

NUMSA President Opening Speech: "Numsa National Bargaining Conference"

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"The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living. And just when they seem engaged in revolutionising themselves and things, in creating something that has never yet existed, precisely in such periods of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirit of the past to their service and borrow from them names, battle cries and costumes in order to present the new scene of world history in this time-honoured disguise and this borrowed language..." (Karl Marx, 1984, Eighteenth Brumaire)."

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Central Committee members

The officials of Numsa present here

Our invited guest

Most importantly the delegates of the Bargaining conference, Numsa shop stewards

On behalf of the National office bearers of our red Union I greet you all and welcome to the Numsa National bargaining conference 2014. Once again the time for ear to the ground in preparation for the 2014 class war against the bosses in our Engineering sector and house agreements like Eskom has arrived. Collective bargaining remains central to our revolutionary work to reclaim the surplus value that is stolen daily by the bosses at the point of production, as part of our program to take war to capital.

The National bargaining conference take place in the context of the:

- State of the Nation address
- The Budget speech
- The coming election
- Cosatu in the intensive care unit
- The working class under seige

Political developments

The bargaining conference takes place at the time when our country is still facing difficult challenges, the devils of unemployment, poverty and inequality, the truth of the matter is that no matter how many times we keep on talking about the triple crises, it will not go away unless if our country takes a new political and economic path to address this challenges. The old solutions no matter how many times they get recycled they are not capable to deliver the required results which is a new economic path, in these regards i do wish to borrow from Karl Marx on the Eighteenth Brumaire;

“The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living. And just when they seem engaged in revolutionising themselves and things, in creating something that has never yet existed, precisely in such periods of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirit of the past to their service and borrow from them names, battle cries and costumes in order to present the new scene of world history in this time-honoured disguise and this borrowed language...” (Karl Marx, 1984, Eighteenth Brumaire).

The results of the failure to implement the freedom charter is the stubborn triple crises we facing today, all what is left is to lie to our people that we have a vision 2030(a good story to tell) and south Africa will be a better place (wokers and the poor in these country have a bad experience and story to tell). We have a bad history of shifting goal post in

defence of the right wing agenda that our movement have accepted. Today we want to tell our people that they must forget about vision 2014 that we all supported and even refuse to make an honest assessment of ourselves.

The truth of the matter is that we only replaced white man with a black man, the system is still the same, and the South African capitalism continues to flourish with cooption of few black capitalist, whilst majority of our people continue to be excluded from the economy. The Anc government continues to be the supervisor of white monopoly capital, and that's why they will fail.

The Sona provides nothing as part of taking forward the second phase of radical transition and the budget speech was even more decisive giving the bosses free grants with a an illusion that they will create jobs.

The developments in Cosatu

The enemies of our people and our revolution have intensified their campaign to isolate and defeat us; the forces of capitalism are now plotting to dismiss us from cosatu, under the pretext that our congress resolutions are not consistent with that of cosatu, as if we are not an independent trade union with all rights to take decisions.

Numsa has been given 7 days to respond why we should not be suspended or dismissed and we complied last week Friday. The letter from cosatu was very clear that the CEC has resolved to dismiss us to complete their master plan.

- To paralyse cosatu
- Get rid of Vavi
- Dismiss Numsa

Finally you have cosatu of your dreams and aspirations but not cosatu of the workers, a conveyor belt of the Anc alliance, while the Anc is clear about serving their masters which is

capital, while Cosatu of Sdumo grouping is paralysed the Anc government is forging ahead with anti worker policies.

This grouping does not care about workers issues anymore, the CeC of casatu is now a circus, and for the whole year now cosatu is still stacked on the same old matter.

They are now resorting to tribalist divide due to their desperation to divide workers for their selfish ends.

The Sacp was quick to go all out in defence of misuse and theft of tax payer's money used at Nkandla project but is quite like an Egyptian mommy on zwelinzima vavi and cosatu.

Ours at this moment is to mobilise the base of the working class to stand up and reclaim their federation from this power hungry grouping that has no regards for Cosatu constitution.

The court date for our long awaited trial on the unconstitutional suspension of Vavi is on the 27and 28 march, we call on all workers and activists who care's about the unity of the federation to join us on the picketing line in South Gauteng high court.

The battle lines are clearly drawn now.

Socio Economic context in which the takes place

Indeed comrades we still bedevilled by the stubborn crises of capitalism, and we shall not pay for the crises.

More than anything else, what makes the current systemic and structural global crisis of capitalism more dangerous and frightening than in the past is the total intellectual, ideological, political and moral bankruptcy of the world capitalist leaders and their capitalist theorists: they have no answer to what increasingly appears to be the world's relentless progression towards mass poverty, worldwide unemployment, growing extreme global inequalities within and between nations of the world, vicious and extremely violent

civil and international wars, global warming, environmental destruction – all pointing to the eventual destruction of our Earth and all life on it.

Today 26 million South Africans who live in abject poverty, 25 million are Africans

- Unemployment grew from 36% in 2007 to 37% in 2012; among Africans it grew from 40% in 2008 to 46% in 2012
- For every 1 unemployed white workers, there are 80 unemployed African workers.
- Between 2008 and 2012 the number of “discouraged work-seekers” nearly doubled (from 1.2 million to 2.3 million)
- 71% of those employed are not unionised,
- 54% of workers do not receive regular wage increases,
- 24% of workers work for more than 48hrs a week, average working time is 44 hours a week
- According the General Household Surveys, 77% of the unemployed rely on employed workers for survival.

This is just part of the state of the working class in this country; it is a bad story to tell.

Collective Bargaining

Numsa has begun our Ear to the Ground Campaign in workplace to develop our demands for 2014

In collecting these demands our key and strategic objective is to improve the benefits and conditions of employment. The demands from our 9 Numsa Regions shall be consolidated and tabled for discussion in this Numsa National Bargaining Conference.

We must be upfront that we are preparing for the mother of all battles as we shall champion the struggle for a living wage for workers in the Engineering Industry and Eskom in particular and other house agreements.

The union will use this round of negotiations not only for wages but also take up a very important campaign of defending existing jobs and to fight for more jobs. In extending our work beyond the factories,

We shall on the 19th of March 2014 embark on a national strike to demand the scrapping of the employment tax incentive act or the so called youth wage subsidy. We shall do so in defense of existing jobs as we have reason to believe that the current spate of retrenchments notices across various sectors are directly linked to this senseless incentive scheme.

We refuse that the working class of SA must be forced to pay for the global crisis of capitalism.

With respect to Eskom, Numsa shall not rest until workers at Eskom receive a fair increase. We view the arbitration award that imposed 5,6 % as an insult that constitute a wage freeze.

We do need equity of pay. Currently white workers sit at the top of their pay grades while many black workers still languish at the bottom of their grades.

We can no longer tolerate Eskom and Government hiding behind Nersa to justify paying lip service to a negotiation process while the power (the only power) of workers to withhold their labour is removed.

We calling on all workers at Eskom to unite behind their legitimate right to demand a living wage if in these round of negotiations Eskom management doesn't move swiftly to make a real offer that will settle workers' demands and hide behind essential service but pay workers peanuts, they would have to take full responsibility of the consicoensies.

Workers continue to receive low wages as there is no National Minimum Wage that can guarantee them a living wage.

Workers are taking loans from loan sharks in-order to make a

living.

There is poor or virtually no assistance from the employers.

Unemployment which makes those who are working to support those not working imposes a heavy burden on our members as a result of the triple crises poverty and inequalities.

It is not in the nature of capital to give, the working must be prepared to wage a class war to advance their interests.

In conclusion

We must use this moment to mobilize for unity of the working class and even recruit those workers who are still non Union members to Numsa.

1. 1. History has imposed on Numsa a huge responsibility as can be seen from the outcome of our ground breaking Special National Congress
2. 2. Forces of evil are plotting and planning to destabilize Numsa from within and from without
3. 3. All Numsa Regions are expected to rally the broadest possible support for our S77 national strike action on 19 March 2014
4. 4. The Numsa Moment calls for absolute maximum unity

Forward we go and backward never.

Amandla