

# Appeal of the Kryvyi Rih Basin Miners to the Workers of Europe

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The attention of the world community is currently focussed on the confrontation between pro-government and anti-government forces in Ukraine. This confrontation is becoming all the more tenacious and bloody. All the more it is being turned into an interethnic confrontation that is fuelling a hysterical mutual hatred between workers of different nationalities.

What remains beyond peoples attention at this moment is the sharpening social and economic situation, and not only in the regions where the fighting is taking place. The rapid devaluation of the hryvnia (Ukrainian currency), the steep rise in prices of consumer goods, transport, utilities, as well as the cutbacks in production in many enterprises all this has led to a sharp fall in workers real wages. By our estimates there has been a 30-50% fall in real wages.

The announcement by the governor of Dnipropetrovsk oblast (province) of an increase in pay for April of 20% was actually turned into an insulting hand-out to workers of 300-700 hryvnia (25-58). Miners received only 15% of the actual rate, which often makes up less than half their actual income. As well, the money was paid out as material support, which means it will not be included in the calculation of their average monthly wage and therefore in the calculation of their annual leave.

As a result we have no option but to demand an immediate doubling of the real wage in the interests of preserving social peace in this country. We are deeply convinced that the main cause of the destabilised situation in the country is the

greed of Ukrainian and Russian oligarchs, who pay a beggars wage to workers, send all their profits off-shore and don't pay taxes in Ukraine. In fact the oligarchs are almost completely exempt from taxes on their profits.

We turn to you with a call to support our struggle against the oligarchs, who have brought Ukraine into the current crisis and who continue to destabilise it further, threatening to provoke a fratricidal war in Ukraine which without any doubt will have catastrophic consequences for all of Europe. It is necessary to put pressure on the corporations of the Ukrainian and Russian oligarchs, many of whom have their shares placed on the London Stock Exchange.

There is a mounting labour dispute in the enterprises of EVRAZ plc, whose headquarters are in London. On 11 May 2014 the miners marched through the streets of Kryvyi Rih to the administration of the EVRAZ Sukha Balka plc and showered its office with loose change as a sign of protest against the fictitious wage increase for April. The Independent Union of Miners of Ukraine calls upon the British public to picket the offices of EVRAZ plc and the offices of other Russian and Ukrainian oligarchs corporations in London and other cities in Europe. If we don't force them to come round the chances of preserving peace in Ukraine will be elusive.

At the same time we are demanding that the authorities officially recognise the miners self-defence and the arming of miners brigades. Organised workers and workers self-defence are precisely that stabilising factor which can effectively prevent the escalation of violence in Ukraine. In those places where organised workers are controlling the situation mass actions never turn into mass killings. The workers defended the Maidan in Kryvyi Rih. The workers did not allow any violence when they took under their control the situation in the city of Krasnodon during the recent general strike there.

We call upon the workers of Britain for solidarity. In particular we will be grateful for any information and humanitarian support, but the biggest need we feel right now is for personal protective clothing for members of the self-

defence brigades (body armour and the like) and mobile radio communications equipment.

Long live international workers solidarity!

By preserving the peace in Ukraine we will preserve the peace of Europe!

Oleksandr Bondar, Head of the branch of the Independent Union of Miners of Ukraine at the EVRAZ Sukha Balka plc

Yuri Samoilov, Co-ordinator of the Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Ukraine in Kryvyi Rih, Head of the Independent Union of Miners of Ukraine in Kryvyi Rih.

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# Numsa and the question of a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist political organ of the working class in South Africa today

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***“It is obvious** that the black capitalist class favours capitalism and that it will do its best to influence the post-apartheid society in this direction.*

***It is obvious** that the black middle and upper classes who take part in a broad liberation alliance will jostle for hegemony and attempt to represent their interests as the interests of all Africans.*

***It is obvious** that (like their counterparts in every part of the world) the black middle and upper strata, who find*

*themselves on the side of the people's struggle, are often inconsistent and vacillating. They are usually the enemy's softest targets for achieving a reformist, rather than a revolutionary, outcome." (Joe Slovo, 1988)*

[threecolumns]It has become necessary, and quite urgent, to emphatically re-state and explain the December 2013 historic Numsa Special National Congress Resolutions, especially the ones that talk to the formation of the United Front, the Movement for Socialism, the ANC and its alliance, and the formation of an independent revolutionary socialist vanguard party of the working class and the role of Numsa in all this.

The Resolutions adopted in our Special National Congress were a culmination of more than 26 years of working inside the South African Liberation Movement (LM) in general, and inside and building the ANC and its alliance in particular.

Over more than two decades of struggle inside the LM and the ANC and its alliance, by December last year, Numsa came to the inescapable observation and conclusion that there is no chance of winning back the ANC led 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.

As for the South African Communist Party (SACP) it was clear that its leadership had become embedded in the state and it was failing to act as the vanguard of the working class. Nor, for that matter, has the SACP any revolutionary programme, post 1994, for the struggle for socialism for South Africa.

By December last year, we became convinced that the chances of winning back the ANC onto the path of radical implementation of the Freedom Charter and the SACP onto the path of genuine working class struggles for working class power had become

very remote, truly, had actually evaporated!

We therefore correctly resolved to call on Cosatu to break from the ANC led alliance. We stated that the need for looking for a political alternative had arrived.

We then resolved that NUMSA was going to lead the establishment of a **new United Front**, which will coordinate struggles in the workplace and in communities, in a way similar to the UDF of the 1980s.

The task of this Front will be **to fight for the implementation of the Freedom Charter and to be an organisational weapon against neoliberal policies such as the NDP**. For this to happen, the Special Congress charged our members and shopstewards to be active on all fronts and in all struggles against neo- liberal policies, wherever these policies were being implemented.

Clearly, the United Front is not a political party – it is simply an **organisational weapon against neoliberal policies and for the demand for the radical implementation of the Freedom Charter**. The fundamental purpose of the United Front is to **coordinate struggles in the workplace and in communities**.

We have noticed that some creative journalists have gone so far as to announce for us that Numsa's political party is called the United Front. Nothing could be further from the truth. In our Resolutions, we clearly stated that the United Front will be an organization similar to the United Democratic Front (UDF) – a democratic umbrella coordinating structure of the shopfloor and community struggles of the working class bringing together all sorts of working class and progressive community organisations and individuals.

Again and for the record, the United Front **is not a political party!**

Side by side with the establishment of the new United Front, we resolved that Numsa would explore the establishment of **a Movement for Socialism**, as the working class needs **a political organisation committed in its policies and actions to the establishment of a socialist South Africa**.

We said that Numsa would conduct discussions on previous and current attempts to build socialism. We resolved to commission an international study on the historical formation of working class parties, including exploring different type of parties – from mass workers parties to vanguard parties.

In our Special Congress we even mentioned countries such as Brazil, Venezuela, Bolivia, Greece – as potential sources on socialist experiences we would study. We then said the whole learning process would lead to the union **convening a Conference on Socialism**.

We said that the work to explore the formation of a Movement for Socialism must be regularly reported to our Numsa constitutional structures and the work must be finalised by **the first NUMSA Central Committee in 2015**.

In the meantime, in all the work being done, whether on building a new United Front or exploring the formation of a Movement for Socialism, we said that **we must be alert to gains that may present possibilities of either the new United Front, or any other progressive coalition or party committed to socialism, standing for elections in future**. We charged the NUMSA constitutional structures to continuously assess these developments and possibilities.

It is in pursuit of this objective that we have recently announced that we will consider the possibility of the working class fielding candidates in Metros and Municipalities, in 2016 Local Government Elections, such as in the Nelson Mandela Metro.

The “Movement for Socialism” is not the name of a political

party Numsa has formed. The name of such a political organ (could be a broad coalition of revolutionary socialist formations) or party (could be a straightforward revolutionary socialist workers party – not necessarily of that name!), and how such an organ or party will be formed, ***all will be determined in the theater of struggle*** – the working class, once sufficiently mobilized and united behind the demand for socialism, will determine the programme, form and name of such a structure.

From the above, a few things that are very important must now be very clear.

Numsa is and will remain a trade union, inspired by Marxism Leninism. It will not convert itself into a political party. It cannot do so, anyway.

Numsa sees itself playing ***a leading role*** in the formation of the United Front and ***a revolutionary and catalytic role*** in the formation of the revolutionary socialist organ of the working class – it is theoretically and factually wrong to assert that ***“Numsa will form a political party”*** or more ridiculously and quite incorrectly, that ***“Numsa has formed a political party”*** in the same way that Julius Malema or Bantu Holomisa formed their parties!

The political organ to logically arise out of the processes outlined above (whether it be a socialist movement or a socialist workers party, and called by whatever name) cannot be about ***“beefing up, or providing credible opposition to the ANC”*** precisely because the process we have outlined above are processes of ***the immense majorities*** – the South African working class, both black and white, in all their workplaces and communities!

All other previous and historic political formations, including the birth of the ANC itself, were movements of minorities!

The ANC and SACP are everyday reminding Numsa that the working class organised in Cosatu unions and Cosatu itself will always remain in the ANC and its Alliance. This is arrogance of the highest order, and it reveals shocking ignorance and abandonment of Marxist-Leninist class theory and analysis, on the part of the leadership of both the ANC and SACP, about why the working class both organized in Cosatu unions, and those not organised in any union, have tolerated a clearly dysfunctional and anti-working class alliance for more than 20 years!

Simply stated, the working class, are not the political property of either the ANC or the SACP – their presence in the ANC and SACP **is premised on the sole fact that these organisations are able to protect and advance the class interests of the working class**. As more than 27 years of our Marxist-Leninist analysis and revolutionary work has shown, both these organisations no longer champion the interests of the working class or socialism. And the advanced working class has, and continues to, abandon these organisations.

The revolutionary strategic objective of all these processes is for the advanced detachment of the working class to rally the immense majority in order to win economic and political power for **the immense majority of South African working class** in all its manifold manifestations, for a socialist South Africa as the only solution to the human crisis in South Africa, and the world, today.

There are no individuals among the Numsa national leadership who harbor **illusions of personal grandeur, or who want political power in order to advance their personal economic interests**. Only a malicious and extremely ignorant imbecile would make such a mischievous and unashamedly false accusation.

Numsa as a revolutionary trade union inspired by Marxism-Leninism, will play its revolutionary part in solving the

human crisis in South Africa by advancing the cause for the only alternative and solution available to us: socialism.

Writing in 1988 at a time when many left and revolutionary socialist formations condemned the SACP's strategy of working inside the ANC led Alliance for many reasons, including the possibility of the SACP abandoning the struggle for socialism in favour of the struggle for bourgeois nationalism, Joe Slovo then SACP General Secretary warned the working class thus:

***"It is obvious** that the black capitalist class favours capitalism and that it will do its best to influence the post-apartheid society in this direction.*

***It is obvious** that the black middle and upper classes who take part in a broad liberation alliance will jostle for hegemony and attempt to represent their interests as the interests of all Africans.*

***It is obvious** that (like their counterparts in every part of the world) the black middle and upper strata, who find themselves on the side of the people's struggle, are often inconsistent and vacillating. They are usually the enemy's softest targets for achieving a reformist, rather than a revolutionary, outcome."*

Twenty years into our neoliberal capitalist democracy, it has become clear to us, the working class, that **sections of the black petit-bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie who took part in the broad liberation alliance are viciously jostling for hegemony and attempting to represent their interests as the interests of all Africans by claiming that the Black and African working class will forever remain in the ANC and the SACP, and in the neo-liberal and capitalist ANC led Alliance.**

The SACP, when it was still led by Marxist-Leninists, further warned the working class about these tendencies of the vacillating strata among Black people, in its 1989 Programme:

*“In the period after the seizure of power by the democratic forces, the working class will need to continue the struggle against capitalism. It will need to strengthen its organisations and build the bases of working class and popular power in the economy, in all sectors of the state and in the communities where the people live.*

*A deliberate effort will have to be made to prevent attempts by the bourgeoisie and aspirant capitalist elements – and their imperialist supporters – to dominate state power and divert the revolution. Constant mass vigilance will also have to be exercised and action taken against such negative tendencies as the stifling of popular democracy, the bureaucratisation of the state and corrupt practices in government or in society as a whole.*

*In order to prevent the emergence of a seed-bed for capitalist resurgence and ensure an advance to socialism, the working class must win to its side other sections of the working people, both now and after the popular seizure of power. The landless rural masses, sections of the intelligentsia, students, large contingents of youth and women (as social groups) and some small businessmen and other forces stand to gain from the victory of the socialist revolution.*

*The transition to socialism will be neither completely separate from nor contradictory to the tasks of the national democratic revolution. On the one hand, consistent implementation and defence of the national democratic programme constitute a major guarantee for progress towards socialism. On the other hand, many of the major objectives of the national democratic revolution will be fully accomplished in the process of socialist construction. Among these tasks are complete national liberation and equality, elimination of sex discrimination, and, more significantly, the elimination of monopoly domination over the economy.”*

As Numsa we have consistently maintained that the NDR is not

on track. The only track for the NDR is towards socialism because we believe many of the major objectives of the NDR can be fully achieved in the process of socialist construction. Our call for a United Front of the working class and a Movement for Socialism is precisely a defence of the national democratic programme, the Freedom Charter, which remains the only programme that is capable of laying the basis for socialist transformation of South African society.

There is no turning back, for us in Numsa. We will do whatever it takes to contribute to uniting the working class behind the demand for the radical implementation of the Freedom Charter, for the struggle against a neoliberal capitalist post-Apartheid South Africa, and for Socialism. As the Marxist-Leninist SACP said in 1989; “in the aftermath of the democratic forces assuming political power, the working class has the duty to continue the struggle against capitalism, for socialism”.

***Irvin Jim,***  
***Numsa General Secretary***  
***20May 2014.***

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# Global Solidarity day for Fast food workers

ITF unions back fast food workers

15 May 2014

ITF activists backed fast food workers in America today, supporting their right to join a union and to earn a decent wage.

The Low Pay is Not OK campaign has highlighted poor working conditions for American fast food workers. Wages are often too low for workers to support themselves, and the right to join a union is restricted. This has a huge impact on communities across the country, with almost seventy percent of fast food workers being the main breadwinner in their family.

ITF unions around the world have answered the call for global solidarity. ITF US affiliates the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) have held demonstrations to support fast food workers, while members of Ireland's Services Industrial and Professional Union (SIPTU) participated in rallies outside fast food restaurants.

In India, activists from the National Union of Seafarers India (NUSI) demonstrated outside MacDonalds outlets in Mumbai. All India Railwaymen's Federation (AFIR) members rallied in Delhi, Colombo, Chennai, Cochin, and Kathmandu.

ITF acting general secretary Steve Cotton said: "As this campaign highlights, low wages hurt workers. This kind of employment drives down wages and conditions for all workers, across all sectors, in a race to the bottom to get a bigger profit at the expense of workers' rights. Unions have a huge role to play in protecting the livelihoods of each and every

worker, and I'm proud that ITF activists were out there supporting this cause today."

from: ITF, see more at: [fastfoodglobal](http://fastfoodglobal)

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# **Numsa President Opening Speech during Central Committee at The Lakes Hotel and Conference Centre on 12 – 16 May 2014**

[threecolumns]20 Years After 27th April 1994: what is the state the South African Revolution?

*"Nothing demonstrates better the increasing rigor of the colonial system: you begin by occupying the country, then you take the land and exploit the former owners at starvation rates. Then with mechanization, this cheap labour is still too expensive. You finish up taking from the native their very right to work. All that is left for the Natives to do in their own land at a time of great prosperity, is to die of starvation." (Jean Paul Sarter, 2001)*

Numsa National Office Bearers,  
Delegates to this Numsa CC,  
All Numsa Staff,  
Invited guests,  
Media present.

On behalf of the National Office Bearers of Numsa, I welcome

all of you to this first Central Committee meeting of Numsa after our historic December 2013 Numsa National Congress.

As we seat here, we are meeting after the first South African National Elections in which Numsa as an organisation did not support any political party.

This Central Committee must help all of us to fully understand the moment we are in, from a clear Marxist-Leninist class perspective. There should be no confusion over what Numsa resolved to do, in the Numsa National Special Congress. All of us must be very clear what these just ended elections mean to the working class of South Africa. All of us must be clear what our revolutionary and trade union responsibilities are, post the Numsa historic Special National Congress.

From the beginning, please allow me to thank the General Secretary, the Deputy General Secretary of Numsa and the entire Head Office and all our staff in all our Numsa provinces for putting together a most comprehensive information and documentation package for this important Central Committee. This is as it should be.

Among other important matters this Central Committee must initiate is a serious and urgent national dialogue among all the left formations in general and in Numsa in particular, on the fundamental question of the form and content of the socialism we want for South Africa and the world.

We are required to go beyond theoretical formulations to concretely defining the economic and social formation we would like to see South Africa and the world become, when we win the struggle for a socialist South Africa and socialist world.

In order to help us all fully appreciate the moment we are in, and the state of class struggles in the whole world in general and in South Africa in particular, I want to, very briefly, tackle the following:

- A. The state of the world capitalist system;
- B. The South African revolution: its theory and revolutionary practice;
- C. The Freedom Charter as the minimum programme and basis of the class alliance of the forces that spear-headed the South African violent revolution for freedom in South Africa;
- D. The South African negotiated settlement and post 1994 South Africa;
- E. Numsa and post 1994 South Africa and the Numsa Special National Congress;
- F. The 2014 National Elections and their class significance; and
- G. What is to be done, to build the power of the working class and accelerate momentum towards a Socialist South Africa as the only viable alternative to the savagery of the current racial capitalism and imperialist domination?

Obviously, in the course of this Central Committee delegates must make time to reflect upon these and all the other business of this Central Committee. My hope is that when we depart this meeting on Friday the 16th of May 2014, no one who will have attended this Central Committee Meeting must be a source of confusion when we are back in our regions, locals, communities and on the factory floors.

Numsa is a serious, mature and revolutionary Marxist-Leninist inspired trade union. We pride ourselves in being a worker driven and worker controlled revolutionary trade union. Internal robust debates and discussions before decisions and resolutions are taken is our democratic lifeblood. This is the cornerstone of our democratic centralism.

It is my duty to always remind ourselves that our Constitution charges us to, at all material times, grow the power of the working class in the factories, in our communities and in the whole world so that we can win the war against exploitation, oppression, discrimination and for socialism.

We are a socialist trade union precisely because we know that our real war is ultimately for winning the dictatorship of the proletariat as the only true democratic state of affairs.

We understand capitalism as the dictatorship of the bosses, of the capitalist, no matter how well concealed this fact may be, behind false liberal hopes as captured in all liberal constitutions.

Very briefly then, allow me, Comrades, to deal with the matters I said I will tackle above.

#### A. The state of the world capitalist system

We all have a duty and revolutionary responsibility to understand, in class terms, the world we live in. This is important because we need to be fully aware at all times, of the actual revolutionary potential for winning the war against the barbarism capitalism inflicts upon the world working class and peasant populations.

We also analyse the world in order to understand how our own class struggles are linked to the rest of the class struggles taking place in the world, so that we may better grow faster the power of the world working class against our class enemy: the capitalist class.

The world capitalist system is in a deep terminal systemic and structural crisis. The world capitalist system is terminally sick, it cannot recover. Unless the world capitalist system is soon destroyed by the world working class and replaced by revolutionary and democratic scientific socialism, the Earth and all life on it are faced with the real possibility of being destroyed!

This is not an empty threat, nor is it a false alarm: capitalism has today developed enough atomic, nuclear, biochemical and other kinds of bombs to destroy the Earth and all life on it.

We now know that land, sea and air pollution are all at record high and life systems in all these spheres are threatened with total destruction. Global warming is not a joke. It is real and is fast destroying the energy balance of our Earth system as we know it.

As Marx and Engels so scientifically and correctly explained more than 150 years ago in the Communist Manifesto, the world today is ruled by the money form of value. Everything has been reduced, is being reduced, into a money relationship – finance (money) capital is dominant today. No human value or relationship is immune to the penetration of money.

We live in the true age of imperialism as the phase of human history in which finance capital is truly dominant.

The world capitalist class that owns and controls the global economic production and financial system ultimately controls all our lives, as they make sure that nothing that does not serve the interest of money can survive and thrive! The search for faster, more efficient, global means of accumulating money is conditioning all economic and social activities, and therefore all human life on Earth today.

Even our poverty, diseases, homelessness, ignorance and all miseries are everyday being converted into businesses for making money. If ways have not been found to make money out of any of our problems, those problems will not receive any attention until money can be made out of them!

All this is happening at a time when the development of productive forces have never been so advanced! We now live in the age in which no human being should go to bed hungry – there is enough agriculture and food science to properly feed more than 100 times the current entire human population.

No one should have no decent modern house to live in – there is in fact too much construction science and technology to ensure that every human being lived in a luxurious and

palatial house!

There is so much medical science and health technology that each human being can today have their health problems attended to, and medicines provided, according to their individual needs and specifications.

There is so much communication knowledge, technology and science that in fact nursery schools, primary schools, colleges and universities as they exist today are actually museums of ancient education: information technologies and computers, and manmade robots have made learning, transferring skills and education such a simple and accessible process that every human being can virtually learn anything, know anything, acquire any skill, communicate in an instant, as often and as many times as they want in their life time.

In the meantime, billions of human beings live miserable lives because the world capitalist class controls and dominates the world production system, all for money, for profits, and not for serving human beings and protecting our Earth.

Thus we see that on one hand, at no time have the productive forces been so developed such that every human being can live a full, enjoyable and happy life, on the other hand, precisely because a small and minority world capitalist class owns and controls the world economy for their profits, the majority of the world peoples suffer terribly, and the Earth itself is threatened with total destruction.

Thus there is no alternative to the victory of the world working class over the world capitalist class, if we must save human life and the Earth, from the potentially inevitable destruction from the power of the world capitalist class. We are engaged in a life and death war with world capitalism!

Because of their greed, the world capitalist class has actually already started curving up pieces of the moon for themselves, even as we seat in this CC!

## B. The South African revolution: its theory and revolutionary practice

South Africa today is firmly and fully imbedded in the world capitalist system. The 1994 negotiated settlement had as one of its most important objectives the full and rapid integration of the South African economy (inevitably, society too!) into the world capitalist system.

This is not to imply that before 1994 the South African economy was not part of the world capitalist system, rather, the negotiated settlement removed all the impediments which the Apartheid government had caused, and a post-Apartheid neoliberal and vicious capitalist trajectory was adopted to fast-track this "integration".

But, when we say that there was a struggle for freedom in South Africa prior to 1994, what do we mean? What were we fighting for? What was the theory and revolutionary practice of that "revolutionary struggle"?

Was our struggle for the fuller integration of, and the normalization of the white minority South African economy into the world capitalist imperialist system?

Was our struggle a struggle for a neoliberal capitalist South Africa?

Was our struggle for social grants?

Was our struggle for the protection of white minority cultural, social, political and economic rights at the expense of the majority of South Africans who are Black and African?

Was our struggle for the mere reform of Apartheid education, health and other social services?

Was our struggles for us to merely participate in choosing which faction of the capitalist class should be in government through the lottery of capitalist elections once in every 5 years, and then pretend that we too have "political power"?

Was our struggle merely for “basic services” in our apartheid designed geographical ghettos?

Why was our blood shed? Why did we shed blood? Was it for BEE? For Nkandla? For Ghuftas? For tenders perhaps?

Indeed, was our violent revolutionary struggle just for “a better life for all”?

For more than four centuries, why did we kill and risk being killed?

Today, especially after the 2014 National Elections in which the ANC has won a majority in both the national and provincial legislatures, it has become extremely important to sharply remind ourselves why we waged a violent revolutionary struggle, what its theory and practice was.

Only when we fully connect to this understanding will we then have the necessary and sufficient theoretical preparation and understanding, to enable us to summon the courage we need to continue the revolutionary struggle. For, indeed struggle we must, precisely because the revolutionary war has not been won!

Our struggle was about ending forced and violent colonial occupation. Today, less than 8 percent of the white population still own more than 80 percent of our land.

Our violent revolutionary struggle was about ending social and cultural domination.

Today, 25 million Africans live a life no cat or dog of the rich white 10 percent of the population enjoys! They are classified as extremely poor. 23 million Black and African people in fact survive on less than R650 per month, far less than the weekly dog food for a rich white and Black middle class dog!

Our violent revolutionary struggle was about ending exploitation of the Black and African majority who are the bulk of the South African working class! Today, the majority

of Black and African people cannot survive without selling themselves very cheaply to white or white black parasitic capitalists!

Today, 20 years after 1994, the majority of Black and African people, who because of our history of violent white land dispossession were turned into labourers on white farms and factories and mines, cannot find even these super exploitative jobs, thus they are left to die of starvation and extreme despondency, at a time when South Africa is one of the richest countries of the world!

Our violent revolutionary struggle was about ending land hunger among the formerly disposed, and restoring the ability and right to live anywhere where one desired in South Africa. Today, neither land redistribution nor decent affordable housing has been made available throughout the country to enable the destruction of Apartheid distributions of our population.

We fought and shed blood, not so that a few corrupt Black and African elites should become the new prison warders of Black and African labourers by becoming instant credit card billionaires!

In South Africa as elsewhere in the capitalist and imperialist colonies, we violently fought to end colonial occupation, to abolish colonial domination, to abolish exploitation, to end gender oppression and domination, to restore the right to land to all the people of South Africa, to return the wealth of the country to all the people of South Africa.

In a nutshell, we fought – we killed and shed blood – to restore the humanity of both the oppressors, dominators, exploiters and dispossessors and the exploited, dominated, oppressed and dispossessed.

It is my submission that nothing, not even an iota, of the theory and practice of our violent revolutionary struggle has

been achieved in the past 20 years.

The extra water, electricity, small poorly located and constructed houses, poor quality but expanded health care, and a raft of empty liberal political rights (precisely because these rights are not backed by economic equality – which is the only foundation of real political freedom) in the past twenty years do not amount to even the smallest achievements of the promise of our violent revolutionary struggle for freedom.

There is nothing extraordinary that has been done in the past twenty years that any ordinary capitalist formation would not have done, I submit.

To the contrary, we now have become the most unequal country on Earth, with the most violent of violent crimes, with an explosive youth unemployment that threatens to blow this this country up any time now, with the world's largest and most violent civil protests against inhuman conditions of life.

Our poor rural populations have simply been forgotten!

C. The Freedom Charter as the minimum programme and basis of the class alliance of the forces that spear-headed the South African violent revolution for freedom in South Africa.

With all the noise making the rounds about “a good story to tell” and the results of the 2014 7th May National Elections, it has become absolutely necessary to remind ourselves of the basic demands that brought together the coalition of forces that participated in the struggle for liberation in South Africa.

The Freedom Charter is the basic document that contains both the principles and the demands for the minimum programme that was the basis upon which the revolutionary block of the African, Black and White working class and other progressive strata in South African society united, and constructed and fought the struggle for freedom and liberation.

We remind ourselves of the 10 demands of the Freedom Charter:

1. The People Shall Govern!
2. All National Groups Shall have Equal Rights!
3. The People Shall Share in the Country's Wealth!
4. The Land Shall be Shared Among Those Who Work It!
5. All Shall be Equal Before the Law!
6. There Shall be Work and Security!
7. The Doors of Learning and Culture Shall be Opened!
8. All Shall Enjoy Equal Human Rights!
9. There Shall be Houses, Security and Comfort!
10. There Shall be Peace and Friendship!

To govern means to have political power. Land and economic power has not been transferred into the hands of all the people of South Africa as a whole. White monopoly capital and US and British and other imperialist finance capital dominates and controls the South African economy. The people are not governing!

The 2014 National Elections perfectly captures the fact that all national groups do not have equal rights!

The results of the Elections perfectly mirror the colonial and racist distribution of the racial political groupings in South Africa today. The results are a perfect reminder of the fact that white monopoly economic and political power continues to live side by side with majority Black and African poverty and extreme inequality. Nothing best captures the colonial nature of South African economy and society than the racial voting patterns.

Black and African people are still condemned to live far away from former whites only economic centres, rely on extremely inferior education, health and housing facilities, are condemned to inferior colonial wages and have no similar access to modern science, technology and the fruits of their labour! This explains why Black and African communities today are warzones.

The fundamental point to note here is that as long as a

minority controls and owns the economy, with the support of US, British and other imperialist backers, the essence, the fundamental reason for our violent struggle for liberation will remain unachieved: the transfer of the wealth of the country into the hands of all South Africans!

Racism is a necessary feature of our continuing post 1994 racist colonial economic and social system, whose destruction were the basis for our violent revolutionary struggle.

D. The South African negotiated settlement and post 1994 South Africa

Today, 20 years after the 1994 negotiated settlement, we the revolutionary South African working class are very clear that:

- While the working class in the townships were making the Apartheid government and society “ungovernable” and sorting out traitors in their communities, even by using burning tires, the Black and African middle class elites at the heart of the negotiations were busy stitching together with the enemies of the working class, secretly, a neoliberal anti working class and capitalist post-Apartheid South Africa, without the formal democratic mandates of either the ANC or SACP members and leadership structures.
- We now know that the totality of the openly and secretly negotiated settlement firmly entrenched a neoliberal capitalist post-Apartheid South Africa, and threw the Freedom Charter into the dustbin of history!
- We now know that the racist dominant and exploiting white block won by simply mutating racial social and economic dominance into economic class domination and exploitation through the South African liberal constitution which protected their old and newly created economic and property rights.
- The 1996 South African most liberal constitution guaranteed both existing and created new property rights for the white minority population, especially in land – thus entrenching

racial capitalism, post 1994.

- We are now convinced that BEE was secured as a means both to pay off and consolidate a Black middle class, post 1994 that would act as the new policeman for the new version of the same Apartheid capitalist society and economy that South Africa became, after 1994.
- We are very clear that the 1994 democratic breakthrough was nothing but the mechanism for the racial capitalist transition, entrenchment of the racial social and economic domination order we are now living in.
- The 1994 negotiated settlement laid the capitalist foundation for the post-Apartheid rise of a kleptomaniac, corrupt black and African political class.
- The negotiated settlement contained the seeds for the dismantling of the popular and revolutionary block that had waged the struggle for genuine freedom in South Africa.

We are therefore, not surprised that today, 20 years after 1994, Black and African working class communities will, on the same day, participate in the elections by returning a black government into power, even as they are coming straight from a violent protest against their inhuman conditions of life. This is a perfect reminder that our colonial and racist society and economy are alive, and the struggle for freedom continues!

E. Numsa and post 1994 South Africa: the Numsa Special National Congress Resolutions

Numsa is a socialist Marxist-Leninist inspired revolutionary trade union. We make no apology to anyone for this fact.

In our December 2013 Numsa National Special Congress, we confirmed and resolved that the ANC led alliance no longer serves its revolutionary purpose. We, accordingly, ended our political support for the ANC and resolved to campaign for Cosatu to break the Alliance.

We further very correctly recognised that the SACP has exhausted its revolutionary potential in South African politics and in the South African revolution.

In order to prevent Cosatu from being destroyed and converted into a useless and toothless formation of the working class and the poor, we have resolved to call for a Cosatu Special Congress to deal with the class paralysis and leadership question in Cosatu.

I am happy to report that we have placed this demand before the courts.

Our demand for the President of the ANC and the country to resign because of the neoliberal trajectory and corruption in government and the country stands. This CC must determine how to carry this demand forward.

In order to sustain our membership growth and simultaneously to defend and service our members, we produced and adopted a Service Charter for Numsa. We must all live by this Charter, in Numsa.

F. The 2014 National Elections: Significance for the revolutionary South African working class.

We have already explained above that the continuing ANC victories from all the previous elections and especially the 2014 National Elections are all simply proof of the racist colonial polarization of South African Society – they are all perfect proof of the continuing US/British financed neocolonial economic and social status of South Africa.

The foundation of the South African social and economic formation remains racial capitalism: the super exploitation of Black and African labour.

The ANC negotiated settlement guaranteed this neoliberal and colonial status of post 1994 South Africa. The majority of the population, therefore, who are Black, African and proletariat, in the lottery that is the capitalist election circus cannot

be expected to vote for a white minority party with the same capitalist policies as the black party, no matter how rotten the black parties may be!

The solution to this crisis of development lies in the working class (white, black and African) creating their own political organ to continue the struggle for liberation which can only inevitably lead to socialism as the only viable alternative to the savage and backward system of capitalism and imperialism.

Numsa resolved in its December 2013 Special Congress to work to unite the working class behind a movement for socialism, and to work to initiate the formation of a genuine revolutionary political organ of the working class.

G. What is to be done, to build the power of the working class and accelerate momentum towards a Socialist South Africa as the only viable alternative to the savagery and misery of the current racial capitalism and imperialist dominated South Africa?

Numsa must jealously guard and defend the unity of its organisation as a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist inspired trade union.

While retaining our independence and autonomy as a trade union, Numsa must carry through its resolution to build a united front of the working class in South Africa.

Simultaneously, we must deepen and sharpen our understanding of what we want our socialism to be like, even as we work towards the formation of a revolutionary socialist political organ of the working class which must lead the revolutionary struggle for a socialist South Africa.

The General Secretary will brief this CC on how we expect work to explore the state of socialism in the world is going on. We need to fast track this work. Socialism is international because capitalism is international. The victory of the South

African revolutionary struggle for socialism will not be possible if we do not simultaneously struggle for a socialist world.

We must be humble, ready to learn from all other revolutionary and progressive working class formations even as we are very clear about what we want: it is not the resuscitating of any version of some pre-Marxian utopian socialisms: ours is the struggle for scientific socialism in which the dictatorship of the proletariat is the ultimate goal, as the only true democratic state of any society.

I am confident that this CC will do its work properly, and contribute fully to growing our union and firming up our revolutionary struggles for socialism!

Forward to a socialist world!

Forward to a socialist Africa!

Forward to the Socialist Republic of South Africa!

We cannot afford to fail. The future will not forgive us!

Andrew Chirwa,  
Numsa President  
12th May 2014.

original posted here:

*Numsa President Opening Speech during Central Committee at  
The Lakes Hotel and Conference Centre on 12 – 16 May 2014*

[/threecolumns]

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# **Statement on the decisions of the National Union of Metal Workers of South Africa by the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International Conference 29-30 March 2014**

The Special Congress (17-20 December 2013) of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA), with 1,200 delegates representing 338,000 members, unanimously decided to break with the African National Congress (ANC) and the South African Communist Party (SACP) as the first step towards establishing a political organisation committed in its policies and actions to the establishment of a Socialist South Africa.

For NUMSA the massacre of the Marikana miners marked a turning point in the social and political life of South Africa. It could not be business as usual. They put the question: How do we explain the killing of striking miners in a democracy? They had to conduct a sustained and thorough analysis of the political meaning of Marikana.

The leadership concluded that the decisions of the unions 9th Congress were no longer enough to guide [them]. The situation had changed to a point where [they] needed a new mandate from the membership, and their Special Congress decided to break with the ANC and SACP and call upon the Confederation of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) to re-establish its independent campaigning role, for there is no priority more important than

safeguarding the capacity of the working class to act in its own interests.

In so doing NUMSA is raising matters of vital importance for workers everywhere engulfed by the crisis of capitalism which manifests itself in mass unemployment, deepening poverty and widening inequalities. To end the rule of capital, workers are faced with the task of breaking with fake socialist and communist parties acting on behalf of the capitalist class and failing to act as the vanguard of the working class.

The Special Congress therefore decided on a new united front to coordinate the struggles in the workplace and in communities, to explore the establishment of a Movement for Socialism and to conduct a thoroughgoing discussion on previous attempts to build socialism as well as current experiments to build socialism and an international study on the historical formation of working class parties.

For the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International these decisions of the NUMSA Special Conference and the unions subsequent statements and actions towards socialism are historic and crucial for the working class and its organisations internationally.

Inspired by the example of NUMSA we are making every possible effort through our own currently small and isolated organisations to oppose all the opportunism and anti-working class politics which are so widespread in the so-called advanced capitalist countries, with a view to preparing socialism. And, like NUMSA, in the midst of the majority of organisations which have gone over to the side of anti-Marxism or falsification, we are guided by Marxism.

We support, and will circulate and publicise, NUMSAs Special Congress Resolution and Statement throughout the working class;

We support and will act on NUMSAs decision to build a

Movement for Socialism;

We enthusiastically welcome and want to take part in NUMSAs decision for an international study on the historical formation of working class parties.

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# **Long live the South African working class as they get ready to storm the heavens!**

by Balazs Nagy, April 2014

[threecolumns]Here in France, as elsewhere, the media have hardly mentioned the social and political ferment currently convulsing South Africa, which is no surprise actually. This evasive and rather suspect silence contrasts oddly and strikingly with the unprecedented enthusiasm these same media showed during Nelson Mandelas elaborate funeral rites, an enthusiasm whose real purpose was to glorify the mans politics. The sleight of hand that makes important information like this simply disappear also contrasts strangely with the endless, servile, outpouring of easy-reading chatter when the President of France visited the US. (This sycophant never once stopped licking his hosts boots, although they hack into his private communications like they do everybody else on the planet, and US-owned businesses in France dont even pay their taxes).

These glaring contradictions clearly reveal what these media are really like and what they are there for. All working people, especially the politically active among them, should ponder this. It exposes the highfaluting idea that the media are there to provide reliable information as a gross,

outrageous fiction. The deception they are currently trying on exposes even more clearly exactly what this vast brainwashing mechanism is for: to stop workers becoming conscious of the situation they are in and what they really need to do by mutilating, obscuring, and in this instance deliberately camouflaging, the great, irresistible strength that lies in workers international unity. This colossal strength, whose development is as uneven as that of capitalism itself, is still deeply divided and fractured along national and regional lines. It is split and stunted even more by the crying lack of political organisation, a genuine, powerful International, on the part of this working class.

So what have the bourgeoisie and its purveyors of mind-altering mush been trying to keep from us in recent months? An initial answer to this question will just focus on the essential facts about this qualitative development in the workers movement in South Africa, since this exceptional groundswell is something we really will have to return to in days to come.

### **South Africas biggest trade union takes some amazing decisions**

To start with, these are admirable and astonishing decisions which break up the class-collaboration that the bourgeoisies power is based on and theoretically and politically re-arm the South African working class. Moreover, their character is such as to shift the international relationship of forces between the working class and the bourgeoisie, halting the long process of defeats and set-backs the international proletariat has suffered.

In December 2013, the powerful South African engineering workers union NUMSA (the biggest union in the country with more than 341 000 members) held a Special National Congress (SNC) attended by more than 1 000 delegates. After passionate debates it took a number of historic decisions (see Workers International Journal no3, March 2014) . To summarise:

The Congress paid appropriate homage to the miners massacred

at Marikana, collecting a huge sum in financial support of the victims families, and condemned the compliant attitude, not to say downright complicity, on the part of the countrys political and trade union leaderships. Then in the same spirit it resolved:

To reject the tripartite alliance between the governing party, the Stalinist Communist Party and the trade union confederation (ANC–SACP–Cosatu) as agencies of the bourgeoisie and its policies. As NUMSA General Secretary Irvin Jim stated in his speech of 11 February 2014, the ANC and SACP leadership has consistently attacked the working class, because the current leadership, the very same leadership that calls itself anti-imperialist, is in a lucrative alliance with international capital. The delegates emphatically declared that The chance of winning back the SACP onto the path of working class struggle for working class power is very remote, something which Deputy General Secretary Karl Cloete re-stated in another speech in early February. Consequently the SNC decided to suspend payment of financial contributions to the ANC.

Evoking the disturbing situation the country faces, especially the growing impoverishment of the working class, the SNC launched a call for the nationalisation of the mining and finance sectors as an immediate and urgent requirement to save our nation.

This gathering of workers also resolved that NUMSA will play a central role, as a catalyst, in the building of a united front. That United Front will take up the bread and butter issues of the working class. It will link our struggles on the shop floor with our struggles in our communities.

The Congress then took a vitally important step. As Irvin Jim emphasised in the speech quoted above, there was in the SNC a profound understanding that unless the working class organises itself as a class for itself it will remain unrepresented and forever toil behind the bourgeoisie. For this reason the SNC decided to study, research and investigate various forms of independent working-class parties and to serve as a catalyst

to form a party. Deputy General Secretary Karl Cloete was obliged to add in his speech that, as a trade union, NUMSA could not commit itself to setting up such a party, but it should explore the means and methods leading to it. So he recalled the exact words chosen by the SNC, according to which NUMSA should organise a Conference on Socialism as a stage in organising a Movement for Socialism to now be initiated by the trade union. In preparation for this conference, the whole union should look at experiences of building socialism, now and in the past. At the same time: We must conduct an international study on working class parties.

He went on to explain this fundamental decision by saying: that the building of such an instrument needs patient and consistent work. Parties require political programmes that clearly spell out what they are fighting for. Such programmes need to inspire millions of people as alternatives to the existing order. A socialist political organisation needs to be rooted within the working class and its struggles. History is littered with initiatives to form parties that came to nothing and where such parties collapsed like packs of cards. History is also full of experiments to build socialism that went in other non-socialist routes. And he summarised NUMSAs position thus: While we understand the urgency, we are not rushing as we are not building an electoral machine but an instrument of revolution and transformation with very deep roots within the working class.

We cannot here present in detail the full richness of these resolutions, which trace the innovative revolutionary path taken by this working class in South Africa. We will return to this very shortly. Now, in line with its political line of class combat against the bourgeoisie and for socialism, the SNC took further substantial decisions.

It voted to call on the leadership of the trade union confederation Cosatu to convene a Special Congress and to break the alliance (with the ANC and the SACP) which, according to General Secretary Jim, failed to use the political power it secured in 1994 to take ownership and

control of the national wealth of our country and replace the white racist colonial economy.

Going straight from words to deeds, the congress decided to launch a campaign of rolling mass action initiated by the NUMSA structures to demand fundamental change in the direction of the South African economy and society. For a start, NUMSA launched a powerful call for a General Strike and mass and community actions for 26 February. As Irvin Jim emphasised towards the end of his speech: We are starting to build the irresistible force that will take back our nation and build it in the interests of the majority.

A few days after this speech, which clarified and explained the Congress decisions, nine trade unions affiliated to Cosatu, at NUMSAs prompting, launched a Statement which testifies to the fact that a tumultuous awakening of the working class is underway in South Africa. Note the names of these trade unions: Public and Allied Workers Union, the SA Football Players Union, the Democratic Nurses Union, the SA Municipal Workers Union, the Food and Allied Workers Union, the SA Commercial and Catering Workers Union, Communication Workers Union and the SA State and Allied Workers Union. There can be no doubt that this list will soon grow, although this will involve intense internal struggles in each union. The nine unions which signed this Statement urged the Cosatu leadership urgently to call a Special National Congress of Cosatu, which the factional leadership (an obvious reference to the line-up of leaders behind the right-wing leadership of ANC and the Stalinist party) has prevent from meeting for some time. At the same time they demand the re-instatement of Zwelinzima Vavi, the elected secretary of Cosatu, who was arbitrarily removed because he refused to follow slavishly the opportunist watchwords of the ANC and the SACP.

To complete its resolutions, which profoundly alter class relations within the country, NUMSA decided to organise Marxist-Leninist Schools for trade union delegates to explain, discuss and assimilate the unions socialist orientation and to explain what it means and how to do it. The first of these

week-long schools took place in early February 2014.

## **What the historic rebirth of NUMSA means and what it teaches us**

It would be impossible to squeeze into one short article everything that can be learnt from the way this big trade union adopted radical positions, even just in relation to South Africa, not to mention the rest of Africa, starting with her neighbours, or indeed the international working class movement, especially Europe. So we are obliged to confine our remarks to some essential points, with a promise to return soon to a more complete and systematic evaluation of the invaluable contribution to Marxist theory and socialist practice this section of the great South African working class is making as it starts to move.

First and foremost, this class vigorously states that, faced with the bourgeoisie and its policy of enslaving working people, the only way forward is to commit firmly and openly to smashing capitalism and opening the road to socialism. This clear and unequivocal slogan, backed up by energetic commitment, stands in striking contrast to the reticence, not to say downright confidentiality, in relation to their programme, on the part of the great majority of organisations on the so-called Left in Europe and elsewhere. Even the most advanced political formations such as the Front de Gauche, Syriza and die Linke (France, Greece, Germany) drown their programmes in a fog of mealy-mouthed phrases and random, unexplained and non-committal hints. In the unflattering popular phrase, they try to hide behind a matchbox. One wonders whether they have any plan at all apart from somehow improving capitalism. We urge our comrades in these organisations: be inspired by the example of NUMSA in South Africa. Steer a clear course towards socialism! All the experience in South Africa and in Europe proves that there is no third way between this path and the reign of the bourgeoisie with its attendant attacks and miseries.

Such a clarification would allow us to take the South African road, and so cleanse from top to bottom the theoretical source that illuminates workers struggle for emancipation, by opting for creative Marxism, as the African workers did, the only theoretical guide for such a struggle. Of course such a choice goes hand in hand with a complete rejection of the jumble of all sorts of left-over ideologies and conceptions the bourgeoisie uses to keep working people chained to them. It is urgently necessary to get rid of the mish-mash of the most widely-held—but all bankrupt—fragments of conceptions about class-collaboration, from the insipid hotchpotch of stale Keynesianism to Stalinisms various—catatonic but still clinging on—popular fronts.

For all trade unions, even the most combative ones, like the CGT in France, the message from South Africa should ring like a persistent wake-up call. It is frontally opposed to the opportunist and degrading conception and practices of partnership with the bourgeoisie and its state which the European trade union leaderships put forward for their unions, following their bourgeois gurus, anti-reform reformists and de-frocked Stalinists. This is where NUMSA has made a radical break. By taking up the resolute defence of the interests of the working class against this class-collaboration, it has necessarily chosen and politically committed the union to fighting for the interests of the independent working class as a whole. By doing so it has entirely confirmed and reinforced the correctness of Trotskys analysis in *Trades Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay*, the writing of which was interrupted by the ice-pick of Stalins assassin. All working people and the activists among them should study this pamphlet afresh in the light of the formidable break-through opened up by the South African trade union.

By its very nature, said Trotsky, imperialism in its death agony provokes violent and repeated aggression on the part of the bourgeoisie which mean that must urgently fulfil a political role in relation to the fundamental choices the working class as a whole faces. Now the trade union

leaderships have done and still do everything they can to divide up trade union activity and restrict it—at best—to the absolute minimum of defending their members immediate interests. They have erected this separation, which in reality is the same actual break already advocated by the syndicalism of old, into a rigorous, strict dogma in union work, which the majority of organisations, even ones claiming some attachment to Lenin and Trotsky, cheerfully adopt, promote and ruthlessly apply. Now NUMSA flatly repudiates this whole trade union swamp in a way whose ultimate ramifications are still difficult to foresee.

The only European trade union which to my knowledge has decided and adopted a definite, truly political role on the side of the working class is the biggest UK trade union, Unite. This surely demonstrates that NUMSA is not at all on its own and that the awakening of the world working class really has begun. Clearly opposed to the so-called neo-liberal policies of the Labour Party, Unite has rejected its opportunist leadership and pushed the party to break with this policy and adopt a workers programme. The significance of the tenacious struggle going on in the UK is not confined just to that country; its implications are and increasingly will be valuable for the working class as a whole right across Europe. Similarly, there is no doubt that the meeting between NUMSA and Unite, which was planned before these most recent events, will involve fruitful exchanges of considerable interest not only for the working class of these two countries but for the whole international working class.

As against this renewal, our Journal has already denounced, in particular in a recent article, the class collaboration on the part of many unions, their consequent refusal to take on a political role for the working class and their insistence on confining themselves to an obsolete, ossified, narrow and sterile trade union practice which has led a great mass of workers to turn their backs on them and reject them as blunt and rusty tools. Even a weapon as powerful and deadly (and double-edged!) as the general strike, which the Greek,

Portuguese and Spanish working class have boldly and repeatedly wielded in the course of recent years, showing remarkable courage and spirit of self-sacrifice, has ended up each time in a bitter setback. All that these repeated general strikes have actually achieved has been to exhaust the working class and undermine its morale, since their leaders have refused to open their only way out, i.e. the political assertion of the working class taking over the economic and political leadership of the country. As for the half-hearted mobilisations in partial strikes and demonstrations, whose pathetic results merely emphasise the contradiction between what the situation demands and a trade union movement embalmed in routine, the less said the better.

This sclerosis has eaten its way so deeply into the unions that their leaders now constrict and limit their actions even further, not even fulfilling their basic responsibility to organise workers and defend their interests. Just take unemployment! Deferentially adopting the doctrinal precepts of bourgeois ideology, trade union leaderships only consider those who are directly—and officially—employed in an actual job to be workers. Capitalists are throwing more and more workers out of the production process, but these leaderships are no less eager to get rid of them out of the unions! They don't think that the unemployed deserve to belong to trade unions at all, and any attempt to organise them systematically on a wide scale is sabotaged and abandoned.

Fortunately, pretty well all over Europe workers will not accept being thrown on the scrap heap in this contemptible, humiliating way, like worn-out rubbish. Spontaneously, but at the initiative of local former leaders and cadres, they have gathered in various other structures at the margins of or outside the official unions. In the UK, the Liverpool dockers, after a long and difficult two-year dispute sustained and encouraged by port workers around the world, which was the stuff of legend, were nevertheless deprived of their jobs and the historical Liverpool docks wiped out. But they never said die. Inspired by local leaders and cadres such as Jimmy Nolan,

Terry Teague and others, they organised, in this ravaged working-class city, around their Casa with its intense political, social and cultural life to maintain their class as a living, active force. And in the North East of the country, in Tyneside and Durham, former miners whose mines have all been completely closed and the miners left to rot, like one of our former comrades, Dave Temple, have woven back together the broken threads of the union and kept alive the collective activity of the miners. They even revived their disused links with the Spanish Asturian miners when they came under attack.

It is no coincidence that this rock-solid working-class resistance has kept going in the UK, the historical cradle of the working class and its movement, a country where working peoples consciousness of belonging to a distinct working class is incomparably stronger than anywhere else. But even in Europe, various groups of workers are stubbornly trying a variety of ways to resist degradation. They are essential component parts of a united and powerful working class and of re-constituting its general movement as a whole.

The deterioration caused by the massive destruction of the productive forces, in the first place of workers themselves, has been made even worse by the way in which the aims and methods of their organisations have been obscured and by the general de-naturing and impoverishment of their trade unions. However, the determined orientation and decisive action of South African workers bring the reviving message of a real global awakening of the workers movement.

NUMSAs SNC has opened the floodgates to a development of profound importance in the trade union movement, comparable to the general shift from craft unionism to industrial unionism which started in the first half of the twentieth century. Whereas the trade union bureaucracys practices, ossified into a dogma by reformists and Stalinists, stop at the gates of the workplace, the NUMSA SNC resolved to smash through this barrier. It decided to extend the activity of the union to the struggles waged in the communities (townships, suburbs, settlements, towns and villages) for workers and unemployed

peoples basic demands for water, electricity, housing etc.,—struggles which are intense in South Africa. Consequently the union has taken the initiative to take on and directly organise these struggles and the activists involved. These struggles already have a long history stretching back to the 1990-1994 period, and even then NUMSA wanted to link them up with what it was doing. Its then leader, Moses Mayekiso, worked out a whole political and organisational plan to that effect, to which NUMSA now refers. But the union abandoned these plans when its revolutionary line buckled under the right-wing influence of the overall ANC-SACP-Cosatu alliance. And it was precisely then that these community struggles really took off as the way in which the impoverished masses defended themselves against the violent destruction of their living conditions by the governments class-collaboration policies.

As a member of a NUMSA delegation to the UK led by Mayekiso, the young Durban engineering worker Bongani Mkhungo easily grasped the correctness of the Marxist orientation of our day contained in Trotskys teaching. And so it was as a member of our Workers International that he returned to Africa, where from the outset he was marginalised by NUMSA. But he completely dedicated himself to organising these community struggles to obtain and improve water and electricity supplies and other essential services and for a decent life. Illness and privation struck down our comrade, whom we sorely miss, before he could witness this re-birth of our movement, but what he did greatly contributed to its preparation and current flowering.

The struggle is particularly lively and violent throughout the region. In neighbouring Namibia, our comrades Erica and Hewat Beukes and their group have spent years organising a whole movement of impoverished and dispossessed working people for access to decent housing and against various abuses at the hands of their bosses and the state.

Over the last two years, these comrades have broadened out this activity to include the defence of miners and teachers

robbed of their pensions by the mining trusts and state organs, and of the rights of various ethnic groups of farmers and agricultural workers. To organise and centralise them, they and their supporters and associates have established the Workers Advice Centre, whose activities and influence have become quite extensive. Rapid and brutal reaction from the Namibian bourgeoisie, its old colonial master South Africa, and its own repressive legal organs was not long in coming, especially once our comrades resolved to prepare to set up the Namibian workers party in the very near future. A raft of administrative hassles, legal threats and arbitrary measures, fines and charges and police summonses and harassment, cutting off of water and electricity supplies, warnings, intimidation and arbitrary accusations paralyse their work and disorganise and even put in question the very existence of the Workers Advice Centre. Certainly they will not be put off doing what they do, and especially not their big project. But active and effective solidarity on the part of working people across the whole world provides precious support which, even in modest forms, helps the Namibian comrades efforts and forges and cements international unity of the working class and all working people.

### **For a South African turn everywhere!**

The immense scope of this initiative by South African workers in NUMSA arises in an international atmosphere where sharpening class contradictions have already provoked a series of revolutionary explosions. Since the Tunisian people unleashed their revolutionary march, spurred on by the working class and rapidly spreading to Egypt and then more or less all Arab countries, the massive mobilisation of working people against the bourgeoisie and the intolerable measures they are taking has accelerated and taken on increasingly sharp and violent forms. The inevitable avalanche of the world revolution has started, even if its various manifestations have a spontaneous character which makes their rhythm somewhat

jagged, and even though they dress up in the nationalist or religious garb of past dominant ideologies. A spectre is haunting Europe (or rather the world): the spectre of communism. Even in the last year it has appeared noisily in Egypt, then entered the scene albeit briefly in South Korea and Turkey, while more or less gate-crashed and disguised by nationalist and religious stand-ins, defied the powerful from Palestine to Pakistan by way of Iraq and Afghanistan, and it is ready to burst out in our old Europe, albeit tempered, softened and enfeebled. And all the while, travestied and disfigured as it has been, side-tracked and losing its bearings in Syria, it terrifies the possessors and drives their rulers all over the world to either desperate self-defence or complete paralysis.

This is the explosive powder-barrel within which the working class masses in Ukraine frontally attack the authorities with exemplary determination—but wrong and confused ideas. Bosnian, Serbian and Croatian workers in Bosnia-Herzegovina in turn have courageously and with great determination launched into an attack on the bourgeoisies feeble rule and its nationalist henchmen. Imperialism and bureaucrats joined together to impose this through the rotten Dayton Agreement, which divides these peoples and ties them down in the straitjacket of the failed and unviable pluri-national framework. Now they are under pressure from all sides to accept the so-called proper application of this Agreement, whereas it is precisely the yoke against which they rose up, as Comrade Pavlovics article explains very clearly (Lutte des classes no 20, February 2014).

At the same time in Ukraine the revolutionary explosion of the working masses has advanced legitimate demands but gets bogged down in the swamp of a false choice between the suffocating embrace of Putins dictatorship or the deceptive siren voices of a capitalist Europe that has itself lost its way.

The lucidity of NUMSAs position and its explicit orientation towards socialism cuts through this whole dense morass to bring vital clarity into the chaotic tangle of wrong roads. It

brings the light people need to separate the good seed from the various kinds of bourgeois chaff fed to it, and opens the way to the only solution, which is socialist. It is also entirely valid for all organisations, even those claiming to speak for working people in the more developed countries. It spurs us on to either act like South Africans or take sides with the oppressors or, at best, fall into historical oblivion—and in both latter cases to drag working people into a defeat.

Now, this re-orientation of the whole international workers movement that NUMSA has started—to take up once more and unequivocally the class struggle and the goal of socialism—is absolutely essential to combat the opportunist perversion of the movement. But other dangers immediately arise along the way to recovery. The most dangerous is probably the adventurous impatience inspired by panicking petit-bourgeois intellectuals—followed unfortunately by young people who are, by nature, necessarily impatient—who try to push this profound correction towards an ultra-left practice that is the licensed midwife of sectarianism.

In South Africa itself, on 14 February 2014, the small, recently-created, workers party WASP (Workers and Socialist Party of South Africa) published a statement. Having greeted the NUMSA decisions, the statement hurries to advise them that the time has come for NUMSA to lead the way to a new trade union confederation. In other words, whereas elsewhere in the same document it supports NUMSAs action in fighting inside Cosatu and forming an opposition group along with nine other unions, it also repeatedly calls for an immediate break with the Cosatu confederation! But that is exactly what the right-wing ANC-SACP leaders want! They would love NUMSA to leave Cosatu and abandon the fight inside it. It would save them a lot of grief. No, the struggle is inside Cosatu and in all the affiliated unions, and fortunately NUMSA shows not the slightest intention of following this suicidal recommendation to put the knife into this struggle by giving up in mid-stream. In particular, this short-sighted haste would limit

the horizon to just Cosatu, whereas what is boiling up here is the whole South African working class with all its movements and organisations.

Not only is a bitter struggle developing inside every union, but the ANC and the SACP are undergoing an unprecedented crisis in which oppositions and groupings along a new line are endangering the right-wing monolith Stalinism built up within them. Even the radical turn made by the NUMSA SNC would not have been possible without a decisive political turn on the part of communist and ANC activists who are NUMSA members and delegates. Do the WASP comrades seriously think that NUMSA and its leaders are going to put the brakes on this huge movement of renewal and strangle it by giving up the fight and looking for a hole to hide in somewhere outside this whole class in ferment?

They want nothing to do with this kind of siren call. Only recently it was very evident how this rash impetuosity allied to sectarian adventurism blocked and isolated the broad scope of the movement that developed after the Marikana massacre. They saw with their own eyes how a lot of activists, advised and guided by the UK-based Committee for a Workers International (CWI) launched themselves against the ANC-SACP right-wingers running the big miners union (NUM) in partnership with the mining trusts and compromised in the Marikana massacre. The CWI also urged them on to set this workers party (WASP) up in a hurry. Knocked off balance by the CWIs inveterate ultra-leftism, itself resting on the young workers genuine—understandable but ill-advised—impatience, activists encouraged the break with the union and with Cosatu and the establishment of an improvised and therefore botched left union. In that way they put themselves outside the battle in the unions and were absent from the actual renewal of NUMSA and the ferment going on throughout Cosatu. Alongside that, by over-hastily declaring the workers party WASP, they bungled its own process of growth to maturity and they are now marginalised in the workers movement as a whole and even stand outside of NUMSAs work for a new party.

These are recent examples which speak volumes to all activists about the CWI-WASPs methods. The great working class mobilisation following Marikana was disrupted and blocked and ended up at the back of the queue. Thoughtless excessive haste meant that the mountain of a huge upsurge by the working class gave birth to a mere mouse.

WASP and its CWI inspirers try to distract NUMSA from the job of winning the other unions for its socialist positions through a struggle inside Cosatu and winning the confederation back. Instead they urge it to break away, as if that struggle was already over, and to stand on the side-lines as spectators. Which is where they themselves are.

Instead, the WASP comrades could have grasped the real job facing Marxist worker-activists by thinking through for themselves, for example, the implications of the NUMSA resolutions, instead of following the CWIs ultimatisic watchwords. That organisation is known in various parts of Europe as a body locked in sectarian isolation which prefers brandishing ultimatums to democratic discussion either in its own ranks or beyond. WASP comrades have nothing to gain by following these watchwords; on the contrary, by doing so they risk doing damage to the South African workers movement. It isnt NUMSA which should break with Cosatu, but WASP which ought to break with the CWI.

All in all, sectarianism constitutes a significant obstacle throughout the whole great international movement, and one which it we must oppose from the outset. The struggle against the bourgeois degradation of the movement and the job of cleansing it of every nuance of its methods and agents is a greater, more urgent and more complex task, and that is what we need to get down to now.

The most obvious and natural thing to start with is to call on all trade union and political organisations anywhere which claim any attachment to the working class to publish the NUMSA resolutions and statement in full and organise a discussion about them as urgent, necessary tasks. That is an elementary duty, for if it is true that recent weather conditions have

been somewhat out of kilter, it is no less true that to see the sun of workers struggles rise, from now on we should look not East but–South![/threecolumns]

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## **More than ten thousand workers stage strike at massive Dongguan shoe factory**

14 April, 2014

At least 10,000 workers at shoe-making factories owned by Yue Yuen Industrial in Dongguan took to the streets Monday 14 April 2014, protesting the company's failure to pay its 70,000 employees their full social security and housing fund contributions.

Original post here:

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## **Numsa says: We built COSATU!! No Numsa Expulsion! No Numsa Suspension!**

8 April 2014, Posted in Press Releases

Today, Tuesday 8 April 2014, over 500 Numsa members, shopstewards and staff picketed outside the Congress of South

African Trade Unions (COSATU) special Central Executive Committee (CEC). Their message was clear, WE BUILT COSATU: No Numsa Expulsion! No Numsa Suspension! The picket was held in response to a faction within Cosatu wanting to use the meeting to expel or suspend Numsa from the federation.

The picket was addressed by Numsa national office bearers and the national office bearers of all 8 Cosatu affiliates who are in support of Numsa.

We have never acted against the interests of the federation nor in any way are we interested in dividing the working class! We offer eight reasons as to why we should not be suspended or expelled.

- **We built Cosatu!**

Throughout its existence, Numsa has been a dedicated and disciplined affiliate of COSATU. History can reveal that few unions in Cosatu today can match Numsa's contribution in the federation's campaigns, struggles and contributions towards leadership collectives. We are always the first to go in and the last to come out in battles that Cosatu declares. We have always taken ownership and provided leadership of decisions of the federation.

- **We remain an autonomous affiliate of Cosatu!**

As a union we have played our role in building Cosatu as an independent affiliate of the federation guided by Numsa's constitution and our own worker-controlled and democratic structures. We pride ourselves of being a union that walks where others fear to tread. While others may be surprised it is not the first time that our union has called for a break from the ANC. We resolved this in 1993. When we did not win our position in Cosatu, we subjected ourselves to the discipline of the federation. What is the difference now?

- **Democratic centralism does not mean that affiliates cannot ask difficult questions!**

The fact that Cosatu has policies does not mean that affiliates cannot question existing policies. If affiliates don't have the opportunity to question policies how else would policy change within the federation take place? As Numsa we strongly believe that it is our right to question and criticise Cosatu policies and practices where these do not advance the interests of the working class. This is what our Special National Congress has done. It is the role of the others to prove us wrong, instead of threatening to purge us.

- **Nothing in existing Cosatu policies says that the federation will all the time endorse the ANC!**

The 2015 Plan of Cosatu calls for an evaluation of every election and to base our strategy on elections on what we have achieved in the implementation of the previous Election Manifesto. According to Numsa, no such evaluation has taken place on the 2009 ANC Election Manifesto. Most of the promises made then remain unfulfilled and we have seen few advances for workers and the poor.

- **Unions are creative animals!**

Our call for a critical review in organising strategies and approaches is in line with the 1997 recommendations of the Cosatu September Commission that argued that unions need to recognise the shifts and changes in how global capitalist production is organised. Cosatu itself has spoken about mergers and cartels between metals, mining, energy and chemicals. We as Numsa cannot be accused of taking a lead in what are federation-wide decisions.

- **No dues for flouting the constitution!**

Nine unions in Cosatu have called for a Special national Congress in line with the federation's constitution. This has been persistently denied. How can we continue to pay dues to an organisation that flouts its own constitution?

- **No levy for liquidators!**

There had been a persistent campaign by the SACP over the past

18 months to attack Numsa and undermine its leadership. There have also been both open and clandestine attempts by the SACP to split our union. How can we continue to provide political support and resources to an organisation that has made it its mission to liquidate Numsa and its leadership?

- **We believe that the unity of workers and of the working class is sacrosanct!**

For us the unity of the working class is sacrosanct. Expelling or suspending Numsa will lead to a split in Cosatu. The only beneficiaries of this split will be the bosses. To us Cosatu was not an end in itself. It was an instrument of struggle. It is for this reason that we understood Cosatu as one step towards one country one federation. Our call for a revolutionary, militant and independent union movement and against a “yellow federation” is about safeguarding the capacity of workers and the working class more broadly to act in its own interests.

We built Cosatu!

Reclaim COSATU for Workers' Unity!

Defend Numsa! Defeat Factionalism!

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# Calling On All Workers Demanding a Strong and United COSATU!

7 April 2014, Originally posted here

Come and Welcome Comrade Zwelinzima Vavi back to COSATU House from 8.00am Monday 7th April at COSATU House at 110 Jorissen St, Braamfontein (near Civic Centre)

The historic High Court ruling last week confirmed that Comrade Zwelinzima Vavi had been wrongly suspended for eight wasted months by the current leadership faction of COSATU. Friends and comrades are gathering outside COSATU House to say:

- Welcome back to work Comrade Zweli! Provide the dynamic leadership we need!
- End the paralysis in COSATU! Give workers a strong and independent voice once again!
- Forward to a COSATU that challenges corruption, exploitation, inequality and unemployment!
- Call the Special National Congress! Stop the victimisation of NUMSA and other Unions!
- Out with factionalism! Build a United, Independent, Democratic COSATU under Workers Control!

Issued by the Nine Affiliates : Secretariat Comrade Radebe  
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# Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Ukraine Statement To the International trade union movement

Originally posted here 11.03.2014

[threecolumns]The People of Ukraine took to the Maidan in Kiev and other Ukrainian cities, struggling peacefully for a civilized, European future. Protesters sought democracy and decent social protections for working people in the face of the corruption and lawlessness of Yanukovich regime and they were victorious. The Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Ukraine and its member organizations took an active part in this struggle from the first days. Unfortunately there were victims. As a result of armed violence against Ukrainian people more than a hundred killed and nearly 300 missing. More than 2000 people were wounded.

Having understood that people cannot be defeated even by force, Viktor Yanukovich together with his associates fled, leaving the country devastated. This staggeringly corrupt clique emptied the state treasury and bankrupted the country.

During this difficult time for the state and the people, Ukraine was subjected to aggressive interventions by the Russian Federation, which, having abused all International and inter-governmental treaties, invaded the territory of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and actively destabilized the situation across the southern and eastern regions of Ukraine.

Naked aggression of the armed forces of another country against the peaceful citizens of Ukraine has led to profound political, economic and social crisis. Unemployment and decreasing in living standards, already a reality under Yanukovych, have worsened in the current emergency.

That is why our country now more than ever needs international support and attention to social and economic problems as well as financial assistance. Unfortunately, we are confronted here with another tragedy, that of economic austerity. The failed policies of austerity are inexplicably still supported by some parts of the international community and international financial institutions. Recent experience in Europe shows that International Financial institutions (IFI) continue to demand a type of austerity that disproportionately impacts lower income works and their families. This targeting of average people is unacceptable and counter productive, all the more so in a country with extreme inequalities of wealth. Ukraine's wages, pensions and other social payments are the lowest in Europe. Combined with a high unemployment rate, an effort to push austerity cuts in social benefits for the poor risks further destabilizing the country. Social insecurity was one of the major reasons pushing the Ukrainian people to Maidan.

Threats of western supported austerity were also heavily used by the Yanukovych regime, and now by Russian propaganda, to intimidate average Ukrainians against their European sympathies. Austerity cuts to pensions, wages, fuel or utility subsidies that disproportionately impact workers and the poor will fan the flames of conflict in Ukraine. Further, we believe that aid proposals from the IFIs that do not address wealth inequality as root cause of economic malaise and decline in Ukraine are doomed to failure. Wealth inequality is not just the result of corruption and undemocratic governance; it is a core cause of these problems.

We call on the international trade union movement to support the efforts of the KVPU and its member organizations in the

struggle for peace for our country, its independence, integrity and the inviolability of its borders. We call for trade union solidarity support for democratic values, decent work, and a decent level of life for Ukrainian workers. The current conflict as well threatens peace and progress across Europe.

We address the International Trade Union Confederation and global trade unions asking for clear statements of support for the Ukrainian trade unions in their assertion of fundamental rights and freedoms of working people. We ask the international trade union movement to strongly condemn armed incursions into the territory of Ukraine. We ask the international trade union movement to further strongly condemn austerity conditions that target poor and working Ukrainians, as a part of any foreign aid.

Mikhailo Volynets

Chairman of the KVPU[/threecolumns]