPD) but also a the most significant revolutionary Communist Party (KPD) outside of the Soviet Union.

This working class had made enormous experiences of struggle in the course of World War I and the following 14 years. At one point a short lived-socialist republic had been proclaimed. Workers had organised strike waves, military and naval insurrections, a general strike to defeat a right-wing coup attempt, workers' and soldiers' councils in many cities and actual Red Armies in some industrial regions. In 1923, the year of the great inflation, there had been serious moves to prepare, equip and carry out a workers' revolution.

The large German Communist Party was inspired and materially supported by the successful revolution in Russia and the workers' state established there.

The Nazi regime was a reckless, foolhardy (and of course profoundly criminal and barbaric) option forced upon the German bourgeoisie by the rival imperialist powers who prevailed in World War I. It was underpinned by a (fairly) worked-out ideology of blood, soil, violence and conquest. This involved extreme nationalism, racism (towards all allegedly "non-Aryan" races and most immediately affecting the millions of Jews living in Europe), a leadership cult based on utter subjection of the mass, hero-worship, militarism and a simplistic concept of the survival of the fittest. Another aspect of this ideology was utter hatred of all kinds of Marxism and a determination to stamp out Communism in the USSR and everywhere.

We do criticise the policies and actions of the Soviet-led Communist International (CI), and consequently of the German KPD, during the period of "bonapartist" rule by Heinrich Brüning, Franz von Papen and Kurt von Schleicher between 1929 and 1933. First of all, these alleged Marxists did not see the real depth of the coming catastrophe. They had a mechanical view of the effects of the economic meltdown of 1929.

The CI of the day saw the Social Democrats (the reformist socialist party) and the Nazi Party as "not antipodes but twins". After all, a

Social-Democratic government inflicted welfare cuts and austerity measures on the working class and sent armed police to shoot workers demonstrating on May Day. A Social-Democratic minister had said in 1919 "someone has to play the bloodhound" and unleashed vicious right-wing paramilitaries on revolutionary workers. Could the Nazis be any worse?

But of course, they were!

The second mistake the CI made, as a consequence, was that they did not anticipate what damage Hitler would inflict on the workers' and socialist movement, which was comprehensively crushed with the use of extreme violence and intimidation once Hitler was elected German Chancellor. The CI and KPD leaders thought that Hitler's accession to power would generate enough mass resistance among workers to lead to a Communist counter-stroke: "After Hitler, us!" they said.

The third mistake the CI and the KPD made was to believe that they could win over Social Democratic workers by propaganda alone, just by brow-beating them with arguments. They offered a "United Front from below" to SPD supporters against their own leaders. In effect, they were saying: "if you agree with us, join our United Front on our terms" instead of "let's see how we can get your leaders to work with ours to stop Hitler". This attitude let the leaders of the SPD and the trade unions "off the hook", because it was clearly not a serious attempt to overcome the division in the working class. If they had been sincere about a united front, the KPD leaders would have negotiated jointly-acceptable terms on which to organise one with the Social-Democratic party and trade union leaders. In the face of the Nazi threat, such a workers' united front could have made sense.

It is worth quoting what Trotsky wrote in 1932 in Germany, *What Next?*, not in order to appeal to some Holy Writ, but to get to grips with how the dynamics of class relations are approached:

"Without hiding or mitigating our opinion of the Social Democratic leaders in the slightest, we may and we must say to the Social Democratic workers, 'Since, on the one hand, you are willing to fight together with us; and since, on the other, you are still unwilling to break with your

leaders, here is what we suggest: force your leaders to join us in a common struggle for such and such practical aims, in such and such a manner; as for us, we Communists are ready.' Can anything be more plain, more palpable, more convincing?

In precisely this sense I wrote – with the conscious intention of arousing the sincere horror of blockheads and the fake indignation of charlatans – that in the war against fascism we were ready to conclude practical military alliances with the devil and his grandmother, even with Noske and Zörgiebel.”

But there was another side to the question of the United Front, a tactic which the Communist International under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky had adopted: applied incorrectly, it could also become a cover for passivity and inaction. Further on in the same text, Trotsky wrote:

“In the hands of the Stalinist bureaucracy, the policy of the united front became a hue and cry after allies at the cost of sacrificing the independence of the party. Backed by Moscow and deeming themselves omnipotent, the functionaries of the Comintern seriously esteemed themselves to be capable of laying down the law to the classes and of prescribing their itinerary; of checking the agrarian and strike movements in China; of buying an alliance with Chiang Kai-Shek at the cost of sacrificing the independent policies of the Comintern; of re-educating the trade union bureaucracy, the chief bulwark of British imperialism through educational courses at banquet tables in London, or in Caucasian resorts; of transforming Croatian bourgeois of Radich's type into Communists, etc., etc. All this was undertaken, of course, with the best of intentions, in order to hasten developments by accomplishing for the masses what the masses weren't mature enough to do for themselves.”

The mistake the CI leaders then made after they had digested the depth of the disaster that Hitler's take-over represented, was to believe that there was a way to prevent the spread of fascism by forming an alliance with “democratic”, anti-fascist capitalists in which the interests of the working class were clearly and officially subordinated to the leadership of the bourgeoisie. This policy of a so-called “Popular Front” also enters our story, because it is the entire foundation and backbone of the

policy of the CI's successors (although the body itself was wound up during World War II) towards the colonial liberation movement in general and the African National Congress in particular. They dressed this tribal and bourgeois formation up as the main revolutionary force in South Africa and systematically over many years did everything they could to subordinate the South African working class to it.

But it was the black working class which drove the struggle against apartheid forward. Nevertheless in 1990-1994, the ANC, supported by the SACP and in close dependence upon imperialist governments, the mining monopolies and the parties of the white minority, carried out its own form of "state capture". Subsequent history (as many can explain) has exposed what this "state capture" actually meant.

Is Zuma Hitler?

No, Zuma is Zuma.

Since the end of apartheid rule, governments of the ANC in alliance with the SACP and Cosatu have all provided a democratic screen, engaging the support of as many local forces as possible while serving the interests of international capital. Apartheid was ended and majority rule installed by arrangement with the international mining companies, major banks and imperialists governments.

The Triple Alliance was cobbled together from individuals in exile all over the world parachuted into positions of authority in the major institutions, including the trade union movement. "Sections" of the South African bourgeoisie black and white were appeased to various extents to make the Triple Alliance workable, while the commercial headquarters of the big mining companies were prudently moved abroad to major imperialist centres such as London. It is the imperialists' requirements which have predominated ever since under a veneer of national independence and self-government.

But the Triple Alliance was fragile and it is breaking up, above all under the pressure of the masses, first and foremost the working class.

Now candidates for power in South Africa must demonstrate to the

satisfaction of their international imperialist masters that they can directly confront and subjugate that pressure. Zuma is up for the job, equipped with the necessary qualities and eager to enjoy the fruits of such work.

Such regimes practice a level of self-enrichment at the expense of their own peoples which is not merely tolerated but actually encouraged by their international patrons. These regimes were conceived in corruption and live by it. They steal state property with impunity, rob the public treasury and have been known to “nationalise” and then take over (or sell to cronies) traditionally-owned tribal land, etc.

They will play every vile trick to protect their access to wealth, including crushing democratic protests, imprisoning and murdering opponents and fanning ethnic differences into open conflict.

To retain local control over their populations they rely on tribal elites bought with a fraction of the loot often alongside the straightforward rule of gangsters.

Such are the shared characteristics of African “independence” regimes. And for that reason, they are instable regimes of crisis. But although they share some features with fascist regimes (for example, suspension of the “rule of law”, crimes against the people, even outright genocide in some cases) they are not as such fascist regimes.

Labelling them “fascist” can be quite misleading. Tony Blair and George W. Bush branded Saddam Hussain a “fascist” in order to justify the second Gulf war. They went to war against the “fascist” Hussain, but it was the Iraqi people they were aiming at and actually hit. You could say the same about their treatment of Libya under Ghaddafi and Syria under Assad, all in different ways.

Confusing Popular Front and United Front

“The Popular Front”, Ahmed Jooma and Shaheen Khan correctly say “is the main strategic weapon of the bourgeoisie to tie the hands of the working class to the interests of the bosses”. However, they soon go on to urge NUMSA and its allies to plunge straight into – a sort of Popular Front!

They spend five sentences enumerating the forces predominating in the “anti-State Capture Movement” which make it very clear that this is a mass popular movement around a “single issue” (i.e. “Zuma Must Fall!”). They then write: “The class character of these movements is not as important to ordinary people as the fact that they are ready to take up the fight practically and immediately”.

Yes, it is good for the masses to get involved in political action. But it is the job of revolutionary movements to point out the things which are really important to ordinary people above and beyond what the bourgeoisie presents as important.

Ahmed Jooma and Shaheen Khan think that the presence of a working-class force inside the movement armed with “its own programme and banner” will magically convert the Popular Front into a United Front. It is worth quoting what they say in full:

“20: The task of the proletariat and its leadership is to join the general movement. However, in doing so it enters the fray under its own programme and banner. It applies the policy of the united front which is ‘unity in action’. March separately. Strike together”.

However, they have just spent more than a few lines describing the class character of the “general movement” in considerable detail, which makes it clear that this movement is NOT a workers’ united front but a cross-class popular front irrespective of whatever programme and banner we Marxists “enter the fray” under.

Comrade Appolis (“Critical Comments on the article: *Platform of the Left Bloc in the Zuma Must Go Campaign* by Comrades Ahmed Jooma and Shaheen Khan”) notes the discrepancy here (which is to his credit). He also sees the need to build a core of politically-conscious leading activists with a breadth of vision which extends beyond the parochial. However, he both turns his back on the main force able to bring about such a cadre (which is NUMSA and the new trade union federation) and proposes a different version of the same popular front which Ahmed and Shaheen put forward:

“The working class and its forces should enter this conflict with its own vision, strategy and demands. It should enter it against the big

bourgeoisie and its system of accumulation by calling for Zuma to go. And this call is in line with the sentiments and mood of the masses”.

Further on he notes: “the working-class movement exhibits numerous weaknesses – organisationally, politically and ideologically. It is marked by fragmentation, low levels of mass implantation and has a very disperse advance guard who are caught up in the immediacy of its issues.”

He is impatient of the developments among organised workers:

“The trade unions are only now in the beginning phase of shaking off the effects of years of false politics, bureaucracy and inertia. Legalism and an excessive emphasis on an industrial relations’ approach to class struggle seems to still frame its politics and methodologies. Its social base is not as yet at the cutting edge of anchoring a mass movement. NUMSA/SAFTU have so far express some correct sentiments but have a way to go.”

It is true that trade unions cannot solve all the political problems of the working class. The characteristics which John Appolis lists reflect one side of the conditions under which trade unions operate: they deal with the day-to-day problems of their entire membership containing a wide range of men and women with a variety of outlooks; they deal with bread-and-butter issues; they deal with employers; they stand up for their members’ rights day by day within with the legal and political framework of class relations and understandably both work within it and work to improve it using established channels.

Trade unions have to have an administrative machine and responsible leaders. If they are doing their job properly they have to spend a lot of effort on organisational matters. This is their strength as class organisations but at the same time it makes them susceptible to the influence of the employers’ class.

What was overwhelmingly striking, following Marikana and the resulting wave of mass industrial working-class action, was that the leaders of NUMSA decided to use their union’s resources in order to lay the basis for a political development by their class. The quantity of experiences mounting up of 20 years of majority rule under the Triple Alliance turned

into a new quality, the determination to work for a new political organisation which would fight for the interests of the working class, the fulfilment of the promises of the liberation struggle.

The trade union movement is not just some undifferentiated mass. There is a mass movement and there are leaders at various levels. Some leaders were not equipped to draw political lessons from the struggles that broke out. Others were loath to escape their intellectual vassalage to the Triple Alliance. It is enormously to the credit of NUMSA's leadership that the union has taken forward its special conference decisions of 2013 into re-building the strongest possible unity in a new union confederation around new positions in the movement.

Unlike them, Comrade Appolis is looking for a short-cut to overcoming the movement's "numerous difficulties". He says:

"What the demand for Zuma to go offers is an opportunity to unite these struggles, give them a national expression and a connection to a common national cause. The present conjuncture requires this qualitative shift in the struggles of the working class. And the Zuma must go provides the basis to effect such a qualitative shift.

"The unification of these struggles on a national basis will not amount to an artificial manoeuvre. Rather it will organically weave together the thousands of different struggles of the masses into a national stream. This will place the working class in a position to articulate an alternative ideological and political explanation of the political economy of corruption, of the class character of the ANC and its factions, of the nature of the South African social formation and the position of white monopoly capital therein".

On this basis, he asserts: "This coalescing and cohering of a nation-wide cadre of militants with their thousands of connections with the concrete struggles of the masses is the key task of the moment".

To achieve this, he proposes:

"The starting point is to convene a National Assembly of Representatives of the Struggling Formations of the Working Class, especially those at

the cutting edge of the anti-corruption struggles, for instance Outsourcing Must Fall movement, Abahlali Freedom Park, Housing Assembly, Tembelihle Crisis Committee, SECC, Black Sash, R2K and many others. It is these formations that must anchor the movement against the Zuma Bloc and white monopoly capital. The coalescing of these formations on a national scale with clarified class perspectives on the political economy of corruption and crystalizing around a common set of demands shall enable the working class to make its presence and imprint felt on the national anti-corruption movement. NUMSA and SAFTU are to be engaged to be part of this initiative. At some point overtures should also be made towards COSATU to come on board.”

However, he proposes all this under conditions where the movement is dominated by the demagogy of various self-seeking sectors and above all of the Economic Freedom Fighters of Julius Malema.

“White Monopoly Capital” and demagogy of every kind

Oupa Lehulere is even more pessimistic about the role that organised labour can play than is John Appolis. But this only becomes clear at the end of a long and rather confusing article, *Cronin and Company harness Marxism to the service of White Monopoly Capital (The SACP and the Cronification of Marxism)*, which foregrounds the significance of “white monopoly capital”.

At the heart of Lehulere’s emphasis on “white monopoly capital” is the idea that the future of the mass movement must involve an alliance with one or another “sector” of South Africa’s black bourgeoisie as a stepping-stone into the political arena; that such an alliance is essential and possible against the common enemy, “white monopoly capital”.

To put it briefly: The whole basis for the “Zuma Must Fall” agitation is that in robbing the state finances alongside his Gupta associates, Zuma is seeking to (or obliged to) “capture” the South African state, turning it from a democracy of some sort into his own personal fiefdom.

The existence of black capitalists in South Africa is noted and they are classified into two main sectors. The “credit” bourgeoisie are said to be

those who were bought off by the big international corporations with credits which enabled them to become shareholders and then branch out into businesses of their own. (One thinks of the former miners' union leader Cyril Ramaphosa).

The "tenderpreneurs" on the other hand, are those who exploit any kind of relationship with the ruling alliance in order to win contracts to carry out public or government works. Jacob Zuma and his Gupta associates are meant to be placed in this category.

It is made into an article of faith that these are two separate groups who constitute the South African black bourgeoisie. Essentially, all those who call for the South African workers' movement to advance by joining the "Zuma Must Fall" campaign are arguing for the workers and the masses to support the "credit" sector of capitalists.

Zuma carried out a cabinet reshuffle in March this year, removing Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan and replacing him with the supposedly more malleable Malusi Gigaba. Gigaba appointed as an advisor a well-regarded left-leaning associate professor at Wits University, Chris Malikane.

Malusi Gigaba may have had good reason to believe that Malikane was a Zuma loyalist, but he apparently had not gone into detail about how he (Malikane) rationalised that position. That became clearer when people got around to reading what Malikane actually wrote. Take *How to break monopoly white capital for example* (<http://www.iol.co.za/news/opinion/how-to-break-monopoly-white-capital-8779291>).

Malikane starts dramatically by saying: "The class structure under colonialism or apartheid remains intact. The African is at the bottom of the food chain. The darkest skin performs the toughest job at the lowest wage."

He goes on: "Even within the capitalist class, the darkest skin is the lowest in the hierarchy. It should also be mentioned that, within the African capitalist class, the upper stratum which is credit-based is found inside, and accumulates directly through, established white monopoly capitalist structures."

And: "White monopoly ownership and control of state power is even more secured if the government in place is democratic, since the masses believe 'this is our government, we voted for it'. Yet, what cannot be explained is why 'our government' is failing to resolve our centuries-old problem of white monopoly of social power.

"The battle over the removal of the finance minister is the battle waged by white monopoly capital in alliance with the credit-based black capitalist, against the rise of the tender-based black capitalist class, which also has links with the leadership of political parties."

He explains further: "South Africa has now entered a phase of intense rivalry between capitalist groupings. In this phase, it is not possible to advocate political abstention, especially of masses of the oppressed and super-exploited African working class.

"The fight against white monopoly capital and its black/African allies, is an integral part of the struggle to consummate the national democratic revolution."

(The reference to "consummating the national democratic revolution' rings rather hollow in the mouth of a man who asserts that "white monopoly ownership and control of state power is even more secure if the government in place is democratic", etc.)

"The tender-based black capitalist class", he continues, "is not likely to win without the support of the mass of the black and African working class. Unlike its white counterpart, the tender-based black capitalist class has no coherent historical international backing. Its relationship with the organised working class, which is the only force that is capable of disrupting white monopoly capitalist power at production, is very weak if non-existent.

"Nevertheless, from the standpoint of the objective analysis of the class forces, in so far as the tender-based capitalist class has begun the war against the dominant white monopoly capitalist class, it has to be encouraged." (my emphasis – B.A.)

And in order to "encourage" that "tender-based black capitalist class",

Malikane took a government job under Zuma!

Apart from that one little detail, his proposals are the mirror image of those of Ahmed, Shaheen, Appolis and Lehlere. They all say that the South African working class is in no state to lead the struggle; its only hope to get into the game is on the coat-tails of this or that "sector" of the bourgeoisie; either sector. Toss a coin ...

Lehlere is so enamoured of the phrase "white monopoly capital" that he uses it nearly sixty times in his article. It is a conception he profoundly shares with Malikane (and many on the radical left in South Africa). It is a phrase which seems to evoke the condition of the black masses, and it does capture one side of the imperialist oppression of the people of South Africa. However, it leaves out so much about imperialism that is easily abused by demagogues.

If it is thought mainly to be the whiteness of the foreign monopolies (which are indeed in the main run by rich white men) which enables them to exploit and oppress the people of South Africa, then the suggestion is left open that black capitalism is a less daunting prospect.

What is startling is that Malikane's proposals are also barely different from the proposals of Julius Malema and the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), proposals which "radical lefts" such as Rehad Desai now laud to the skies in the TV documentary *Julius vs the ANC!* "White monopoly capital" continues to rule South Africa, is the cry. Resources and industries must be taken away from the control of "white monopoly capital" and nationalised.

The fact that Chris Malikane's attitude is simply as it were a photographic negative or reversed mirror image of the attitude of the EFF etc. places Lehlere in a certain difficulty. While he understandably defends Chris Malikane against the cynical sophistry of the South African Communist Party's Cronin, his own adherence to the theory of "white monopoly capitalism" is uncomfortable. Mouthing the catch-phrase "white monopoly capital", one could support Zuma against his opponents, or just as easily support Malema, the SACP, the Democratic Alliance et al against Zuma. It is a formula tailor-made for demagogues.

To put some distance between himself and Malikane, Lehulere drags in a disagreement over the question of the state.

It would of course have been quite enough to say that Malikane's decision to accept a job as an advisor to a minister hand-picked as a crony by Zuma was either misguided or unprincipled. He (Malikane) may have imagined that the job would enable him to advance the nationalisation of the country's resources and their mobilisation to fulfil the needs of the population.

But if Lehulere had merely expressed that simple truth, it would have left open to view how threadbare is the illusion that any "sector" of the South African bourgeoisie is interested in furthering the interests of the working class in any way.

So Lehulere raised his understandable disagreement with Malikane's career choice to the level of a principled disagreement over the nature of the state. Lenin is dragged into the discussion, not to mention Gramsci. We are told to concern ourselves not with "inside the state" or "outside the state" but in a different state. It is wrong not merely to sell yourself for a job on the Zuma payroll, but to direct any demands on the state.

Now whatever Lenin thought about the state (and his works are available for all to study), he never thought the working class (and the broader masses) could ignore it. He encouraged workers to place demand upon the state, to raise their political demands at the level of the government, the state and the legal system, to try to place their own representatives in institutions at that level.

The task facing the South African masses has little to do with individual lefts taking government jobs. What is needed is what NUMSA has put forward: a united front throughout the masses alongside a movement for socialism, enriched by a study of the examples of struggles for socialism around the world and leading to the formation of a genuine workers' party.

There are no short cuts to this. The organised working class in the unions in the new federation needs to be a backbone of iron sustaining this movement. The work has to go forward systematically and soberly. It

can only succeed if, alongside a growing mass of conscious support, a cadre is steeled in the course of the struggle. The movement must train itself not to be stampeded or derailed by demagogues of any stripe. The stakes are too high.

Bob Archer, 23 June 2017

Half a million people to take to the streets on Wednesday 19 March in demand for youth jobs

17 March 2014, Posted in [Press Releases](#)

Yesterday Sunday 16 March many of you woke up to posters on lampposts announcing that “Numsa declares war”. Unfortunately, little did the posters tell you what the war was all about. Also not properly explained was the fact that the battle that made yesterday’s newspaper headlines involved not only the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) but hundreds of community groups, faith-based organisations, other unions, numerous women’s groups, taxi associations and a number of youth formations. This coming **Wednesday (19 March 2014)** close to 500 000 people will take to the streets to demand jobs for young people. After Greece and Spain, South Africa has the third highest unemployment rate in the world for people between the ages of 15 to 24. Half of the people between the age of 15 and 24 are unemployed in this country. About 71% of all unemployed people in South Africa are between the ages 15-29. Most of them are women; the majority of which have never had a job in their lives. As workers and parents, we are no longer prepared to fold our arms while our children remain jobless. We are also tired of political parties and

business organisations that often refer to youth unemployment as a ticking time-bomb but do little to address the problem. As workers we also cannot continue to use our meagre wages to send our children to schools, colleges and universities to only find them wallowing in hopelessness as they cannot find employment after completion of their studies. Youth unemployment is a real problem in South Africa. **It is time for those with power to act!** On **Wednesday 19 March 2014**, we as a coalition of trade unions, community groups, faith-based organisations, student groups, organisations of unemployed people, taxi associations, women and youth formations; we will march in seven towns (Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban, Port Elizabeth, Bloemfontein, Emalahleni and George) to highlight the issue of youth unemployment and demand real solutions to the problem.

Youth unemployment demands real and not false solutions:

When presenting his Budget Speech on 26 February this year, the Minister of Finance Pravin Gordhan announced to a great applause in the Houses of Parliament and from the press gallery that since the introduction In January 2014 of the youth employment tax incentive, there have been

56 000 beneficiaries of the scheme. Little did the Minister tell us that the Employment Tax Incentive Act that President Jacob Zuma signed in December 2013;

- made it possible for employers to backdate the claims for the subsidy to October 2013. So many of the 56 000 people that the Minister referred may have been employed last year.
- for the 56 000 beneficiaries there will be no mandatory training.
- that for those in his 56 000 beneficiaries where there is no bargaining council agreement or sectoral determination or collective agreement; there will be no enjoyment of benefits such as provident fund and other benefits.
- No figure is given for actual jobs created since the Act

was signed.

Why are we opposed to the Employment Tax Incentive Act?

The *first* thing that South Africans must note with the Employment Tax Incentive Act is that what is being proposed is something broader than a youth wage subsidy. The Act proposes two *additional* categories of workers to be subsidised:

- workers who work in Special Economic Zones (SEZs) as envisaged in the Special Economic Zones (SEZ) Act that was recently passed in Parliament.
- workers in industries that the Minister may designate by notice in the *Government Gazette*.

In both these additional categories of workers, there is no age restriction. Subsidised workers in designated industries and in SEZs could be older than 29 years. The Minister has the power to move beyond the 18-29 years bracket through designation.

This means that employers in SEZs get an extra “bonus” benefit in the zone together with the other benefits in the act.

The *second* thing that we need to note is the hypocrisy of the whole thing. While we hear everyday about how social grants create “a culture of dependency” among the poor and that there has been the rejection of the demand for a Basic Income Grant, employers seemed happy to accept handouts from taxpayers in the form of tax concessions or subsidies for them to open factories and create jobs. It looks as if the philosophy that underpins the legislation is that; *handouts to the poor are bad but good for the capitalist class!*

As this coalition we remain opposed to the Employment Tax Incentive Act for the following **NINE** reasons:

Reason 1: The Act asks the working class to subsidise employers.

As the Act says no incentive will be paid in respect of employees who earn more R6 000 a month. The bulk of qualifying employees in terms of the Act pay no income tax as the current tax threshold (2013) is R67 111. This means that an employer can withhold the subsidy he is entitled to from the general tax deductions. Tax which workers pay for schools, hospitals etc can be used by the employer as his subsidy!

This in effect means it is coming from workers and to an extent the middle class. It is they who will work to subsidise the capitalist class.

Reason 2: The philosophy of the Act is that 'handouts' to the poor are bad but good for capitalists!

The philosophy of the Employment Tax Incentive Act is that grants to the poor are bad but good for capitalists. The government is prepared to forego revenue to entice the capitalist class to create jobs. This is the same capitalist class that speaks about how social grants create dependency and that grants are unsustainable. The Act is also being implemented by a government that has thus far refused to implement the Basic Income Grant and which makes no effort to pay current social benefits at anything near a decent level.

Reason 3: The Act is based on the assumption that it is 'high' wages that are causing unemployment and not the refusal of the capitalists to invest that leads to joblessness.

The idea behind the Employment Tax Incentive Act is that it is 'high' wages that are the cause of unemployment; which is why we must subsidise wages. Unfortunately for capitalism even its supporters in the World Bank no longer believe this. In its 2013 *Development Report*, the Bank argues that youth wage subsidies have not worked.

The architects of the Employment Tax Incentive Act are however silent about the "investment strike" by the private sector that has been going on in South Africa for many years. No-one

seems to be able to put a figure on this but there is little disagreement that it exists. It is the problem of the refusal to invest on the part of the capitalist class that government refuses to tackle head on. It is this avoidance of the real problem that leads them to false solutions such as the tax incentive scheme.

Reason 4: Even sectors with agreements are not immune from abuse.

The drafters of the Act do not seem to know the distinction between ACTUAL and MINIMUM wages. In the implementation of the Employment Tax Incentive Act, eligible employers can bring in qualifying employees and pay them minima in the agreements. The implications for a two-tiered labour market therefore remain with one group of workers on actuals and subsidised workers on minimums.

In collective bargaining this will have an inevitable downward push on wages in general. This is not "greedy" workers trying to protect their own conditions. Each worker in South Africa supports many more who are at home and unable to find decent work. In reality the vast majority of workers in this country, have no bargaining protection and don't even negotiate their wages!

Reason 5: The dangers of displacement of older and permanent employees are not totally eliminated

Although the Act states that an employer will be deemed to have displaced a worker if the "order of court or otherwise, reveals that the dismissal of that employee constitutes an automatically unfair dismissal", for us this is not good enough. For a start the employee must prove that he or she was displaced because of the subsidy.

The worker must then wait for the Labour Court to decide that the dismissal was caused by displacement. Employers are never likely to announce that a worker is being dismissed to replace

him or her with a subsidized employee. Workplace reorganization will cover a multitude of sins! An employee could be dismissed, or leave in one unit and be replaced with a worker from another unit. The job of the replacement worker could then become subsidized. No new job has been created, the number of jobs remains the same.

But more serious in relation to any potential unfair dismissal case is that in the case of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and industries that the Minister may designate, there is no age limit. So we cannot use age as the basis of an “automatically unfair dismissal” case.

Reason 6: Fraudsters are not disqualified!

In the original bill an employer who committed fraud would be disqualified from receiving the subsidy. In the Act that was passed although, there is a new penalty of R30 000, the automatic disqualification for receiving the subsidy in respect of other employees has been removed. According to the Act, a fraudster employer may not be disqualified if the Minister feels that the effects of the disqualification may directly or indirectly have an impact on employees of the employer.

Reason 7: There are still no mandatory training provisions in the Act.

Although there is some talk about regulations for training, these are very weak. The key word to watch in the Act is “MAY”; which is a very weak commitment. The Minister may or may not prescribe regulations requiring training or skills development. Don’t believe what is in the ANC Election Manifesto. The law says the Minister “may” pass regulations! They are not there.

Reason 8: The Minister of Finance still has wide ranging powers.

Except the consultation with the Minister of Labour on the training regulations that may be prescribed, the Minister of Finance still retains too much power. The Minister does not have to consult with other Ministers or stakeholders when designating industries for qualifying employees and eligible employers. Nor is there any provision for criteria that would guide the Minister's decision.

Reason 9: The Act bypassed NEDLAC.

As this coalition we still maintain our view that the Act should have been tabled in NEDLAC as it is a socio-economic policy. This is what the NEDLAC Act requires. This was also the commitment in the Youth Employment Accord.

Don't believe what truth twisters say!

Last Monday 10 March, members of the ANC's Economic Transformation Committee (ETC) attacked our opposition to the Employment Tax Incentive Act and accused Numsa of speaking with "forked tongues". Leading the pack was the architect of the employment tax incentive scheme Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan and unfortunately Numsa's former general-secretary Enoch Godongwana. Both claim that Numsa is dishonest in opposing the tax incentive scheme because "tens of billions of rands worth of government incentives have over the past years gone into the auto industry and that such incentives have kept the auto industry alive".

Displaying the buffoonery that characterises what he says or does these days, the Secretary-General of the ANC Gwede Mantashe was blunter than Gordhan and Godongwana. According to Mantashe, "Numsa accepts incentives for the capitalist class in the automotive industry but refuse government subsidisation of unemployed people".

In the workshops that we have run in all our 52 locals since January 2014, we have dismissed as disingenuous the criticism that as union we accept incentives for the capitalist class,

but refuse subsidisation of unemployed people. As indicated above it is not all incentives that NUMSA is opposed to.

We are opposed to schemes where the working class is forced to subsidise capitalists. The APDP works differently from the employment tax incentive scheme. Yes, through the duty-free import credits the state foregoes some revenue for the fiscus but this is different from asking the working class to subsidise capitalists. The incentive scheme in the Act uses PAYE and avoids touching profits.

Gordhan, Godongwana and Mantashe conveniently forget that the APDP, through Numsa 's intervention has other components such Vehicle Assembly Allowance (VAA) and Production Incentive (PI) that promote local production and local assembly. Our support for APDP and opposition to the Employment Tax Incentive Act is not double speak or opportunism. Our support for the MIDP and now APDP is premised on our overall objectives of job creation, localisation and creation of decent jobs.

What are we then demanding?

In place of the false solutions that government is putting forward, WE DEMAND:

- A repeal and scrapping of the Employment Tax Incentive Act.
- Macro-economic policies that increase the demand for labour such as a tax system that penalizes companies who pay out dividends instead of reinvesting in job-creating activities.
- Credit and the lowering of the cost of capital for job-creating companies and sectors.
- A move beyond public works programmes to public-sector employment programmes.
- Training of apprentices, learners, experiential learners and interns to achieve qualifications.
- A job-seekers grant or a basic income grant instead of a

subsidy for employers.

Our strike is protected:

The strike on 19 March is protected in terms of the Labour Relations Act (LRA) as the unions have served notices to the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC). Every worker can join the strike without fear of dismissal or victimisation.

STRIKE FOR YOUTH JOBS

AGAINST FALSE SOLUTIONS!!!

Contact: **Irvin Jim**, NUMSA General Secretary, 0731576384

Or

Karl Cloete, NUMSA Deputy General Secretary, 0833890777

Black Thursday at Marikana

By Radoslav Pavlovic,

Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International

While a heat-wave and panic in the northern hemisphere have set off rocketing corn prices, in the southern half it's supposed to be winter. But the seasonal silence has been shattered by the gunshots of the South African police on Thursday 16 August 2012. 34 miners at the Marikana platinum mine were killed, some 80 wounded and more than 250 arrested. It was a bloodbath of a kind unknown since the days of Apartheid, but with the difference that the killers and their victims are both black, while the mine owners and those giving the orders are still white.

The miners were killed because they were on strike demanding an increase in their poverty wages and rejected the management's instruction to go down the mine. So capitalism, which long since entirely entered its second stage of rotten decay, is now passing over to its third stage where free collective bargaining of wages reverts to slavery. There is just one nuance in this new class relationship: power is still in the hands of white capital, but they work through black sub-contractors in the African National Congress (ANC) and the majority union, NUM, whose leader is on the platinum mining company's board of directors. Remember how the lords of German capital bought the services of the socialists Ebert and Noske when they needed to behead the proletarian revolution? Well the same thing is happening today in South Africa.

I have a brother living in those far-off lands in the south, but I feel closer to my black brothers who are the Marikana miners, because ties of class are stronger than ties of blood. I know that on the football terraces of Zagreb, Belgrade, Warsaw and Moscow hordes of fascist football fans hurl racist abuse at black players and call them monkeys, because they are deluded into believing that they themselves belong to a blue blooded and blond-haired white master race. They go on from abuse to physical attacks on black immigrants on the underground, like the Golden Dawn do in Greece ("Black Death" would be a better name). If there are no migrants where you live, you can always pick on your own local Roma. Then you graduate to organising militias, like the Serb tigers, eagles and wolves in the war in Bosnia and elsewhere, before ending up with regular military units for "special operations", "anti-riot" squads or "national security", in the small Balkan countries as much as in South Africa. If capitalism really is guided by a "hidden hand", it is the white hand of capital operating behind the scenes. If workers get disobedient, there are plenty of the unemployed, thirsting for violence, to turn into uniformed killers.

President Zuma, Commissions of Enquiry, reporters asking "who shot first" are just so much hot air to divert public opinion.

What they did is, on the orders of white capital, they shot black miners down like sparrows.

May the memory of our black miner brothers of Marikana live for ever!