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Workers Revolutionary Party of Namibia:

‘We use Parliament to advance the demands of the working class including the poor peasantry’



Members of the Namibian Workers Revolutionary Party and Mirek Vodslon of the Workers International with the banner of the WRP. Salmon Fleermuys, WRP parliamentary representative stands behind the banner. Reports start on page 2

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Political and theoretical journal of
Workers International to Rebuild
the 4th International
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Namibia:

'This house will have to hear the independent voice of the working class'

Maiden speech of WRP parliamentarian Benson Kaapala

Mr. Speaker, Members of Parliament,
This is the first opportunity for my party, the Workers Revolutionary Party, to address this house and also the first speech that I personally am making in this parliament.

Therefore, before communicating to you the position of my party on the proposed budget, let me utter a few words both about this party and about me.

First, I wish to congratulate all 13328 workers who sent two members of the Workers Revolutionary Party into this parliament. I am saying to these workers: you made the right choice! You imposed, for the first time in history, that this house will have to hear the independent voice of the working class.

I feel honoured to have been chosen, with my comrade Salmon Fleermuys, to be that voice and I promise to do my best to let it resound so clear and loud that not just you, members of parliament, will hear it, but above all our constituency in this vast country of ours. That constituency is the whole working class and poor peasantry which, taken together, form the majority of the population.

My comrade Fleermuys and I are former soldiers of the SWATF. We and almost all of our comrades in arms returned, a long time ago, into the working class of Namibia from which we were removed by the apartheid regime in the 1970s and 1980s. After the independence consented to Namibia by imperialist powers through the implementation of the Resolution 435 of the United Nations Security Council, we did our best to help build our country, but all governments, while paying lip service to "integration", withheld from us our rights as war veterans and the pension fund which is our rightful property.

We remain reduced to poverty. We fought for our pensions on our own for a long time till we understood that our plight is essentially the same as that of, for example, the miners of Tsumeb Copper Limited whose pension fund was shamefully stolen with the help of Namibian banks and Namibian courts. It is also the same as that of former

PLAN fighters who were falsely accused by SWAPO leadership, held in concentration camps, tortured, assassinated, sent to their doom by treachery before independence.

Finally, after independence and up to this date, the survivors have been denied their status of war veterans, deprived of their pensions and of any means of subsistence. Like all these groups and several other sectors of the working class we decided to become members of the WRP, not just to join forces but to start a powerful movement which will at last bring the working majority of this country to power and thus ensure true democracy, end the endemic corruption which the ruling party has made to a system of government and end the capitalist exploitation that is the root of all these evils. We the Workers Revolutionary Party are conscious that this goal is not achievable in Namibia as one isolated country. Our party is therefore member of the Workers International to rebuild the Fourth International in order to further such favourable issue in the whole of Southern Africa and in all countries of the world.

As a Caprivian I am member of one of the peoples that our constitution, drawn up according to a template provided by imperialist powers, has forced into a unitary state without consulting them. Our right of self-determination has been denied. As a result, Caprivians who have tried to exercise that right have been in prison since 1999. We demand an end to this shameful denial of right and their immediate liberation. My comrade and fellow Member of Parliament Fleermuys belongs to another such nation, the Namas. Workers Revolutionary Party is also the party that has fought and continues to fight for the right to self-determination of both nations and also of that of Basters, Herreros and other peoples. The WRP affirms this right as the only basis for a Namibia truly united, namely, united by virtue of a free decision of all its constituent peoples.

We now respond to some of the central comments made by Mr Schlettwein, the incumbent Minister of Finance, in his budget speech.

1. The Minister claims on page 5, paragraph 14, that "our country has been able to make notable progress and register key achievements". He does so on amongst other claims that "the ... income per capita ... increased more than 10 times, from N\$5,500 in 1990 to N\$58,300 by 2013.

2. This is simply not true. The statistics show that per capita income varied from International dollar 4,120 in 1991 to 5,840 by 2013. This is not 10 times, but 1-and-a-third times.

3. His claim moreover of relative poverty reduction from 38% in 1994 to 20% in 2010 is somewhat provocative considering the steady rise of unemployment, from an estimated 20% in 1990 to 52% by 2008. This latter figure was obtained from the National Labour Force Survey of 2008.

4. He claims moreover that extreme poverty has been pushed back from 9% to 2% over the same period. One only needs to look at the Katutura and Otjomuise with their seas of shanty slums to know that is false and absurd.

5. It should be clear that a budget may not be justified on the basis of unmitigated untruths.

6. It is self-evident that a nation needs to have an accurate estimation of its tax base to be able to make a meaningful budget.

7. Spain, Russia and South Africa are allowed to fish in Namibian waters with factory ships over which we have no control and of which we do not know the amount of exploitation. Fishing is a major source of revenue.

8. In 1991 the O'Linn Commission of inquiry into the Procedures and Practices applied in the Allocation and Utilisation of Existing Fishing Rights was appointed. The report – a presumably crucial instrument to determine the state of fisheries – was suppressed by the State President. This report has still not been released

9. The Thirion Commission report published in March 1986 found that De Beers overmined diamonds, exported diamonds through its subsidiaries and consequently defrauded the Namibian State by R5 billion. In November 1990 President Sam Nujoma signed an exoneration of de Beers from

liability. In 1998 de Beers was once again found to have defrauded the State by 8 billion rand.

10. Mr. Speaker, to this day diamond mining remains uncontrolled with various South African companies operating in the sea and on shore to mine diamonds over which the Namibian State has no control and no knowledge.

11. The Namibian State has no meaningful knowledge of its tax base to produce a meaningful budget.

12. The budget lists non-existent items for expenditure. A glaring example is the renovation of Katima Mulilo Soccer Stadium while there is none. A further example is the construction of existing army bases.

13. We cannot agree with the construction of army bases at such towns as Keetmanshoop, Rehoboth, Karibib, Oshivelo, etcetera for no rational strategic reason other than to plan for civil war.

14. We cannot agree with a budget that omits payment of State liability vis-à-vis disappeared pensions of former South African soldiers, TCL miners, Rossing Uranium and GIPF pensions.

15. More than a billion rands are owed to the former soldiers from their disappeared pension fund which was administrated by SANLAM.

16. An estimated 800 million to a billion rands accrued to the pension fund of the former TCL miners.

17. GIPF has been defrauded of more than 12 billion rands that we know of.

18. The recovery of the said pensions will immediately alleviate poverty.

19. The macro-economic stability Mr Schlettwein is speaking about is achieved by unimpeded exploitation of Namibia by International Capital and their local hangers-on.

20. This Budget is an admission of failure and was agreed with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) even before the November 2014 elections. 25 years since Independence no progress has been made in reducing poverty and providing stability for the mass of the population. This is reflected in the very small concessions made to the working class for example on pensions. The Budget concedes that unemployment is perpetually high which completely contradicts their claim that poverty has been reduced to 21%. The word "perpetual" means "forever".

21. We do not agree with the 1% reduction in Corporation tax.

22. We do not agree that 2 billion on loan guarantees should be given to the private sector to build more houses for the rich to buy.

23. In conclusion, Mr Speaker, the WRP notes that the entire budget does not provide good reason for its items of expenditure. It is therefore not a budget based on accountability.

24. The WRP cannot agree to this budget. As a consequence we say as follows:

Mr Speaker, We demand that:

- The housing industry be nationalised under workers control to train young people to build houses.
 - The fishing, diamond and uranium industries also be nationalised and put under the control of Workers Committees.
 - Pension funds should be restored because it is retired workers who need the money **now** due to the adverse effect on their quality of life. Restoration would form part of poverty eradication and generate income for the State by way of taxation. The pension funds should be restored to the pension fund boards of the former South African soldiers and the former TCL miners.
 - The 1976 Plan Fighters and SWAPO Youth League members and the former South African soldiers shall be declared war veterans and accorded benefits under the War Veterans Act.
 - The Minister of Finance should appoint an independent NAMFISA Director and remove the current officer.
 - The Minister of Defence gives an explanation to Parliament with reference to the items in the Defence budget of payment going to the private August 26 Company for "catering and construction". We ask why there have been no tenders in respect of building new army bases.
- DATED at WINDHOEK on this 15 day of April in the year 2015 ,
Benson Kaapala
Member of Parliament for the WRP.

Namibia:

'We will put forward the seizure of our natural resources to enable us to fund the upliftment of the working class and poor peasantry'

Salmon Fleermuys addresses Parliament

Mr Speaker,

I am Salmon Fleermuys, a leader of the Workers Revolutionary Party. I represent the WRP and its programme in Parliament.

1. We, the WRP, go to Parliament to use it to speak to the masses of working people.

2. We are using the Parliament to advance the demands of the working class including the poor peasantry and in particular the demands of the TCL workers and the former SWATF families and relatives, in relation to stolen pensions, loss of income and losses in

general through economic sanctions, marginalization, victimization and discrimination, landlessness and homelessness.

3. We will articulate and support the demands of the Herero and Nama people for War reparations for Genocide (1904-8) from the German State.

4. We will put forward the seizure of our Natural Resources to enable us to fund the upliftment of the working class and poor peasantry in general and the neglected TCL families and former soldiers in particular.

5. We will put forward the immediate cessation of the wanton sale of our natural resources through Exploration Licenses (EPL's) with seizure of it without compensation, to enable us to fund the upliftment of the working class and poor peasantry.

6. The demands of the TCL workers and former soldiers will also highlight the demands of the working class in general.

7. We will further advance the demand for basic needs of the working class families to be provided and subsidized by the government on the first

tier level (Municipalities), housing, water and electricity, public transport, clinics, kindergartens, sport and recreation facilities, etc to be brought to the people.

8. We will advance heavier taxation to be levied on corporate business and demand **living** wages tied to the rate of inflation (and not minimum wages).

9. We will demand land to the landless and subsidies for the upliftment of the poor peasantry.

10. We demand immediate steps such as public works to build roads,

schools, hospitals and develop the general infra-structure to stop the slide to extreme poverty and pauperization officially from 2% to 16% seen in the growth of shanties.

11. We demand that the land of the Southern Peoples Allegiance in Keetmanshoop of 400 families be handed over to them for development and building of houses to be funded from the National Planning Commission.

12. We articulate the demands of the Truth & Justice Committee of the 1976 PLAN Fighters and SWAPO Youth

League for the restoration of the true history of Namibia and the accounting of the hundreds of persons unaccounted for in exile and whose whereabouts are still unknown, the truth about the thousands of Namibians who lost their lives at the hands of the SWAPO leadership and the regimes of Zambia and Tanzania in exile.

The Honourable Salmon Fleermuys

15 April 2015

WRP Namibia's response to Sam Nujoma

'It is clear from these facts that you were a collaborator of South Africa'

The statement (in the extract on the right) includes the Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP).

The basis of these statements are not disclosed and cannot be disclosed. Nevertheless, the issues are clear:

1. The "New Era" is a State organ which is funded by the people of this country. It is being abused to publish your libel of the WRP.

2. You have been declared as the "Father of the Nation" by the Namibian Parliament and your office is being funded by the people of this country.

3. You use this office and our funds to libel our party which has participated in the elections.

4. In 1966 you were the "Commander-in-Chief" of the "People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN)". You did what no other legitimate "Commander-in-Chief" of a force in military conflict would, can or might do: You flew to the South African Security Police at International Airport at Windhoek; You had lengthy deliberations and flew back to Zambia to resume your Commander-in-Chiefship.

5. In 1980 you informed the South African Administrator General by radio that we the SWAPO Youth League under the leadership of the WRP's current leader was organising clandestinely for a general strike. The Administrator-General warned us that a general strike would be considered an act of war.

6. In April 1988 our clandestine party the WRP approached Mr. Vekuui Rukoro of the SWANU and the internal SWAPO leadership to collaborate with us to call out nationwide protests

Extract from an interview with Sam Nujoma in the *New Era* of Thursday, 2 April 2015

"MH: Your Excellency, we have opposition movements in Africa that are being formed and funded by the former colonisers but led by black brothers and sisters. How should Africa respond to these foreign funded formations?"

SN: Here they tried it. When we had the last general election, there were 16 parties we did not know where they emerged from. Just created by the forces of imperialism to create divisions in the country. Fortunately they were all defeated by Swapo in all the regions. This means our people are following the policies of our party Swapo. We had many [Morgan] Tsvangirais here during our elections. You see, all such parties die a natural death. They are just a waste of time and as you know these imperialists have lots of time to waste.

They come and start talking about democracy and human rights as if the people of Africa feed on these concepts. The people of Africa know democracy better than these imperialists. They fought for it."

against the South African occupation of Namibia. They declined and the WRP called out successful mass protests, leaders of which were subsequently killed by you after they had fled the country to Zambia and Angola in December 1988. Axab Hendricks was killed as soon as March 1989 under your command.

7. On 1 April 1989, you send in PLAN fighters into northern Namibia misinforming them that the South African forces had withdrawn to South Africa. More than 500 fighters were killed. We the WRP leadership met with our SWAPO sisters and brethren at Aaron Muchimba's house in Donkerhoek in Katutura on the afternoon of Saturday

1 April 1989 to mourn until 4H00, Sunday, 2 April 1989 while the SWAPO leadership was celebrating the coming independence in Klein Windhoek.

From Monday 3 April we launched a flier protest against the UN which ordered the killings. The flier was titled, "The United Nations, the footsoldiers of imperialism".

8. On your return to Namibia you did not trust PLAN to protect you. You preferred KOEVOET bodyguards. It is clear from these facts that you were a collaborator of South Africa.

Statement by the WRP Central Committee,
posted on Facebook 19 April 2015

Namibia:

'You are not welcome at our commemoration'

A letter to the President of Namibia from the Baster Community in Rehoboth

To: The President Dr. H. Geingob

We the Rehoboth Baster Gemeente on May 8 2015 commemorate the 100th anniversary of our forefathers' victorious battle at Sa-!Khubis in which we were saved from extermination.

The foundation of that struggle for our survival was two-fold: to continue to live our natural lives without danger and in peace, and; to reclaim our means of productions and subsistence to render our continued existence meaningful.

However, with your entrance into Namibia as a SWAPO government you immediately sought to negate and destroy the foundation of our existence by seizing our collectively-owned private land; by seeking therewith to disable our capacity to subsist and maintain our dignity, our customs, in short, our self-determination, making

it difficult for the working people of the whole of Namibia to make a living by your policies of preference for foreign corporations in the building and construction industries, for example.

You, in other words, your government sought to undo what our grandparents offered their lives for, to secure our continued existence.

We are commemorating Sa-!Khubis to renew our vows to continue the struggle for our survival in particular against your government's policies of expropriation and denial of the right of self-determination. In this we stand in fundamental dispute with you. At this very moment our Captain and the Rehoboth Baster Gemeente stand in your court in which your organ the Rehoboth Town Council seeks the final dispossession of the Rehoboth People.

A group of persons – which have no connection to our grandparents who

waged the battle against our extermination and for our continued existence – is behind your invitation to our commemorations. These persons are opportunists who seek to speculate with our land and property through their connection with your party, SWAPO.

The fact that you accepted invitation from them to our sacred Commemoration and Renewal of Vows from a group who mostly are not from the Rehoboth Baster Community and who obviously do not respect our Captain and Community clearly indicates that you do not recognise them either.

You are not welcome at our commemoration and we respectfully ask that you refrain from attending it,
Signed by representative members of the Rehoboth Baster Community
Anne-Marie Beukes, David Beukes, Jan Frans Narib and others

Hewat and Erica Beukes on behalf of the Beukes and Thiro families:

Do not attend!

Mr President,

RE: Your attendance of the 100th Commemoration of !Khubis
We are submitting this letter to you in addition to the letters from members of the Rehoboth Community and our party, the Workers Revolutionary Party.

We do so due to the particularly direct personal and intimate interest we have in this matter to which impersonal and general political statements cannot give expression.

Nevertheless, we are submitting this letter for the historic record.

Hewat is a grandson of Johannes Timotheus Beukes, who was the commander of the forces at !Khubis which defeated the German army on 8 May 1915 and saved the Rehoboth Baster Nation from extermination.

He is the brother of the Late Martha Ford, who was a Politbureau member of SWAPO in exile. Prior to that, she was a National Executive member of the SWAPO within the country.

He is the uncle of the Late Winston Ford, the son of Martha Ford, and he is the cousin of the Late Priscilla van Wyk, who fled into exile in 1978.

Erica is the sister of the Late Walter Thiro, who fled into exile in January 1979.

In 1989 Hewat and Erica were informed by returning members of SWAPO who were imprisoned in holes in Lubango, Angola that Erica's brother Walter had died in these holes after having been slandered, tortured and imprisoned. His body was disposed of in an unknown manner. They were also informed that Priscilla van Wyk who

had fled Namibia to escape arrest was used after her arrival in Zambia as a slave and personal attendant by Pendukeni Emvula- Iiitana – the present Home Affairs minister. It was reported in 1984 that Priscilla suffered distortion of her face due to extreme anxiety and constant fear. Priscilla later died in the USA after her escape from Zambia.

In 1996, Hewat travelled to Angola to attempt to convince Martha Ford to return to Namibia. The family was under the impression that she refused to leave Angola due to her son's death in 1978. However, upon his meeting with Martha the full truth started to emerge. Martha had left Namibia in 1978 to Angola with her two children, Shireen and Winston. She was quickly disillusioned by the SWAPO leadership's sexual abuse of young girls and

traitorous politics. She expressed her criticism openly.

During about October 1978 the SWAPO leadership shot and killed Winston Ford, then 10 years of age, as reprisal, she told Hewat.

She further unfolded the circumstances of his death: Winston remained in a SWAPO camp in southern Angola. The SWAPO leaders first had him dropped-off in a remote wilderness where it was assumed he would be killed by wild animals or he would succumb without water and food. He made it back to the camp however where he was later shot.

When Martha came back to bury her son, the officials refused her to inspect his body. She was secretly informed by women that he was shot.

After she left SWAPO as a member, the SWAPO leadership conspired with the MPLA including the poet Lusio Lara to confine her to Angola. It became clear to Hewat after listening to Martha that she stood in danger of being killed should she make a serious attempt to leave Angola. She lived in squalor. Hewat abandoned his attempts to get her out of Angola and returned to Namibia to ask the family to support her materially.

Her health deteriorated until she was a shadow of her former self. Only then did the Angolan regime allowed her to leave. She died in Namibia due to years of neglect.

The SWAPO leadership in particular yourself, Mr President, refuse to account for the whereabouts of the remains of Winston Ford and Walter Thiro amongst others.

You now stand invited by a group in Rehoboth to attend the 100th Commemoration of the Battle of !Khubis. This group of people are mostly not descendant from fighters of !Khubis. They have been tied to the homeland policy of the South African regime which turned Rehoboth into a Bantustan despite its rejection by the Community.

They are 'kulaks' – rich peasants – who seek the total privatisation of the Rehoboth Community's collectively-owned land. They have reportedly travelled to China this year to acquire funds on the strength of your government to erect a lodge on the site of the Battle. They have allotted this land in 1992 to themselves through their connection to the former Bantustan and their new-found connection to the SWAPO regime. This group consists of farmers who use the most horrific racist methods of deprivation and humilia-

tion against Ovambo contract labourers, Namas, Damaras and Basters.

To us it is no surprise that your regime is in a good relationship with this group or class of persons. We note that they have even shifted the Commemoration to 6th of May to accommodate you!!!

In your State of the Nation address you amongst others relegated the national languages of this country to alien languages with English – a foreign language - the official language. You put the obligation on people to create their own facilities to be able to speak their languages. This has completed your policy of expropriation of Namibians.

Given your policy of Total Expropriation of Namibians both materially and spiritually and your crimes against us

as a family we demand that you stay away from our most sacred moment, the 100th Commemoration of our salvation from German extermination. In conclusion,

The fact that your leadership is guilty of crimes against the Beukes and the Thiro families and in particular that you have done absolutely nothing to resolve outstanding issues such as the return of our peoples' remains make it unacceptable for you to attend our Commemoration.

As a member of the SWAPO Politbureau you were co-responsible for all the above.

Do not attend!

Hewat & Erica Beukes

On behalf of the Beukes and Thiro families.

Marxist Considerations on the Crisis: Part 1 by Balazs Nagy



Published for Workers International by Socialist Studies. ISBN 978 0 9564319 3 6

The Hungarian Marxist BALAZS NAGY originally planned this work as 'an article explaining the great economic crisis which erupted in 2007 from a Marxist point of view'. However, he 'quite quickly realised that a deeper understanding of this development would only be possible if I located it within a broader historical and political context than I had anticipated ... it would only be possible to grasp the nature and meaning of this current upheaval in and through the development of the economic-political system as a whole'

£10 per copy (Inc. Delivery in UK) from Workers' International, PO Box 68375, London E7 7DT. Cheques payable to "Correspondance"

South Africa:

The United Front, which the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) and its allies are building, now has a website (unitedfrontsa.wordpress.com). In the next few pages we re-publish a selection of the articles which have appeared on this website.

'End the security siege of Thembelihle!'

The Thembelihle Crisis Committee, the United Front (UF), the Right to Know (R2K) Campaign and the Democratic Left Front call on all people of good conscience in South Africa to endorse the call for an end to the security siege of Thembelihle

Since the 25th of February 2015, Thembelihle has faced a *de facto* State of Emergency at the hands of the South African Police Services (SAPS) and other security agents.

This undeclared, unofficial State of Emergency in Thembelihle is an attack on all our constitutionally guaranteed rights to and freedoms to organise, associate and freely express ourselves. We call for urgent action to put pressure on the SAPS to end the siege. We call for the creation of conducive conditions for free, open and democratic political activity in which the people of Thembelihle may express and exercise their right to protest, and have their demands for a decent life of dignity met.

We call for concrete and active solidarity with the people of Thembelihle. We call on all to join tomorrow's Mass Solidarity Meeting (1st April 2015) to end the siege in Thembelihle which will be held from 5pm at the "Park Station" community meeting area in Thembelihle.

For many years, the Thembelihle informal settlement (adjacent to Lenasia south-west of Johannesburg) has been a site of unyielding struggles for basic services of housing, water, sanitation and electricity. These are basic needs promised by our country's constitution. Yet with every struggle the ANC government has never bothered to meet the demands of this community. Instead, it has increasingly opted to use the police as its response.

Since the 25th of February, Thembelihle has seen widespread deployment of heavily armed SAPS members and other security agents to patrol the township. In effect, Thembelihle is living through an undeclared, and therefore illegal State of Emergency due to the SAPS-led security operation

'Thembelihle has faced a *de facto* State of Emergency at the hands of the South African Police Service and other security agents'

with many local leaders in hiding as a result causing incalculable harm and trauma to them and their families. Gatherings of more than three people are broken up and there is harassment of individual activists.

On 25th February 2015, 36 people were arrested with a further 36 arrested a few days later. Of these 17 have been charged and the others released. The 17 facing charges have been granted R1,000 bail each. The DLF has contributed money to bail out two. For the second set of people arrested, R2K Gauteng contributed bail for 4 of them. Another two have been bailed by their families. There are still six who need bail money. Another six have been denied bail and remain in custody due to their being in South Africa 'illegally'.

All these underline the fact that the Thembelihle crisis is a national emergency. The TCC, the UF, R2K and the DLF firmly believe that the Thembelihle siege represents one of the most severe cases demonstrating that the ANC government is now prepared to use repression and police brutality to stamp out social protest, cases of systematic and sustained police repression against public protest in our post-apartheid democratic South Africa. This is part of the ruling elite's increasing securitisation of political, social and economic demands of the mass of the people that it has proved incapable and unwilling to resolve. As stated above, the Thembelihle siege

goes against everything in a democratic society promised by the 1996 Constitution.

The TCC, UF, R2K and DLF also call on the public to make donations to set up a Legal Defence Fund to raise money for bail and other legal costs immediately for the Thembelihle comrades in custody and other activists who are facing and will face similar repression and action from the police. Donations may be made to this account:

- Account holder: The Right 2 Know
- Bank: Standard Bank
- Account Number: 07 022 865 5
- Branch Code: 020909
- Reference: Thembelihle Legal Defence

Needless to say, this *de facto* State of Emergency has effectively removed attention away from the service delivery and housing process, and has turned political demands into a security question.

End the siege of Thembelihle!

FOR COMMENTS, CONTACT:

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Mzwonke Mayekiso – United Front Organiser – 074 991 6202

Godfrey Phiri – R2K National Working Group – 078 733 1236

Rehad Desai – Democratic Left Front – 0839979204

Democratic Left Front Thembelihle, Thembelihle Crisis Committee, United Front

31st March 2015

Defeating the ends of justice?

Glebelands murder witness told: 'You will not see court'

Glebelands is part of Umlazi township on the east coast of KwaZulu-Natal south-west of Durban. Umlazi is the third largest township in South Africa, after Soweto and Tembisa.

Kwanele* was one of the three men ambushed at Block 49 on 15 February this year. A few minutes before the attack, witnesses reported a bakkie (pick-up truck) had arrived at the block to collect a group of men. It seems the same bakkie disgorged the men – now armed – behind Block 49.

These men then reportedly shot at Kwanele and his two friends as they were about to return home. The driver of the bakkie was reportedly a notorious Glebelands Block 52 Hostel thug, implicated in most of the violence since March 2014. Fikile Siyephu was shot dead during the attack.

When Kwanele reported the incident to the police, the investigating officer informed him he should omit the information relating to the role of the bakkie driver in this hit. It is unlawful for an officer to direct a witness as to what information can, or cannot be included in a statement to the police. Interestingly this same investigating officer was allegedly implicated in the torture and unlawful detention of a Glebelands woman in October last year. She was too traumatized and terrified to open a case.

How often do Umlazi SAPS officers 'censor' witnesses' statements?

After at least 25 hits, is this why no one has been convicted of murder? Is this why the criminals still walk free, despite surviving witnesses often having provided the names of their attackers to the police? Is this perhaps why the Provincial Commissioner reported that the community is "reluctant to work with the police"?

Much is known about this thug who is believed to be linked to numerous other serious crimes such as truckjacking and is said to be in possession of police or defence force issue firearms (R5s, 9mm guns and official issue ammunition have been mentioned). He is 28 years old, originates from the KwaDlangezwe Reserve near Umkomaas and is said to have cultivated extensive criminal networks at KwaMashu and Jacobs Hostels before arriving at Glebelands in early 2014. He is also alleged to carry a fake police ID, to drive many different cars, and is said

to make a large incoming from extorting R50 protection money from each of the residents of the nine blocks under his control after each hit. His best friend is believed to be a plainclothes detective stationed at Durban Central SAPS who is also a Glebelands resident (name and details of where he lives are known). There is speculation about whether the thug's access to security issue arms is connected with this friendship. He is also believed to have recruited hit squads from Mandeni and Magabheni (the blocks in which they are living are known). This information is common knowledge among many hostel residents yet the individuals repeatedly implicated in turning Glebelands into a warzone appear to consistently escape police detection.

Kwanele, a former block chairman, claimed he was illegally evicted from his room by the abovementioned thugs in May 2014. After the murder of Siyephu, Kwanele received tipoffs that he would be killed at his place of employment. He has been too fearful to attend work and has for the past two months been without an income. Kwanele is now dependent on handouts from friends while his wife and seven children struggle to feed themselves. Courageously, Kwanele positively identified four of the gunmen in a recent identity parade.

Kwanele visited his rural family after the assassination of another former Glebelands block chairman, Thulani Kathi, over the Easter weekend. On the night of 11 April, Kwanele's brother was startled when strangers' faces appeared at the windows of their homestead. "We just want Kwanele," they said. One man held a drawn gun behind his back. The attackers fled when Kwanele's brother confronted them. Co-incidentally the thug's mysterious policeman friend is said to originate from the town nearest to Kwanele's home.

A few days later Kwanele's wife received a late night call. A sinister voice told her, "Kwanele may have survived the attack on Fikile (Siyephu) but he will not survive again." She now lives in terror.

Within days of returning to Glebelands, Kwanele was alerted to an assassination plot to prevent him testifying in the trial of Siyephu's killers. He has been warned, "you will not see court."

And Kwanele is not the only one under immediate threat. Mandla*, also formerly associated with block committee structures was shot twice during an attempted hit in August last year. Although he identified his attacker to the police, he has yet to receive a case number. It appears the case never went to court. He sees his attacker regularly.

On his way to work last week, Mandla was 'pointed out' to suspected hit squad members who then followed him. He fled home and was too fearful to go to work. This is not the first time he has been menaced in this way. Mandla also has a family to support.

Many residents have reported questionable 'justice' meted out by the Umlazi SAPS. It would seem colleagues of the alleged Block 52 thug frequently obtain bail within hours of arrest, despite having been charged with murder or other serious and violent crimes. However those associated with former block committee members, apparently arrested overwhelmingly on fabricated charges, are often denied bail for weeks at a time. They have also reported being assaulted or tortured in custody, or their bail terms have stipulated they leave Glebelands – their only homes.

The hostel community – especially those members associated with the now disbanded block committees – is again living in permanent fear, their lives held to ransom by thugs against whom the police consistently refuse to act. Mandla, and even more so, Kwanele, are under immediate threat of assassination. This unbearable situation is impacting on their quality of life, their ability to earn an income and support their families.

The Constitution requires the SAPS to prevent crime. A great deal of information has been provided to the police in statements taken from victims and witnesses after incidents, so the police have no excuse whatsoever for not

stopping the thugs' reign of terror, and taking all possible steps to protect Kwanele, Mandla and other vulnerable residents. IF they fail in this duty, SAPS management, and the politicians to whom it reports, will be held publicly accountable for any further loss of life.

*Kwanele and Mandla's real names have been withheld to protect their

identity. Formal complaints have been lodged with the Provincial SAPS Commissioner and Cluster Commander.

As a matter of urgency, the Office of the Public Protector and South African Human Rights Commission have been requested to investigate human rights abuses and other hostel-related issues, while organizations such as Amnesty International, the Right2Know Cam-

paign and defenders of human rights have been notified of this untenable situation.

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Conference on Socialism, Johannesburg 16 -17 April 2015

'We condemn unreservedly the xenophobia which has flared up'

We delegates at the Conference for Socialism, from no less than 11 socialist political parties, the United Front, Numsa Central Committee, left and socialist intellectuals and academics and observers do condemn, unreservedly, the xenophobia which has flared up in the country.

This Conference for Socialism correctly identifies capitalism as the source of the violence in poor and working class communities. Further, we blame the ANC government's neoliberal capitalist policies for the worsening conditions of the working class and the poor.

We condemn in the strongest terms any attempts at rationalizing and justifying the violence such as "foreigners take our jobs", "foreigners commit crimes", "foreigners take our women" and all such irrational and false arguments. No human being deserves to be treated inhumanly and violently!

We also reject the demand for an end to immigration.

We condemn the capitalist bosses who pit workers against each other by super exploiting workers from outside South Africa whom they employ at extremely low wages. We call upon all workers to join trade unions in order to stop the bosses from super exploiting and dividing the working class.

We call upon all our members and structures to campaign in the workplaces and communities for an end to these deadly attacks and to do everything possible to build unity. Let us never forget the solidarity and support we received in the struggle against apartheid from the people of the world and from Africa in particular.

The Conference demands that no one must make inflammatory and xenophobic statements. We make this



Picture: Daily Maverick

demand especially to all those holding positions of leadership in our country.

We call for solidarity among the working class and poor communities: we are all victims of capitalism and we can only solve our problems if we unite and confront the capitalist class. We must never turn our anger at other suffering people, but come together to overcome the real problems we face together. We reject the position that says small traders from outside South Africa are the cause of these problems. These are victims just like all of us, of the capitalist system.

The strongest weapon in the armoury of the oppressed – both workers and small business owners – is unity and solidarity against the capitalist system which is responsible for the levels of poverty, unemployment and inequalities and who profits from the misery of the poor and will always celebrate disunity and conflict within our ranks.

We also condemn the ANC's assertion that this crisis is the result of 'Aphro-phobia' - despite the number of victims who are also from Asia – and the outra-

geous proposal by its Secretary-General that the problem can be resolved by building mass concentration camps for displaced people, which would turn them into prisoners.

We call upon the trade unions and other formations to mobilise their members together with those under attack to fight against the triple scourge of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

We therefore call upon all federations, trade unions and organisations to join us on the streets of Johannesburg on 22 April 2015 to say this is where we support our sisters and brothers and say that we demand a society where all have jobs and security.

There is a solution to the problem of xenophobia, poverty, unemployment and extreme inequalities: it is socialism. We can achieve socialism if we unite and fight the capitalist system.

We the working class do not own any country!

Workers own no country, workers of the world unite!

Expulsion of Vavi as Cosatu General Secretary

As expected, yesterday the Central Executive Committee (CEC) of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) decided to expel Zwelinzima Vavi from his position as its General Secretary. The United Front (UF) regards this decision as the final nail in the regrettable terminal decline of what was once a mighty, principled, independent and militant federation of workers' trade unions.

COSATU will now continue as the labour desk of the African National Congress (ANC) with its militancy and independence finally killed. It is the view of the United Front (UF) that at his height comrade Vavi was one of the most principled and committed leaders of COSATU post-1994. His expulsion will have a major impact on COSATU. He has paid the price for sticking out his neck to fight against the rise of the predatory elite and a crony capitalist state. His principled fight against corruption made him increasingly an enemy of the corrupt trade union bureaucracy that sits on the neck of workers.

The UF regards this crisis in COSATU as a reflection of sustained disintegration of working class organisation since 1994. This disintegration has primarily been driven by the failure of the post-1994 political and economic dispensation in protecting workers from systemic unemployment, starvation wages, exploitation and the neo-liberal restructuring of work.

Compounding this was the failure of the trade union movement to adequately service members, organise farm workers, casual workers, informal workers and other marginalised workers. Subjectively, many COSATU leaders were also co-opted by employers, the government, the ANC and the South African Communist Party (SACP). Even with these weaknesses, COSATU still remained for many years an important voice in defence of worker demands, and broader social struggles.

This was on the back of the unwavering resilience and ability of workers to consistently mobilise and fight for their rights, a living wage and broader social justice.



Zwelinzima Vavi, expelled General Secretary of Cosatu (Picture Ainhoa Goma, Oxfam)

A collapsing COSATU can be a serious threat to workers' rights. This is perhaps the time that capital and the neo-liberal government will strike some of the most serious blows against workers, and seek to confuse and demoralise workers. Already, this is confirmed by government's attitude in the public service negotiations.

Vavi's expulsion is not the end of the story. It can be used to accelerate a process of re-organisation and re-alignment of the labour movement in South Africa.

As the UF, we put out our hand of solidarity to all workers (inside and outside COSATU) for the renewal of militant anti-capitalist trade unionism. Out of the wreckage of COSATU can emerge a renewed labour movement capturing the spirit of principled trade unionism, working class independence, political independence of the trade union movement, high quality service to members, democratic worker control, solidarity and militant struggle. This will also require workers to rise to the occasion where they can arrest and stop internal union corruption, sweetheart relations with management, and bureaucratisation.

Comrade Vavi may very well be found playing a critical role in this renewal. As he thinks about his future role, the UF also calls on him to be principled and to take responsibility and corrective measures for his own shortcomings. This applies to all activists and leaders.

The UF calls on all workers not to waste this crisis in COSATU. This is a moment to rebuild and assert working class confidence and power. The UF calls on workers to reclaim the coming May Day into a day of powerful working class solidarity and action and join important struggles against the major challenges that face ordinary and poor people in the country.

The UF fully supports the proposed Workers' Summit. Such a Summit will be an important moment to reflect and open the path to a revitalised trade union movement. In the UF, a renewed trade union movement will find a progressive home that unites the broad working class.

31 March 2015

FOR COMMENTS, CONTACT:

1. Kwezilomso Mbandazayo - UF National Co-Convenor - 082 817 0097
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Political input to the Conference for Socialism

Birchwood Hotel and OT Tambo Conference Centre, 17 April 2015

Members of the Numsa Central Committee Present, Movement for Socialism Task Team, Representatives and members of the United Front present, Leaders and representatives of political formations, Leaders and members of left organisations, All invited guests, Media present.

The problem of humanity and the world is well known: it is capitalism. The solution is quite simple and clear too: it is socialism. The real challenge, however, is to mobilise humanity to win the war to destroy capitalism and for socialism. Gathered here in this venue today and tomorrow, are men and women, political formations and organisations that can and must make a meaningful contribution to that struggle!

This Conference has gathered together some of the many fine and important different left and socialist political traditions and currents present in South Africa. For this, we are humbled and are grateful to all of you for honouring our invitation to this Conference. We thank you very much.

I believe we all have the revolutionary responsibility to work to unite the South African working class, all of it, behind a revolutionary programme for a socialist South Africa.

The tough, rough and long philosophical, ideological, political, organisational, programmatic, strategy and tactics road we must travel to achieve the revolutionary unity of the working class for the struggle for a socialist South Africa and ultimately a socialist world, must be what has brought us together, in this Conference, I hope.

The President of Numsa has explained Numsa's perspectives of the South African revolution within our understanding of Marxist-Leninist political traditions. I will not bore you by repeating what he has said.

My task is to explain how, organisationally, our Marxist-Leninist analysis at Numsa has led us to where we are today.

NUMSA has unashamedly a proud record of participation in the Mass

Democratic Movement and the ANC led alliance up to the point of our Special Congress, 16 months ago. Thousands of our members and shopstewards, across the length and breadth of our country, during and after the fall of the Apartheid government, have participated actively in the struggles to end apartheid and to retain the ANC government. Others even lost their lives, in these struggles.

This active participation and support stretches well over the 27 years of our existence. For more than 18 years after 1994, right up to our 9th Congress in Durban in June 2012, consistent with our political perspectives on the National Democratic Revolution (NDR), we urged our members to swell the ranks of the ANC and SACP. We did this consistent with our view that a working class led NDR was the shortest route to a socialist South Africa. We still hold that view.

1. Four key historical moments between Numsa 9th Congress and the Special Congress in December 2013

1.a. Adoption of the NDP

The ANC led alliance has irrevocably changed the programme of the Alliance by abandoning the Freedom Charter. The adoption of the National Development Plan – a continuation of GEAR by other means – against the overwhelming concrete evidence of the failures of GEAR and its disastrous effects of worsened unemployment, mass poverty and extreme inequalities and against the demands of the working class in the ANC led alliance left us in Numsa with no doubt that the ANC led alliance and the ANC government were completely won over to the side of neoliberal capitalism.

The problem with the NDP is not a technical one. The NDP is the programme of our South African white monopoly capitalist class, its parasitic black and African elites and imperialism. The NDP is a programme to continue to feed profits at the expense of the working class. It is plan that promotes and defends the interests of

white monopoly capital, imperialism and the comprador black capitalist class, not us, the working class.

In the order of priorities of the ANC, the NDP has replaced the Freedom Charter. A militant, popular programme which challenges the colonial property relations in South Africa has been replaced by a neo-liberal programme which entrenches existing property relations and attacks the working class.

1.b. The deliberate flouting of internal democracy in the ANC

The ANC and SACP leadership demonstrated without doubt, at Mangaung, that they will not allow anybody else to challenge their direction on key class issues. For example, the National General Council of 2010, and the Policy Conference which preceded the Mangaung Conference, had a clear majority in favour of nationalisation. That majority was transformed by the ANC leadership into majority support for a fundamentally opposed class position. The National Development Plan focuses on entrenching a neoliberal capitalist state.

1.c. Vicious attacks on the independence and militancy of Cosatu

Cosatu has experienced sustained, vicious attacks on its militancy and independence. It has become consumed by internal leadership battles between forces which have been won over to the neoliberal agenda of the ANC led alliance, and those who are fighting for an independent, militant, socialist federation. In the process Numsa was continuously vilified and smeared by those opposed to its Marxist-Leninist and militant approach, in Cosatu itself, in the ANC and in the SACP.

1.d. The ANC government attacked and killed workers on behalf of capital

Both at Marikana and in the farm-workers strike in the Western Cape, the armed forces of the state intervened in support of the owners of capital against striking workers. In both instances the result was the murder of workers

whose only crime was to refuse to sell their labour for less than a living wage.

In the case of Marikana, the armed forces of the state slaughtered African mine workers in the interests of global and South African white, black and African monopoly mining capital.

2. The Alliance is dysfunctional

2.a. The alliance is in a permanent crisis

It is paralysed and dominated by infighting and factionalism. Dominant rightwing forces isolate or purge those who are perceived to be against neoliberalism or to be advocates of policies in favour of the working class and the poor.

2.b. The alliance does not lead struggles

Although there are protests everywhere and every day in the country, the Alliance is not an instrument in the hands of the black and African working class struggling masses nor does it provide leadership to these struggles, which are largely leaderless.

2.c. The Alliance is just for elections

The Alliance operates only during election periods. It is used to rubber stamp neo-liberal policies of the ANC and not as a centre of power that debates policy issues and implementation. The working class is being used by the leader of the Alliance – the African National Congress – as voting fodder.

2.d. The ANC is the leader and strategic centre of the alliance

The ANC has resisted the reconfiguration of the Alliance into a strategic political centre where issues of policy, deployments into government and programmes could be jointly decided upon by all Alliance components. Our strategy of swelling the ranks has not worked and the leaders of the Alliance have implemented no significant resolutions of COSATU congresses in relation to how the Alliance should function. In practice the Alliance is still in the hands of one alliance partner, the ANC. The ANC is the centre and implements government programmes and policies alone, with little or no consultation with other components of the Alliance.

It has made it very clear that it has no intention of allowing this situation to change. When Cosatu raised unhappiness with sections of the NDP, an Alliance task team was rapidly created and Cosatu's unhappiness was parked there. It's still sitting there. Nothing has happened, and the ANC and SACP will make sure that nothing happens.

2.e. This is a common development in post-colonial countries

The treatment of labour as a junior partner within the Alliance is not uniquely a South African phenomenon.

In many post-colonial and post-revolutionary situations, liberation and revolutionary movements have turned on labour movements that fought alongside them, suppressed them, marginalised them, split them, robbed them of their independence or denied them any meaningful role in politics and policy-making.

3. Our strategic analysis of the alliance

The working class has lost the war to lead the alliance. Therefore, a socialist NDR was no longer possible.

The Alliance has become the political wing of the comprador bourgeoisie. The material interest of this comprador bourgeoisie lies in its attachment to global and white monopoly capital. This is a parasitic layer which depends on that capital for its existence.

In South Africa its primary mechanism has been Black Economic Empowerment. It is the interests of this comprador bourgeoisie, and its master, global and white monopoly capital, which now dominate in the ANC. The Alliance has been captured and taken over by right-wing forces. As evidence of this, it has adopted the strategic plan of that class, the NDP. Its leadership has shown that it will not let the small issue of democracy get in the way of defending its control. Its economic strategy has caused the continued poverty of the majority of the working class. Its class alliance with capital has resulted in the slaughter of workers. It is clear from this picture that the working class cannot any longer see the ANC or the SACP as its class allies in any meaningful sense.

4. There is no chance of winning back the Alliance or the SACP

We cannot win back the Alliance to what it was originally formed for, which was to drive a revolutionary programme for fundamental transformation of the country, with the Freedom Charter as the minimum platform to transform the South African economy and society, thus creating the basis for socialist transformation.

The South African Communist Party (SACP) leadership has become embedded in the state and is failing to act as the vanguard of the working class. The chance of winning it back onto the path of working class struggle for working class power is very remote.

5. Effects of post 1994 neoliberal capitalism on the South African working class in general and Numsa in particular.

The overwhelming net effects of the post 1994 neoliberal capitalist trajec-

tory has been to worsen the pre-existing colonial status and conditions of the black and African working class – unemployment, mass poverty and victims of extreme inequalities – and the rapid rehabilitation of South African capitalism and restoration to higher profits. Massive export of capital – both legally and illegally, destruction of even the underdeveloped apartheid era industrial base, deregulation, liberalization, privatization and all sorts of neoliberal capitalist policies and practices have so worsened the already impoverished status of the black and African working class that violent crime and xenophobia have become a daily feature of black and African working class life, consistent with their continuing colonial status!

6. Numsa strategic response to the failure to secure working leadership of the alliance and NDR

6.a. The United Front

The United Front is to coordinate struggles in the workplace and in working class communities. Its fundamental responsibility and purpose is to fight against neoliberalism and for the implementation of the Freedom Charter. It must unite working class organisations and activists on the basis of the shopfloor and grassroots struggles of the working class, not on the basis of political ideologies.

We have made significant progress on this work over the last 16 months, as delegates here will be aware, and its national launch is now scheduled for the end of June. The United Front is not an electoral platform!

6.b. Movement for Socialism

In our Special National Congress we said clearly that the working class needs a political organization committed in its policies and actions to the establishment of a socialist South Africa.

To help us determine what type of socialist political organ we must champion, we have done the following:

1. We have done work on previous attempts to build socialism as well as current experiments to build socialism.

2. We have studied the historical formation of working class parties, including different type of parties – from mass workers parties to vanguard parties.

3. We have conducted a programme of Marxist-Leninist political schools, culminating in an international symposium in 2014.

4. We have conducted a programme of international study tours which we still have to complete.

5. We resolved that this process would lead to the union convening a Conference on Socialism. This is that Conference.

6. Next week, in another significant step, Numsa will discuss and resolve,

the nature of the political organization it believes is necessary.

We look forward to learning the perspectives of all the parties gathered in this Conference. It is our sincere hope that this Conference should begin the difficult job of laying the democratic foundation for left and socialist formations in our country to engage one

another for the purpose of advancing the struggle for a socialist world and a socialist South Africa!

Irvin Jim,

Numsa General Secretary 16th April 2015.

Workers International

Report of a delegation to Johannesburg, 24-28 March 2015

The delegation consisted of: Mirek Vodslon (Workers International Berlin), Bronwen Handyside, Nick Bailey (Workers International UK), Hewat Beukes, Sageus Tjihenuna, Paulus Mangundu (Namibian WRP).

We met with Comrade Zanoxolo Wayile, Head of the NUMSA Ideology Department and Asansa Mancoba from the United Front.

We introduced ourselves by saying that we were a delegation to NUMSA from the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International.

We said that we saw our main task as the reconstruction of working class socialist consciousness.

We explained our conception of working class consciousness as the understanding that the interests of the working class and capital are irreconcilably antagonistic.

We said that we know that the working class must break with all the capitalist parties (as NUMSA has done) and build its own independent party, which operates only in the interests of the working class.

This must be a world party, because imperialism is a world system.

We concluded this introduction by saying we believed that this party must be the reconstructed Fourth International, as founded by Leon Trotsky in 1938.

We went on to say that:

The Workers International had seen the important work that NUMSA was carrying out.

We already knew about the decades-old socialist current in the South African trade union movement from our comrade Bongani Mkhungo, who was a founder member of the Metal and Allied Workers' Union (MAWU) – the

predecessor of NUMSA. We knew about the long struggle for the independence of the working class and its party that had taken place in the metal workers' union.

We had followed the uprising of the South African masses, led by a powerful working class organized in its trade unions.

We saw how, without its own party, the leadership of the South African revolution was stolen from it by the enemy class – the bourgeoisie, through its party, the African National Congress.

We saw how that enemy class bought off South African workers with the National Democratic Revolution (NDR), and with the promise that this revolution led by the bourgeoisie would be followed by a workers' socialist revolution some time in the future. We know that the democratic demands of the Freedom Charter have only very inadequately and partially achieved through the NDR and that the class excluded from those achievements is the very class that fought and died for them.

We know that what is needed in South Africa for these democratic demands to be genuinely achieved is a transformation of the economy along socialist lines.

We saluted NUMSA's break from the ANC and SACP as bourgeois parties, after the miners' massacre at Marikana – the turning point.

We said: "You are the first section of the international working class to make this momentous break with the capitalist class.

"We know enemies are lining up against you from the agents of the bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie itself.

"We therefore want to speak with you about organizing international defence committees for NUMSA – when the attack comes."

Bronwen Handyside explained how she had worked in Unite since Marikana in 2012, to change the union's understanding of the ANC as the liberation movement of South Africa, and to enable it to understand exactly what Marikana means. The massacre was the result of the domination of South Africa by the party of the enemy class – which does everything in its power to hold back what it says is the next stage in a two stage revolutionary process – the workers' socialist revolution.

She said that the British working class is unfortunately lagging behind the consciousness of the best leaders of the South African and Namibian working class and its understanding that the interests of capital and the working class are irreconcilable. It is still trying to achieve its needs through the bourgeois Labour party.

Therefore the campaign on South Africa in Unite has centred on justice for Marikana as that frightful event encapsulates the results of leaving the ownership of the means of production in the hands of an international capitalist class fully supported by the ANC's capitalist economic policies. It has focused on the call for an independent inquiry into the massacre.

Unite produced an official report of its delegation to South Africa in August 2014, which leaves out the real causes of Marikana. It says Unite must not take sides in the split in the South African trade union movement. But on Marikana every working class fighter must take sides – with the murdered miners, with those in the unions and outside

who fight for justice for them - and against those forces which conspired to murder them.

The campaign in Unite has consisted of the production of an alternative to the official Unite report, This alternative report contains the truth about the state of the South African political and trade union movement, and the roots of Marikana in the ANC's class-based adamant refusal (supported by the SACP) to change the apartheid era economic structure of South Africa.

Bringing this report to Unite has difficulties - it is difficult to change the union's long-held conceptions about the ANC and its role in the South African revolution. It is difficult because there is no mass understanding that the interests of the UK working class and capital are irreconcilably antagonistic. The alternative report and the call for an independent inquiry into the causes of Marikana has however been endorsed by the London & Eastern Region of Unite, and has been circulated throughout the United Left (the dominant left grouping in Unite).

We asked NUMSA how they thought we could collaborate on the campaign for Justice for Marikana in Unite, whether they could tell us about the NUMSA campaign for Marikana, and how we can take the NUMSA campaign forward in Unite.

We spoke about another great step forward for the working class in Africa in the winning of two seats in the Namibian parliament by the Namibian Workers Revolutionary Party.

Hewatt Beukes, leader of the Namibian WRP spoke about the election and the Namibian WRP.

Comrade Zanoxolo Wayile from NUMSA then replied.

He said that he was Mayor of Port Elizabeth and an ANC member. He had raised issues of corruption in the ANC and was targeted for reprisals including being kidnapped and also survived seven assassination attempts.

He said that in 1994 the South African working class had had a political break-through, but that the oppression of the people and the type of control now imposed on the working class was worse than in the past.

Comrade Wayile said:

"The class struggle continues. NUMSA has been struggling since 1988. In the 80s we saw built organs of people's power (in the townships, street committees etc). There were advice centres set up which advised on a broad range of issues. 1976 was a turning point. The youth demanded 'freedom in our lifetime' and made South Africa

ungovernable. The South African Communist Party wasn't dominant at this point. Post liberation the organs of people's power have been replaced by parliamentary structures which today "aren't working".

"No government can govern unless it is representing the people.

"In the struggle against apartheid the class lines became blurred. It became a struggle against white domination rather than against class domination.

"A key turning point with the post-apartheid government was the appointment of Derek Keys as Finance Minister. The threat was, if you don't appoint him as Finance Minister all the big companies will leave. It was an elitist political pact.

"In the 1990s when Mandela and Tambo were released - people said "our Messiah has come back". The 1994 election gave great expectations - that the government will do everything.

"There was a political and ideological demobilization of the working class. Class issues were blurred - economic entities created, like NEDLAC [National Economic Development & Labour Council - a body in which organized labour sits with business leaders], which propagated corporatism.

"However NUMSA remained vigilant - and a catalyst. In 1993 we urged a break from the Alliance.

We couldn't give a nationalist government a blank cheque. NUMSA came with a Reconstruction Accord which resulted in the Reconstruction and Development Programme (first progressive economic programme of the post-1994 government).

We knew we must control the government, and must find a way of redressing the imbalances. The RDP was adopted by the Communist Party - with the help of Chris Hani.

"Then they started destroying the community-based structures. The Chris Hani negotiations collapsed. The split was used to develop an offensive by the employers and the state.

"Now we are faced with corrupt unions - which are affecting the confidence of workers. There are seven unions siding with NUMSA, who are no longer paying fees to COSATU.

"The state has formed an alternative - fake - union - led by our ex-president Cedric Gina (who resigned from NUMSA as it launched its political initiative) which is trying to poach NUMSA members. It is offering to pay new members to join. It has not even achieved a membership of 10,000. It is



Nelson Mandela: When he and Tambo were released, 'people said our Messiah has come back'

targeting NISSAN and other big companies, and using tribalism and racism. This is supposed to be the "Zulu moment". Even in Toyota in Durban they are using tribalism against NUMSA. They are using tribalism in COSATU and the ANC - to bring about a disintegration of the working class.

"We are living in dangerous times - we have time bombs of unemployed young people and time bombs of tribalism.

"We will be launching the United Front in Gauteng in June. When we launch we want to have 500 representatives of different organisations.

"In April we have our heroes' month. We are organizing a conference for all the left groups on the theme "What kind of South Africa do we need". We are issuing a clarion call in the month of April. It is now almost 100 years since the Russian Revolution. We need to look at the first, second, third and fourth internationals and make an assessment.

Comrade Wayile asked some questions; he asked how we envisaged Defence Committees for NUMSA, how we proposed the rebuilding of the Fourth International in practice (as well as theory) and how we thought working class consciousness could be built.

He extended an invitation to Workers International to come to NUMSA's Conference on Socialism in April and said it would be a good platform for us.

He also invited us to the launch of NUMSA's United Front in June.

Comrade Wayile finished by saying: the lines of communication are now open between Workers International and NUMSA.

Working people in Bosnia at the end of their tether

(Since this article was written, we have learnt that police and media were following the marchers and police confiscated their petrol cans. Fearing that they might actually carry out their threat, the Sarajevo government gave the pair a fictitious minimum wage factory job for a year. They returned home alive)

Over Christmas, 200 Tuzla workers set off on the "March of No Return" to the Croatian border at Orasje, saying they didn't want to stay in their own country without jobs or a future (See "A cauldron ready to blow", *Workers' International Journal* no 10, January 2015). There has been an exodus of tens of thousands of Kosovars and their families to Europe. Although the guns have fallen silent, death still stalks the Balkans. Tossed on the scrap heap like a load of rusting machinery, and not having any political perspectives, the working class is condemned to gestures of despair.

So at 9 o'clock this morning two Tuzla workers, former combatants, set off to walk from Zivinice (an industrial suburb of Tuzla) to Sarajevo, planning self-immolation with petrol in front of the Federal Government building there.

Sefik Muminovic (55) and Dzemat Zahirovic (59) fought for Bosnian independence against Serbian and Croatian fascists. In poor health and with nothing at all to fall back on, they have made many attempts to find help from various institutions. Seeing their families languish in black decline, they have decided to end it all. They wrote a public letter in the hope that their deaths would save their families.

"We tried to get a meeting at the ministry of former combatants for Tuzla canton, but they said they could do nothing for us. We tried to talk to our Mayor in Zivinice but he wouldn't let us through the door. We met with humiliation wherever we went, and this in a country we gladly sacrificed our health to defend. We and our whole families are in despair and starving. That's why at 8am tomorrow (Monday 13 April) we will kiss our loved ones goodbye in front of the town hall and then, after a moment's silence in front of the war memorial to our dead comrades, we will pick up our petrol cans and head straight for Sarajevo. There's no point to a life spent in poverty", said

Sefik Muminovic on the *Tuzlanski.ba* website. (1)

They issued a public statement:

"We, Sefik Muminovic and Dzemat Zahirovic, have decided to set off at 9am from the Zivinice town hall on foot for Sarajevo, where we will PUBLICLY IMMOLATE OURSELVES in front of the Federal Government building as a protest against this society which we fought for and which cannot guarantee us a dignified life. We have already been dead as human beings for a while now. But we will not sacrifice our pride. Let the whole world witness our serious state of health as our families starve to death."

Muminovic fought in the 210th Brigade Sprecanski detachment. After the war he worked in the Djurdjevik mines for five years; he was sacked from there while on sick leave.

"They promised they would give my boy a start at the mine to stop me from taking them to court. But they tricked me, nothing came of it. The manager wouldn't see me. None of us at home – my wife, my son, my daughter, my daughter in law or me – have any work. We've got nothing left to eat. I tried to commit suicide, but they saved me at the last minute. The former combatants' ministry for the canton say they can do nothing. I cannot see any way out; we are knocked back everywhere we turn. All I can do now is end it all", Muminovic told the daily *Avaz* in despair.

Dzemat Zahirovic belonged to the elite 121 Unit, was twice wounded and gets nothing despite officially being 40% disabled. He says:

"When the war started I immediately joined the defence of the state. I was on every battlefield. And what does this state give us?! I have six children. One daughter died last year from sheer poverty. Nobody in the family has a job, although we are all able to work. I wish the politicians would wake up and help the combatants who have been let

down by everybody. If I eat today, there will be nothing left for tomorrow. What sort of life is that?"

This morning they said tearful farewells to their nearest and dearest and the local people and set off from Zivinice. "The whole town of Zivinice ... is echoing with tears, cries of anguish and sadness", *Tuzlanski.ba* reported this morning.

We do not know what will happen today and in the days to come. But the workers' movement in Europe, its activists and anyone at all who claims to be on the left have a duty to come to the aid of the working people of Bosnia. The international struggle of working people functions according to the principle of communicating vessels: those who pay today can draw doubly and triply tomorrow when they need to. Before we can help Bosnian workers to stand up politically, we have to help them out of the despair in which they languish.

I propose a permanent Bosnian workers' solidarity fund to which everybody can make a monthly payment of 5 or 10 euros for as long as they decide, following the example of the solidarity fund set up in Nancy for the Greek clinics in Patras and Athens. We will set up a bank account for this purpose in the next few days together with comrades in solidarity with the workers of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

May I use this opportunity publicly to thank all those who supported the Dita workers in Tuzla last autumn: 1,600 euros were sent from the ATTAC 54 account to the Tuzla trade unionist Emina Busuladzic.

(The original version of this article, by Radoslav Pavlovic, was published in French online on 19 April 2015 at <http://www.europe-solidaire.org/spip.php?Article34766>)
Notes: (1) <http://tuzlanski.ba/demobilisani-borci-iz-zivinica-najavilic-in-javnog-spaljivanja-zbog-siromastva/>

From the workers of DITA factory, Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina

An appeal to the international labour community

We, the workers of Tuzla-based detergent factory DITA, have been fighting a wave of corrupt privatisation, exploitation and asset stripping that is destroying the industry of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

For over two years now, we have guarded our factory around the clock to prevent the removal of machinery and assets.

The process of privatisation of DITA was carried out in collaboration with corrupt politicians, judiciary and banks, which failed to carry out due diligence, and provided toxic loans to the new owners – money that never reached the factory.

Our country is suffering from lack of rule of law: criminal elites have

pushed through amendments to the criminal code that mean there is no court that can try financial and trade crimes.

This legalised theft has denied us our basic human rights: we are over 40 monthly salaries in arrears, all of which left us hungry and destitute; we have been forced to watch our family members die because we could not afford medical treatment.

Now bankruptcy proceedings have begun. We are resolved to maintain the occupation of the factory and are refusing to recognise the authority of the trustee managing the bankruptcy unless the interests of the workers are protected, or new investment to reactivate the factory is found.

We are now at a critical point. Without outside support it may only be a matter of days before we are forced to build barricades and resist enforcement from special police forces.

We appeal urgently to the international Trade Union movement for moral and material support.

Tuzla, 16 April 2015

DITA factory workers

Emina Busuladžić,

(Head of the Strike Committee)

Dževad Mehmedović,

(Shop Steward for the Union of Non-Metal Workers)

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The factory gate at DITA