



The Spark

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IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES ARE WELCOME HERE



March to parliament on 4th March 2017 against xenophobia

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International Perspectives for class struggle 2017

[We apologise for the long delay in bringing out this edition; we hope to be more consistent in future. We have been producing regular articles and interventions in the interim. Most are posted on our website and our Facebook page].

The months leading up to the 2008 US Presidential elections were of unprecedented class struggle against the Bush regime. The masses in the US were on the march; no longer would they support the imperialist war ventures around the globe. War veterans were on the march and the split in the US armed forces threatened to deepen. The strongest imperialist apparatus in the world was shaken to the core. The only way the imperialist could regain control over the masses was to parachute in an 'antiwar', 'anti-establishment' candidate, Obama.

From that period, the most powerful imperialist on earth was constrained, by the working class on home soil, from any large-scale military deployment. US imperialism had to increasingly make use of private mercenaries, drones, surrogate forces, such as the deployment of Russia, the Iranian and Hezbollah forces in Syria, against the revolutionary masses. Having created and largely neutered Al Qaeda, imperialism created isis as a destabilising force within the Islamic/Arab masses. The Obama regime won space for imperialism to continue its hegemony for a while. Gradually, the broader masses started to see through it. By 2013 there was only a 10% support for the US Congress. This shows that the vast majority of the masses rejected the regime. This time the imperialists were forced to parachute an 'anti-establishment' candidate that openly posed as 'Socialist', Bernie Sanders. They soon realised that this posed a risk to the imperialist apparatus and decided to use him to boost the support among the leftward-moving masses for parliamentarism. They then preferred to parachute in an 'anti-establishment' candidate, talking openly about workers' demands but from a right wing, nationalist perspective, seeming to even oppose the Republican party. Thus Trumpism was born. The masses in the US are not so easily fooled. On the 21st Jan 2017, there were the biggest international demonstrations against a US presidency ever. Millions of the masses took part. Currently the US regime remains in a deep crisis of legitimacy.

The crisis of legitimacy of imperialism is international. Even the Economist (28th Jan 2017, The retreat of the global company) reports that '*The mood has changed after the financial crisis. Multinational firms started to be seen as agents of inequality.*' Since 2012, many multinationals are facing up to 20% decline in profits. It is not only on the economic front but also the political front, after 2008, that imperialism and imperialist-backed regimes were increasingly regarded with hatred by the masses. There is currently a world-wide revolt against all capitalist apparatuses and the parties that kept them going. The revolts in Greece, Spain, Libya, Egypt, Tunisia, Nigeria, Zambia, Ukraine, Bahrain, Yemen, Syria, Iraq and Occupied Palestine/ Israel are all expressions of this world revolt against the capitalist system.

It is problematic to regard the uprisings as an 'Arab Spring' as this separates the masses in region from the masses in Europe, it also separates the masses from the struggles in the imperialist centres, especially the US. The fate of the masses in Syria, Iraq, Palestine, Yemen, Greece, Spain, etc, is tied up with the fate of the masses in the USA.

The parasitic nature of imperialism

At least half of exports from China are produced directly either by subsidiaries of imperialist companies or by joint ventures with them. The figure is even higher when we consider companies that may have a Chinese name and appearance but which are controlled by imperialism. In the case of the Apple iPhone, only 1.6% of its value goes to China. The rest goes to imperialism. If one generalises from this then only a fraction of the value of Chinese-made/assembled goods actually goes to China. The claim that China or Russia are



'imperialist' are ludicrous in this context. This super-exploitative relation with imperialism is replicated throughout the world. It is reported in the Economist (28th Jan 2017, The retreat of the global company), that 65% of the foreign profits of US multinationals come from returns on intellectual property, such as technology, drug patents and finance. Thus the exploitation by imperialism does not depend on actual production but parasitism. There is a parallel to the time of the start of the decline of the Roman empire, when it no longer depended on actual produce but on theft from the outer reaches of its domain. The entire Africa, Central and South America, Asia and Eastern Europe are all in the clutches of parasitic imperialism.

The artificial increases in commodity prices and housing prices, taken together the creation of Al Qaeda and Isis by US imperialism, shows that since 2000 there has been a further, qualitative decline in the world capitalist economy. Capitalist 'growth' is dependent on parasitism, ie increases in profits with no real basis in actual production. On the other hand, the wars in Iraq, the carpet bombing of Syria (by imperialist surrogate Russia and by US imperialism) and Yemen (US imperialism), the ongoing occupation of Afghanistan, the periodic mass slaughter of Palestinians, all are evidence that capitalist growth is dependent on war. Thus the wars are not just about political control and absolute domination by imperialism, it is also about sustaining the profits of imperialism. [The IMF projects capitalist world economic growth of 3.3% for 2017 as opposed to 3.1% for 2016. Without the ongoing wars around the world, the capitalist growth would have been much less].

For a number of years now, the declared profits of imperialism from SA have been over R1000bn per annum. However, the capitalist investment in the SA economy is only a fraction of this. This is a reflection of the imperialist relations across Africa, through an 'investment strike' by big capital. The other side of this is a mass repatriation of profits from plundering Africa and other neo-colonies around the world.

On a smaller scale this is what is happening by Net1/CPS is their control of the distribution of pensions and grants to the poorest of the poor. They charge R16.44 per month per grant/pension paid out. For 17 million grants this is R3.4 bn each year. The intellectual property for the technology that Net 1 uses, is held by US imperialism. The CPS also give loans at 68% per annum fees. This means for every R1 bn they loan they receive R680 million. Most of the income to Net1/CPS is repatriated to US imperialism. This is direct theft by US imperialism on the poorest of the poor in SA. This reflects the true relation of imperialism to SA and the rest of Africa. The left often makes the mistake by claiming that the banks and other major monopolies operating in SA are indeed South African. They extend this mistake by talking of SA as a sub-imperialist in Africa. The true relation is that nominal SA companies are fronts for mainly US imperialism, but also to a lesser extent for British, French, German and Japanese imperialism. Anglo American was formed in a partnership with the Morgan bank from the USA. The few billions that the Oppenheimers received was nothing compared to the trillions that US imperialism received over the years. The Oppenheimers, Ruperts, Whitey Basson, Allan Gray are frontmen for mainly US imperialism. The implications are huge. It demonstrates that the struggle for Socialism in SA and the rest of Africa is directly tied to the overthrow of capitalism in the imperialist centres. The success of the Socialist revolution in Syria is directly tied to the overthrow of capitalist relations in the USA, France, Germany and the other imperialist centres.

The prospects of revolution in the USA

Of the 231 million eligible voters in the USA in 2016, about 90 million did not vote. This is despite a multi billion dollar advertising campaign by both the Democrats and Republicans. The millions who have been involved in protests, who include in their number from those who actually voted for the Democrats and to a lesser extent, some who had realised they had been hoodwinked by Trump, shows that there is a growing, active anti-parliamentary mass. Trump has since election been appointing a number of billionaires to Cabinet posts. Thus his anti-establishment posture is rapidly being unmasked. How different is Trump's rule by decree from any 'banana republic'?



Imperialism plans to move some of the assembly jobs back to the US so that they are side by side with the design side. This would mean the reduction in wages of the US worker on the assembly line and/or the use of cheaper immigrant labour power. There is already widespread hatred for US company brands and the label 'made in the USA' is likely to meet with further worldwide resistance. Like many of the US goods, these could be imposed on the rest of the world's masses but there will be resistance.

Healthcare was promised but the rolling back of the limited reform, 'Obamacare', is predicted to remove 24 million of the masses from benefitting.

The rule by decree has implications on an international level too, with US imperialism withdrawing from multilateralism. The multilateral institutions were negotiating grounds between the various imperialist powers. Unilateralism means that US imperialism seeks to impose conditions that are more favourable to it. This is likely to increase inter-imperialist rivalry and tensions as the other imperialists are likely to resist their piece of the pie being decreased.

Unilateralism means greater deployment of US troops around the world. This is a direct challenge to the US masses, who have developed an intense hatred against being used as cannon fodder for the interests of US imperialism. Already hundreds more US troops have been sent to Syria to bolster the Assad regime and to crush the last remnants of the resistance to it. The 'antiwar' movement has been silent about this as they support the Assad regime. The working class around the world are now under greater military threat from invasions and brutalisation at the hands of US imperialism. This is likely to increase the resistance to exploitation by US imperialism across the world. The US masses are unlikely to allow increased militarism without a fight.

The mass no longer accepts the 'exceptionalism' of the US nor of its so-called universal democratic values. The reformist left is weak. The working class increasingly realise that both the Republicans and Democrats do not have their interests at heart.

Imperialism will try their best to infiltrate the anti-state movement, to neutralise it or turn it again onto a parliamentary path. The masses want real gains whereas the imperialists require to cutback more of the working class gains. Anti-state protests are set to grow. Thus what is required is to develop a programme of demands that speaks to the current demands of the masses in the US and around the world. This will set the basis for the setting up of a new, revolutionary working class party in the US as part of the rebuilding of a revolutionary International.

A Socialist revolution in the USA will free the entire humanity.

Some lessons from Syria

Where the masses threaten to overthrow an imperialist puppet regime, then despite their differences, all branches of imperialism would stand together against us. The surrogate force of German imperialism, Russia, is deployed alongside US imperialism against the masses.

US imperialism uses Turkey and Saudi Arabia to infiltrate the resistance against the regime, in order to neutralise it. At crucial moments of struggle, the revolutionary forces have been led away from Damascus; the revolutionary forces were defeated in Aleppo by the Turkish and Islamic leaders who instructed their surrogates to steal the weapons from the stores, start attacking the resistance (at the same time that Assad's forces attacked) and they left, leaving the revolutionary masses at the mercy of Russian and regime forces and their allies. Isis was created to attack the masses from within. The masses had to fight against Isis and against the Assad forces. Much of the left turned their backs on the Syrian masses and assisted imperialism to smash



revolutionary Aleppo and much of the revolutionary forces in Syria. There was an international co-operation of the left and imperialism against the revolutionary masses in Syria.

There is a need for a new revolutionary regroupment, drawing the lessons from Syria. The implications are that, in cases of the masses being on the path to overthrow any capitalist regime on the planet, much of the left will side with imperialism, against the masses.

Russia the 'anti-imperialist'?

There are some who claim that Russia is playing a 'revolutionary' role in supposedly opposing US imperialism in Syria and that they actually support the Palestinian cause.

1. The stalinised Soviet Union was the first country to recognise Israel, a position they have not changed up to now, despite rhetoric of support for a Palestinian state (read: the 2-state bantustan option against Palestinians).
2. In August 2016, they signed an agreement with US imperialism to co-ordinate the fight against the Syrian masses and to exchange information they had on the resistance against the Assad regime.
3. Now that the Russian state has carpet bombed large parts of Syria, terrorising the masses and killing thousands of revolutionaries, the imperialist rating agencies have increased their rating of Russia to 'positive'. S&P places Russia on par with Indonesia.
4. There are more than 6000 German companies in Russia; Russia is mostly dependent on oil and gas exports and on technical imports from Germany. In 2012 Exxon Mobil and Rosneft (the largest oil and gas company in Russia) signed a \$500bn agreement to plunder the oil and gas reserves in the Arctic and Baltic.

This is not the profile of an 'anti-imperialist' but a country that is totally subjugated to imperialism.

Russia the 'imperialist' power?

Oil and gas exports make up \$357bn of a total of \$525 bn. This is 68%. Raw metal and ore makes up a further \$58bn. Thus raw materials make up 79% of total exports. On the other hand, machinery and equipment makes up \$158 bn of \$317 bn, ie 50% of total imports. This is a typical profile of a semi-colony, not an imperialist. [source Pocket world in figures, Economist, 2017].

Further, the only military bases that Russia has outside of the ex-Soviet union countries, are in Vietnam and Syria. This is hardly a profile of an imperialist power, let alone a threat to the domination of US imperialism that has 1000 military bases around the globe.

The implications of the error of mislabelling Russia or China as 'imperialist' are profound. It hides from the Russian and Chinese working class that the main exploiters are US, German, British, French and Japanese imperialism. It hides from the masses in the imperialist centres that their own bourgeoisie is responsible for the plunder of Russia and China and the use of Russia as a surrogate force to destroy the revolution in Syria. It plays into the hands of the imperialist propaganda machine as if the enemy is Russia and China.

South Africa?

As Cosatu, the ANC and SACP lose their grip over the masses, imperialism has directed the state to use brute force to crush revolutionary uprisings. Marikana, the farm workers strikes, and the #feesmustfall struggles all faced the might of the state. Imperialism realizes that they cannot use force alone to control the masses, thus they have nurtured the creation of the EFF and would benefit from a reformist workers' party led by the Numsa leadership.

However, the formation of a Numsa-led workers' party is still subject to contestation. It is here that the revolutionary left need to intervene to fight for a revolutionary programme to be adopted and for real unity in



action in class struggles, irrespective of political or union affiliation. Struggles for free, liberatory education must be extended to involving the broader working class, otherwise there is the risk of self-isolation.

An orientation towards uniting the working class across Africa is also important in the creation of a revolutionary working class party.

Fundamental, however, is a adoption of an internationalist programme that recognises the role of imperialism and the current world conditions for Socialist revolution.

Workers of the world unite! We have nothing to lose but our chains. We have a world to win.

20.3.2017



Protest at parliament in support of revolutionary Aleppo, Dec 2016



The government has handed Sassa grants over to American loan sharks and is robbing the poorest of the poor

For years the government has claimed it has been helping the poorest of the poor. Now, research by ILRIG (International Labour Research and Information Group), has shown that the government has given over control of the Sassa grants to the hands of an American loan shark called Net1. This company was set up in Florida, USA, in 1997. This American loan shark is parasiting on workers in Iraq , South Korea, UK, Namibia, Nigeria, Malawi, Cameroon, the Phillipines, India and Columbia. Net 1 has partnered with Grindrod to set up Grindrod retail bank, a loan shark. Your Sassa grant is paid into a Grindrod account. Grindrod also owns Moneyline lenders. They offer loans to Sassa grantholders at 68% per annum interest.

So Net 1 opens up another Grindrod account which is linked to your Sassa account. So if you have a loan with Moneyline, you actually have 2 Grindrod accounts. One for your grant and one for the loan transactions. Transaction fees and loan repayments are deducted from your loan account which grabs the money owed from your Sassa account. Your Sassa account only reflects the change. So if you want to see the transactions you need to pay for it. Net 1 pays itself R1.24 each time you look at your balance. Net 1 also receives R16,44 for each Sassa account. For 17 million grantholders, this amounts to R3.4 bn each year, just for nothing. They also sell your information to other sharks such as those that sell airtime and funeral policies. Many deductions take place for airtime that a Sassa grantholder did not even ask for. It is almost impossible to get a refund from money taken by the other loan sharks. Net 1 is also selling water meters so they want the government to privatise water too.

After getting the tender from government to distribute pensions, Net 1 partnered with a BEE company called Mosomo Investment Holdings, Born Free Investments and Mazwi Yako. The chair of Mosomo is Brian Mosehla, who received R83 million from Net 1 to be their partner. Mosehla is a partner of billionaire ANC leader Tokyo Sexwale. The majority shareholder of Grindrod is Remgro, whose chair is Johann Rupert. The biggest shareholding of Net 1 is Allan Gray, although the majority of shares are still owned by American banks and financial institutions.

For a few million Rand, the ANC government has handed over the poorest of the poor into the clutches of the super rich in SA and in America.

For years the government has been disrespecting our aged and children. The Cabinet Ministers are paid millions and get fat on BEE deals, yet our pensioners have to survive on R1650 per month. Each year the Members of parliament get big increases while our pensioners get 4 - 5% ' increases'. This is less than inflation, which means that each year, our pensioners can buy less and less. Enough is enough.

Now the big banks, Absa (All Pay services) are fighting Grindrod bank (Cash Paymaster Services, CPS) as to who gets the massive contract. The government has subcontracted the payment of grants to the banks. They are making huge profits. Currently CPS is paid R16.44 per Sassa card. This is besides the bank fees they get. This is over R3.4 Billion each year. These funds could easily have been used for social benefits, for housing, education or better health care or even have increased the grant.

The Social Development Minister, Bathabile Dlamini, has deliberately delayed the appointment of a new service provider. This created a crisis, considering that there was a Constitutional Court ruling in 2014 against the CPS contract being renewed beyond 31st March 2017. The 17 million pensioners and grantholders are being held hostage to the multi-billion Rand contract with Net 1/CPS. The bosses of CPS now even want to increase the amount they charge for the distribution of pensions.



The banks are making a profit out of a public service. The government is privatizing pensions. This is also why the government is wanting to change the law to abolish provident funds. This is to grab the pension savings of the working class so that we do not have access to this until the age of 65. This means that the banks will grab the savings of workers and use this for profits. Most workers die before 65. This means that workers will be robbed of their own savings by the banks and government. The government will spend less on pensions, cut the taxes on companies and use workers' savings instead, for pensions in future.

All this is happening because the capitalist world is stagnating. More companies close. More workers are unemployed and the scope for profit is getting less. This means that more and more, the banks are engaging in parasitic activities like scamming pensioners through their card system. The government is acting like an agent for the loan sharks and banks. We say this profiteering from public services must stop. The entire Cabinet is responsible for the crisis of pension payment. They should all step down. If parliament cannot hold the Net 1/CPS and Cabinet to account, they should be disbanded.

We call for:

1. The government must end the contracts with private companies for the distribution of pensions; No to Net 1 and Allpay. The state must develop their own card system.
2. If the CPS system is extended while an internal alternative is developed, no service fee must be paid to them.
3. We call for demonstrations before school and during lunch time. We call for committees of action to be set up in every area, in every school (with students, parents and teachers) and in every workplace. Let us prepare the way with marches to government offices for pensions to be paid on time, in full, without queues on the 1st April 2017 and going forward; Consideration should be given to preparing the way for a general strike.
4. Not a single cent more for Net 1/CPS nor All Pay.
5. Stop all the deductions, transaction fees and interest payments from Sassa cards to all the loan sharks. Hands off our pensions and grants.
6. Pay back the money. All interest, transaction fees and other illegal deductions must immediately be paid back.
7. Down with prepaid water and electricity meters
8. A living pension and grant for all.
9. If grants and pensions cannot be guaranteed by parliament, it should disband and the way prepared for a new unfettered Constitutional Assembly, with constituency delegates subject to instant recall, and not paid more than the wage of an average skilled worker.

9th March 2017 amended 10th March 2017 **Workers International Vanguard Party**





We condemn the anti-immigrant march of 24th Feb 2017

Workers International Vanguard League/Party condemns, in the strongest terms, the march by the Mamelodi Concerned Residents scheduled for Pretoria/Tshwane on Friday 24th February 2017. Each time the class struggle intensifies then suddenly there are spikes in attacks on poor African immigrants. The only ones who gain from this violence when worker fights worker, is the monopoly capitalist class, who continue to plunder the land.

Last year, in July, the UNCTAD published a report stating that since 2000 the gold mines have been carrying off most of their production without declaring it, more than \$213 bn (over R2,5 trillion). This is besides what has been stolen for decades by the mining monopolies and banks, through illegal and legal theft, amounting to hundreds of billions every year.

The govt does not stop this theft. If they did, there would be full employment for all, everyone would have decent housing and health care as well as free education from creche to university. The basis for drug abuse and prostitution would be non-existent.

The police do not arrest the thieving mine bosses nor do they arrest the drug dealers and brothel owners. They know where they are and what they are doing.

The question then arises: Why does the Mamelodi Concerned residents not march on the police stations and the Union buildings? The govt just released a budget where they say that the monopolies can steal as much as they want, they govt will do nothing; the govt prefers to increase the price of petrol. They know that food, transport and all costs for the masses will increase but the bosses can continue to steal the country dry.

Why does the Concerned residents not march on the banks, who are weakening the currency and so reducing all our wages?

For a concerned group, they appear very unconcerned with the wellbeing of the masses. We call on everyone to not only boycott this march but to actively oppose it.

In 2008 when the last major violence against our African brothers and sisters occurred, the police were photographed, openly allowing gangs of thugs in their attacks. Once it occurred in one area, it spread throughout the country.

Thus we can conclude that the misleaders at the head of the Concerned Mamelodi Residents are working with the state- they were even granted permission by the DA City Council for this attack. If this group is working with the state it means that they are working with big capital who want to divert the attention of the masses away from their plunder to worker fighting worker.

We call on workers to get organised in committees of local and immigrant workers, to defend themselves from any possible attacks by these unconcerned concerned group. We challenge them to lay siege to the police station and the Union buildings and the Chamber of mines; let the march go to the banks who are stealing from us daily. Don't hide behind the excuse of drugs and prostitution. Go to the root cause.

If you study the migration of the population in Africa, then hundreds of years ago, people moved from West Africa, to the east at the base of the Sahel and then south to where South Africa is today. Looked at this way, we are all West African.

The mines and the economy in South Africa has always been built from the blood and sweat of workers from across the entire Southern Africa (Namibia, Malawi, Angola, Mozambique, Lesotho, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Zambia, etc.). The wealth has been carried off by the imperialists, not our fellow worker. The imperialist are responsible for unemployment, not our fellow starving worker.

Let us deal with the main criminals, the imperialists, the mines, the banks, and the govt, whether ANC or DA.

Let us not forget that when the apartheid regime and imperialism smashed the resistance movement here, it was our fellow worker, across Africa, who first opened their doors to us, who shared a slice of bread with us.

Don't allow imperialism and the rich to divide us. Workers of the world unite, we have nothing to lose but our chains; we have a world to win. Socialism will be international; let us join hands to free ourselves; the time has come to expropriate the capitalist class, the big bosses, the imperialists.



Yet another trade union federation - a step by the Numsa leaders to prevent/water down/delay a new workers' party?

Numsa leaders have announced moves to launch a new trade union Federation by the 1st May 2016. This is supposed to include some of the 9 affiliates of Cosatu who have stood by Numsa in its fight against expulsion from the federation, as well as some other independent unions.

Capitalism is entrenched as a world system and needs to be boldly and creatively resisted on the ground and on a national and international level. This requires the development of grassroots, worker-controlled organs of resistance as well as the development of a revolutionary working class party on local and international scale.

Thus, we may pose the fundamental question is why we as Socialists are involved in the unions? Are we there to build big unions and only defend the immediate interests of the workers? Or are we there to help defend the immediate interests of the working class, while helping to prepare the grounds for the advance to Socialism?

The past 20 years (as indeed the entire history of the trade unions) has shown on a global scale as well as locally, that it is impossible for unions, on their own, to even defend the most basic interests of the working class; structural unemployment has risen, while real wages and conditions have worsened. In 2007-8 millions of workers lost their jobs- the unions were powerless to stop this.

We argue that not only will the formation of a new Numsa-led federation weaken the workers' movement, but more crucially, will neutralise the political revolt that began with the Marikana mineworker uprisings in 2012 and 2013, continued with the Numsa Special Congress in 2013, the farm workers revolts and recently the feesmustfall student-worker movement. What was a revolt that has broken out against the capitalist system, will once again be directed onto purely economic grounds, in this case, in a worker against worker contest in a numbers game of big union chauvinism, instead of class struggle for the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of Socialism. The masses have come to realize that each of the components of the alliance, on their own and together, the ANC, the SACP and Cosatu, do not represent workers' interest and that it is necessary for a new workers party, a party of Socialist revolution, is required. Crucial in the diversion away from this political conclusion, is the role of the Numsa leadership in building of a trade union federation rather than the focused and immediate building of a revolutionary working class party, so crucial in the advance to Socialism.

An overview of the trade union movement in South Africa today

According to the Dept of Labour, 1 Feb 2015, there are 23 labour federations in South Africa. The biggest are Cosatu, Fedusa, Consawu and Nactu. By the second quarter of 2015, there were only 3.7 million trade union members of a total number of employed people of 15.7 million This is a 23.6% unionisation rate. When we consider that 36 million are of the age 15-64 then the unionisation is at about 10%. Despite this, leadership of revolutionary uprisings have always been in the hands of a revolutionary vanguard, who step to the front and gives decisive leadership.



Cosatu, formed in 1985, is by far the biggest federation, with over 1.8 million members being claimed. Ideologically, Cosatu is controlled by the SACP, although their membership and even that of the ANC, are only a fraction of the total membership. Mostly made up of public sector unions. Affiliated to the reformist ITUC and ICFTU (CIA-controlled) as well as the stalinist WFTU (World Federation of trade unions). Its industrial worker base has been weakened, partly, through retrenchments (Clothing), through expulsions (Numsa) and through splits (Chemical, transport, mining).

Achieved ideological control by SACP through battles with the left in many unions; the most notable was the deliberate split of CCAWUSA, the creation of a smaller, identical union, which was recognised by Cosatu leaders just because it supported the Freedom Charter. The official CCAWUSA supported a Workers' Charter. The official affiliate was beaten into submission. By 1990, Cosatu adopted, formally, its alliance with the ANC and SACP.

The period from 1985 to 1994 was marked by the SACP striving to turn every mass action, every general strike, into a pressure tool for a negotiated settlement so that the ANC would assume political power on a capitalist basis. Since 1994, the SACP has strived to limit and curtail every movement of the masses so that the ANC remains in power. They have posed left but only in order to remain at the head of the masses. The many attempts, since 1994, to promote a political break from the SACP and ANC have been met with expulsions.

Cosatu, despite its posture of independence, is the most integrated into the capitalist state, having provided a steady stream of Cabinet Ministers since 1994 up to now. Besides the ANC, the SACP has also provided a steady stream of Ministers and recently its current General Secretary is also Minister of Higher Education. Each affiliate of Cosatu has a network of SACP members who report to the state on activities and activists in the union. The imperialists have been allowed to impose their attacks on the masses, except for the occasional symbolic actions (1 day strikes). GEAR, New Growth Path, and now the NDP, all plans of imperialism, have been implemented, with minor changes, thanks to the SACP holding back the organised masses in Cosatu. Virtually every general strike from 1985 to date has been spearheaded by Cosatu, even though the number of general strikes have been reduced drastically since 1994. More crucially, these strikes have been driven by the masses and curtailed and shortened by the SACP.

Nactu was formed in 1986 from the merger of Azactu and Cusa, both black consciousness-aligned unions. In 1990, adopted a resolution to not affiliate to any party; believes in workers' control. Has benefitted from splits from Cosatu in mining (Amcu) and the transport sector (NTM). Claims membership of 397 000. Has a history of co-operation with Cosatu in general strikes; participated in the 1988 workers summits and the general strikes to stop the labour law amendments. In recent years have not participated in any general strikes called (has always acted with Cosatu in general strikes in the past and has never initiated any general strike of its members). Has a resolution that union leaders cannot be leaders of political parties although they can openly belong to any party.

Fedusa, the second biggest federation, with 556 000 members, formed in 1997, made up of former white worker unions, conservative banking and teacher unions, among others. They are nominally independent but are tied into the state structures through Nedlac. Fedusa has never initiated any general strike of its members on any issue.

Consawu it made up of many splinter unions. Some having split off from Cosatu and Nactu. Nominally independent. Believes workers' rights can be achieved by reforming capitalism. Claims a membership of 290 000. Includes ex-white union, Solidarity and some maoist leaning unions. Includes Nupsaw, Nacbauw, Fedcrow, etc. Claims to be political but not aligned to the state nor any party. Has never organised any general



strike of its members on any issue. Is an affiliate of the reformist ITUC and World Confederation of Labour (WCL).

The struggle for Socialism requires a struggle for workers' unity in action

Let us turn to the Fourth Congress of the Third International, the thesis on Communist work in trade unions:

'Despite the fierce anti-Communist witch-hunts being stirred up everywhere by the reformists, we must continue to fight for the slogan of the Communist International – against the splitting of the trade unions – with the same militancy with which we have fought for it up till now. The reformists are trying to use expulsions to provoke a split. Their aim in systematically driving the best elements out of the unions is to make the Communists lose their patience and nerve, so that instead of completing their carefully thought-out plan to win the trade unions from within, the Communists will leave the unions and come out in favour of a split.'
(Comintern, 1921).

Among, the most class conscious working class activists, in recent times, have been located in Numsa. The 2013 Numsa Special Congress made a call for Cosatu to break its alliance with the ANC and SACP and to take steps towards the establishment of a workers' party. The expulsion of Numsa from Cosatu was a calculated move by the ANC and SACP to drive out the most critical and class conscious workers from the ranks of the federation This was in order to keep Cosatu under the control of the ANC and SACP. Indeed, without Cosatu, the ANC and SACP would collapse overnight. The expulsion of Numsa from Cosatu was to prevent the development of a new working class party which would have taken Cosatu as its base. The 2013 Numsa Congress did not call for a new federation to be formed. The current leadership of Numsa have fallen into the trap set by the Stalinists and instead, of continuing to fight for reunification of the federation, are now calling for the workers to split from Cosatu This is a serious mistake as it splits the activists who are fighting for a workers' party, besides actually weakening the union structures. It buries the workers' drive for a revolutionary party as a fraction of the revolutionaries are left in Numsa, while another fraction of the revolutionaries are in the remainder of Cosatu (and in other workers' organizations outside of Cosatu itself).

Let us remind ourselves of the words of Lenin in his work **Left Wing Communism- An Infantile Disorder**, where he discusses the question whether revolutionaries should work in reactionary unions:

'Yet it is this very absurdity that the German "Left" Communists perpetrate when, because of the reactionary and counter-revolutionary character of the trade union top leadership, they jump to the conclusion that . . . we must withdraw from the trade unions, refuse to work in them, and create new and artificial forms of labour organisation! This is so unpardonable a blunder that it is tantamount to the greatest service Communists could render the bourgeoisie....To refuse to work in the reactionary trade unions means leaving the insufficiently developed or backward masses of workers under the influence of the reactionary leaders, the agents of the bourgeoisie, the labour aristocrats, or "workers who have become completely bourgeois".'

In essence, what it comes down to, is that to abandon Cosatu because of the reactionary nature of its leadership, is to leave a huge mass of workers under their leadership, thereby doing a great service to the capitalist class. It is necessary to have revolutionary presence in all unions so that the constant work towards workers' unity in action and against the capitalist system, is sustained. What is necessary is uniting of all the activists from all workers and youth organizations into a single fighting, working class party. Splitting Cosatu



and setting up yet another federation not only splits and weakens the vanguard, but turns the political thrust away from a political challenge to the system to fighting over reforms within the capitalist system.

The lessons of the Marikana uprising and the subsequent miner strikes show that workers formed independent committees across union affiliation. In fact these workers committees united workers from the community as well as the workplace Union affiliation was irrelevant. The farm workers revolt set up independent committees as well. Union structures were totally inadequate for the struggles. Similarly, in 2015, the student-worker structures that were set up at universities rejected domination by any party - they set up direct action committees that challenged the state. For years, the trade unions, on their own, could not decisively challenge labour broking. It was only when the unity of students and workers threatened the very existence of the state, that a body blow was given against labour broking at universities. Such advance is now starting to spread across the country and into other sectors. It is even reverberating internationally.

It follows from this that what the moment requires is not a new federation but direction-action workers' committees, irrespective of which federation or union or political party the worker belongs to. In fact the new form of action committee, namely of worker-student, or even worker-student-parent should be considered. Committees of action, unity in struggle is what is required. This is not to say that work in unions have become irrelevant. No Work in unions is still necessary but in order to promote unity in action of the working class. This fight, of necessity, brings activists into conflict with the leaders, who want to limit struggles only to reforms within the system and who want to control union structures for self-interest and/or for the interest of the bosses.

The intention by all the union federations, even though they chauvinistically refused to form one action united front, to **oppose** the providend fund amendments, is what forced the state to back down and postpone its implementation. This mass action would have been supported by the broader masses, including the youth. This shows what is possible, if the working class formations were to jointly draft a programme of demands and set in motion an action plan to achieve these. The character of the mineworker, farm worker and worker-student uprisings were political, that is why they achieved a great step forward. The essence of capitalist relations were placed under threat. The masses are signalling that they want total system change. For total system change, a decisive group of the activists need to be united in struggle. This can have no other meaning than the establishment of a new revolutionary working class party.

Thus **as a start**, instead of calling for a new splinter federation, the call should be to work towards the formation of a united federation of all unions, both locally and internationally. Side by side with this, should be a call for the drafting of a common programme of action and the setting up of joint worker committees at every workplace, every school, every university and in every working class community, irrespective of party or union affiliation. Even if such a call does not meet with immediate success, it will show to the masses who is for workers' unity and who is for split of the masses in the face of the attacks by the capitalist class. Indeed the 2013 Numsa Congress resolution called for community struggles to be on every agenda of every structure. These broader action committees are in line with this decision. Neither the Cosatu nor Numsa leaders are basing their structures on general meetings at ground level. They are quite happy if the general meetings do not take place as it allows greater freedom to the leaders who control the top structures of the union. The United Front structures that have been initiated by Numsa have not been driven by shopfloor general meetings as an organised unit of the base. Thus the rebuilding of the workers' movement has to be grounded not only on a programme of class struggle but should be based on regular general meetings at plant, mine and farm level and at community level.



Currently, it is only Numsa that has been expelled from Cosatu. The other unions should be directed to stay inside Cosatu so that they can continue to push from within, for joint actions with Numsa and other unions and federations outside of Cosatu. Then it will, over time, become clearer to the masses, who is for unity and who is for splitting the working class.

That many officials have been expelled from Samwu is no excuse for setting up Demawusa. The building of Demawusa is based on taking members from Samwu. Thus, instead of 2 unions in the municipal sector, there will now be 3. This can only weaken the workers in the face of the attacks from the state in terms of privatization, casualisation, etc. Demawusa would take away the very members from Samwu who have seen through the tricks of the bureaucracy, thus the left in Samwu would be weakened and indeed the grip of the ANC and SACP over the apparatus would be strengthened. The principled position would be to continue to build 'Save our Samwu', continue to expose the bureaucracy and the politics behind their positions, while calling for the reinstatement of those who have been expelled and at the same time, for the removal of the current leadership. There should also be a concerted effort to work towards the unification of Imatu and Samwu. The best way would be to set up joint worker committees at every depot, while linking with the surrounding community, for a joint plan of action in support of workers' demands. The bureaucracies of both unions would be further exposed in this way while the activists in either union would be strengthened by the joint work. Lenin's comments on work in reactionary unions are once again relevant.

There are many workers who are in Nehawu and other unions whose leadership is dominated by ANC and SACP, who support the breaking of the alliance. By directing unions to stay in Cosatu will strengthen those who are fighting the leadership. By calling for a new federation, you are asking for these unions to be split; you are taking out of Cosatu the very critical element that has seen through the nature of the leadership; you are weakening the fight against the bureaucracy and indeed you are strengthening the hold of the ANC and SACP over what remains of Cosatu, which is still quite substantial. Even further, by creating a 5th large federation you will be splitting the working class even further. The capitalist class will surely make use of such weakening of the organizations of the working class by intensifying their attacks on us.

To quote that in order for a new baby to be born that the predecessor must die, is blatant opportunism. No child wishes for her parent to die giving birth to her. To say that your birth is dependent on the death of the parent, is to reduce the struggle to a fight for membership. Yet the same leaders, who have been in Cosatu all these years, can offer nothing different. You claim that you offer something new but your past history in Cosatu shows that you were no different from the Cosatu leaders. During the 2012 Cosatu Congress, which happened after the Marikana massacre, the Numsa leaders joined the rest of the bureaucracy in condemning the strike leaders as thugs. How can you say that you will offer anything more when your programme is the same Freedom Charter that Cosatu, the ANC and SACP claims to be fighting for???

The only ones who will benefit from this split will be the capitalist class, who will now see worker fighting worker, instead of the capitalist class and that the attempt by Numsa workers in 2013 to set up a new workers' party, will be buried. Thus the new federation, whether it likes it or not, leads to a strengthening of big capital. They are sure to accelerate their attacks on the masses in these conditions.

In fact the call should be for all 4 federations (Cosatu, Nactu, Fedusa and Consawu) as well as independent unions outside of them, to unite; one country, one federation, which should also push for all the international federations to unite into one, on a common programme.



At the same time, there should be a call for workers committees in every workplace, every mine, every farm and every community, which should be based on at least weekly general meetings; these should be committees of action which unite the workers irrespective of union affiliation or party affiliation. As we pointed out above, these action committees should be extended to unite with students at school and university level. It is through active working together that the role of the union bureaucracy will further exposed.

These committees have historical precedent in SA in the 1980's when workers' locals, street and block committees formed the basis of the resistance against the apartheid state even at the time that all UDF structures had been smashed by the state.

The need for a revolutionary programme

Although the UDF structures were smashed in the state of emergency, its political programme still dominated Cosatu. Thus, even though Cosatu structures and the block and street committees were independent, they were strangled by the political programme of the Freedom Charter. This is a deliberately vague programme that places the working class on the same level as the black middle class, both united as 'the people'. The past 22 years of 'the people' shall govern, has shown that the black middle class and black capitalist class is not only governing in its own interest but acts as the executor of monopoly capital, the imperialists, who are really in control.

Thus it is not only important to develop independent working class structures but the programme of struggle is decisive. Such a programme of struggle should be developed by all Socialist revolutionaries as the basis for the setting up of the revolutionary working class party.

The development of such a revolutionary programme should be a central component of our immediate tasks. This programme is necessary as a first step to set up the required revolutionary working class party. If workers' summits are going to be called, they should be open to all workers, community organizations and the revolutionary youth and can be used to gather workers' demands that could be incorporated into such a programme.

The 2013 Numsa Congress resolution on the Alliance talks about the Freedom Charter as a minimum programme. In other words, the aim of Numsa should be only reforms within the capitalist system. The past 22 years of the ANC and the Freedom Charter has meant nothing to the Numsa leaders. They insist the same old tired formula of the SACP, that workers must unite with black capital, with the black middle class to achieve democratic demands. The past 22 years have shown that the alliance with the black capitalist class and the black middle class is incapable of achieving any single democratic demand. The break from the alliance in 2012 on the mines, in 2013 on the farms and in 2015 at the universities, points to the fact that only when workers act independently, as a class, and supported by the revolutionary youth, that they can begin to achieve their democratic aspirations.

Thus, if this is generalised, then only the working class taking power into its own hands, supported by the revolutionary youth, can the democratic aspirations of the masses be attained, can the minimum programme be achieved. Thus the working class needs to take power, seizing the means of production and taking direct control into its own hands if it is merely to complete the democratic programme. Once the working class has taken power into its own hands it will not stop at completion of democratic demands but will be able to begin taking steps towards Socialism. In this sense, workers' power develops towards Socialism in a continuous



step. This workers' power begins the path to Socialist construction, which can only start to take root on an international scale. Thus the question is not only of workers taking power in one country but in a co-ordinated manner in the semi-colonies and in the imperialist centres. This is not the programme of the Numsa leaders, who still cling to the nationalist, reformist Freedom Charter. Thus their programme can be best described as the programme of the ANC and SACP, but without the ANC and SACP.

While the Numsa leaders talk of the Freedom Charter as being the 'minimum' programme, they provide no clue as to how to get to Socialism. They have no bridge. In other words, just like the SACP, they postpone the attainment of Socialism to the indefinite future. They will fight for reforms of the Freedom Charter and then magically in 100 or 200 years time suddenly Socialism will appear. Thus the programme of the Numsa leaders on Socialism is identical to the SACP, just without the SACP being named.

Thus the programme of the Numsa leaders for a 'new' federation, is nothing else but the same as that of Cosatu and the alliance, except that part of the alliance will be around Numsa and the other part will be around Numsa.

Whether the Numsa leaders realise it or not, a new federation will not only split the working class but will smash the vanguard's attempts to build a revolutionary working class party.

The Fourth International developed a transitional programme, which starts with the workers' democratic demands and provides a bridge to the attainment of Socialism. Transitional demands are developed from looking at the concrete class struggle and posed so that they lead workers to understand, through struggle, that they need to take power into their own hands. Thus what is needed here is to gather a programme of democratic, transitional and Socialist demands in one programme. Such is the tasks of revolutionaries now.

Examples of transitional demands in South Africa would be the following:

The Constitutional Court ruled on the 31st March 2016 that both the President and parliament flouted democratic values by allowing the President to use public funds for his private home in Nkandla. Thus the calling for the establishment of workers committees and worker-youth parent committees, with the support of the rank and file soldier, to organise mass action to dissolve parliament and to set up a new Constituent Assembly that has no pre-conditions that protect the capitalist class, such as happened at Codesa, is an example of a transitional demand. The masses, in this struggle, will realize that only the organised workers' committees and their councils of delegates, is capable of forcing the democratic recall of the President and parliament. No other class is capable of enforcing such a basic democratic principle. (see our article on the call for the dissolution of parliament).

These worker-student-parent action committees should also demand the opening of the books of all mines, banks and monopoly industry. This is to expose the large-scale theft by the mines, banks and large commercial farms. They should demand an end to business secrets. The demand for opening the books of all of the banks and industry, not focusing on the bankrupt ones, together with the formation of worker's committees, begins to lay the basis for workers' control of production. This would begin to set up an alternate power to the capitalist state. This is an example of a transitional demand. Thus, the committees should demand workers' control of the mines, banks, large commercial farms and monopolies. They should also take up directly political campaigns such as the call for prosecution of all the apartheid criminals and the companies who funded the old regime, etc. Other examples of transitional demands are that all work be divided among all who can work, thus striking a blow against unemployment. Expropriate all the large commercial farms, without



compensation, to be placed under workers' control. Expropriate the mines and banks, without compensation to the capitalists, to be placed under workers' control. (We refer the reader to the Transitional Programme of the Fourth International, 1938).

For a struggle for total system change to succeed requires a revolutionary working class party. Thus far, the alliance, some of the left and the capitalist class have succeeded in preventing the development of the working class party that the masses require. By 2012 the working class has placed this party firmly on the agenda. A fraction of the Numsa leadership are now trying to bury the development of this revolutionary working class party.

The movement for a revolutionary working class party and how the Numsa leaders are holding it back:

The capitalist class promotes the non-affiliation of trade unions with any political party. Their real aim to prevent the linking of the organised working class with any genuine revolutionary Communist party. Nactu, Consawu, and Fedusa, despite their glowing words, all place a barrier to the workers' real intervention into politics- fine, challenge a few laws here and there, but do not challenge the capitalist system, is the message from these 3 federations. Another federation that is not aligned to a workers' party will do the same, namely only strengthen the hand of the capitalist class by keeping workers out of politics.

It is no accident that more than half the number of unionised members are in Cosatu This is an indication that the most active members of the working class realise the importance of their union being in alliance with a workers' party.

The 2012 survey, commissioned by Cosatu but suppressed by the leaders, including Vavi, showed that more than 60% of the members of Cosatu wanted to break from support of the ANC and SACP and to build a new working class party. Part of this survey was conducted before the Marikana massacre and part, just after.

In 1993 the Numsa Congress called for a breaking of the alliance with the government and thus from ANC and SACP and for the setting up of a workers party. This resolution faced contestation from the SACP who managed to win clauses that Numsa should build the alliance, in the same resolution. Thus the resolution was contradictory, which reflected the different trends within Numsa. At the time Amos Masondo argued:

' It is incorrect for us to assume that negative historical examples, where liberation movements have sidelined workers' movements and workers' interests after coming to power, will automatically occur in South Africa. At best this is defeatism, at worst it is an abandonment of the workers' struggle for broad (including political) empowerment.' (O Malley, 1993)

Is this not exactly what has happened? The past 22 years have shown that Numsa was right, namely that the middle class or even the black middle class, is incapable of meeting the most basic democratic aspirations of the masses, thus it was necessary then to break alliances with the ANC and SACP. Thus it was necessary for the working class in Cosatu to be allied to an independent working class party, even then.

Masondo goes further:

'The NUMSA resolution, if implemented, would reinforce the dissolution of the ANC as a popular organisation connected to the masses.' (O Malley, 1993)



Well, the alliance has been maintained for 23 years since the Numsa resolution. Numsa stayed in alliance with the ANC for 20 years thereof. The ANC programme is totally one of big capital and not of the masses. The effect of the alliance is to artificially keep the ANC alive, to chain the masses to it, despite it having shown that it never had workers' interest at heart. Thus the role of the ANC and SACP in Cosatu has openly become to maintain the alliance at all costs. Without it, the ANC and SACP would be nothing. The ANC and SACP need Cosatu as voting cattle to ensure their leaders' lives of privilege. In fact, the lavish funding of Cosatu by big capital, and the myriad of strings between the Cosatu leaders and the lucrative BEE contracts, are mechanisms that big capital uses to ensure that Cosatu stays within the alliance with the ANC and SACP. The alliance has largely kept the masses off the street from 1994 to 2012, except for the occasional one day strike. In this time the imperialist programmes of Gear, New Growth path and now the NDP, have all been forced onto the masses, thanks to the alliance of Cosatu with the ANC and SACP. **Big capital rules through the alliance.**

This is why work within Cosatu is still absolutely necessary, to break the iron grip of big capital and their agents within it, to break the hold of big capital over the advanced elements of the masses. This is also why the ANC and SACP expelled Numsa from Cosatu, no matter that this resulted in a loss of over 300 000 members. They would rather have Numsa outside of Cosatu than to have a constant, united force within it that would most likely have won most of Cosatu members over to breaking the alliance with the ANC and SACP.

Imagine 2 million workers allied to a revolutionary working class party! The next day, the struggle for workers' power would begin. No, it was better for big capital to have Numsa out and to isolate it, hoping to break it up or to demoralise it as they did with CCAWUSA, years ago. Right up to its 2012 Congress, the Numsa leaders were still arguing that the alliance had to be built and that Numsa members should join the ANC and SACP rather than build an independent workers' party.

How the SACP has undermined the revolutionary drive of the Numsa members

The Numsa 2013 Special Congress resolution on the Alliance is quite instructive:

*' 1.3. **The Freedom Charter, which we understood as the minimum platform and program of the Alliance, has been completely abandoned [our emphasis] in favour of right-wing and neo-liberal policies such as the National Development Plan (NDP).***

*1.4. **There exists little common understanding within the Alliance of the real objectives of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR).[our emphasis]***

*1.5. **The Alliance operates and works during election periods and it is our experience that the working class is being used by the leader of the Alliance – the African National Congress (ANC) – as voting fodder.***

*1.6. **The Alliance has been captured and taken over by right-wing forces. Those who are perceived to be against neo-liberalism or to be advocates of policies in favour of the working class and the poor are seen as problematic, isolated or purged.***

*1.7. **Dominant classes in society have swayed the Alliance in their favour.***

*1.8. **The ANC has resisted the reconfiguration of the Alliance into a strategic political centre [our emphasis] where issues of policy, deployments into government and programmes are jointly decided upon by all components of the Alliance.***



1.9. *The strategy of swelling the ranks has not worked and all resolutions of COSATU congresses in relation to how the Alliance should function have not been implemented by the leaders of the Alliance.*

1.10. *In practice the Alliance is still in the hands of one alliance partner, the ANC. The ANC is the centre and implements government programmes and policies alone, with little or no consultation with other components of the Alliance.*

1.11. *There is strong opposition from the ANC to an **alliance agreement or pact [our emphasis].*** (Numsa, 2013)

Several of the top leadership of Numsa are SACP members. Thus there has been and still is a tension between the ideology of the SACP of the leaders and the worker base of Numsa. This tension is reflected in the resolution adopted at the Special Congress in 2013

This is why the resolution calls for a break from the SACP and the ANC (reflecting the base) while, as seen from the above quotation from the resolution on the alliance, keeping to the fundamental programmatic positions of the SACP and the ANC (the position of the leaders). This programmatic positions of the SACP and the ANC which are retained are:

- a. Still clinging to the Freedom Charter as the programme
- b. Still clinging to the NDR (National Democratic Revolution)
- c. The alliance of Cosatu, ANC and SACP should be the strategic centre.
- d. The multiclass UDF of the 1980's which was based on the Freedom Charter, serves as the basis for the setting up of a 'new' United Front.

Thus the programme of Numsa could be described as that of the SACP but without the SACP. In other words, there is no fundamental difference between the adopted programme of Numsa in 2013 and that of Cosatu. It comes down to saying that, well, let the alliance get its act together, remove Zuma and put in place measures that allow the alliance as the centre and Numsa leaders would have no problem with accepting Cosatu in alliance with ANC and SACP.

This is the position of the SACP leadership faction within Numsa, as opposed to the rank and file who have broken programmatically from the ANC and SACP. The 2 contradictory trends exist in the same resolution.

The programmatic positions of the leadership of Numsa, which are identical to the SACP, lead to a conscious/unconscious holding back of the movement of the base to set up a fighting alternative to the SACP, namely, the building of a real, revolutionary Communist party.

In the Path to Power (SACP 7th Congress, 1989) the essence of the National Democratic Revolution (which the current Numsa leaders still pay allegiance to) is seen as follows:

'In our situation, the unity in action of the oppressed and democratic forces around the basic national democratic demands constitutes the most powerful revolutionary weapon against the ruling class. To weaken this unity by placing the attainment of socialism on the immediate agenda would, in fact, be to postpone the very attainment of socialist transformation.

The demands for national democracy unite the overwhelming majority of strata and sectors of the oppressed: black workers, the landless rural masses, the intelligentsia, cultural workers, sections of black business, youth, women, religious communities, sports people and others'



In other words, the argument is presented that the working class should not take power on its own. It is argued that the workers' seizure of power would delay the attainment of Socialism. It is argued that instead of the working class seizure of power, that an alliance with the middle class and black business was the guarantor of advancing the democratic aspirations of the masses. This is why the Numsa leaders still say the problem is white capital not capital. Thus they signal their allegiance with black capital as part of the stage of achieving the democratic demands of the masses. The Marikana massacre leaves no imprint on these people.

The history of the past 22 years have shown, on the contrary, that precisely, the tying of the workers in an alliance with the black middle class and capitalist class is what has postponed the attainment of the most basic demands of even the Freedom Charter, let alone the struggle for Socialism. The Freedom Charter, with its dependence on the multi-class 'people', in other words, an alliance between the working class and the middle and capitalist class, stems directly from the NDR conception of the SACP. Thus, by clinging to the Freedom Charter and the NDR, the SACP and Numsa leaders signal that they will fight tooth and nail to prevent the working class seizure of power. They actively seek out allies among black capital (as they have identified white capital as the problem- not capital itself). This is why they will do everything in their power to prevent a revolutionary working class party from emerging. This is why the Numsa leaders want to rather turn workers towards a new federation or some vague 'movement for socialism' or some electoral coalition or at best some reformist party like that of Chavez that left capitalism in place in Venezuela.

When the mineworkers strikes occurred in 2013, the Numsa structures were not aligned to support it to the end and to bring the broader working class along with it; Numsa leaders kept the Numsa members out of general support for the farm workers strikes and indeed the Numsa members were kept passive during the 2015 student-worker uprising.

In place of grassroots involvement of Numsa members, in its place was set up a UDF-type of United Front structures attended by only some Numsa officials and a handful of workers. The United Front structures are weakened by the absence of mass participation of Numsa members. General meetings of Numsa workers at plant level to discuss the class struggles and political issues, are non-existent. The leaders want to, once again, like the SACP did in the late 1980's with the UDF, strangle the growing mass movement with the straightjacket of the Freedom Charter, the very programme of the radical black middle class, that has shown itself to be unable to achieve even one democratic demand.

What difference is there between the Numsa leaders and the Cosatu leaders? They both ally themselves to the NDR and the Freedom Charter and thus against the masses. We need to break decisively from the NDR and the Freedom Charter. We reject the formation of yet another federation.

One country, one federation!

For the development of a revolutionary programme of demands that can serve as a basis for the setting up of a revolutionary working class party on national and international level!

For workers committees in every workplace, every mine, every factory, shop, farm and every community of the masses!

For broader action committees of the worker-youth-parent at every school and university!

Forward to working class power!

Forward to Socialism!

31st March 2016

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Picket in support of reinstatement and insourcing of 144 UWC dismissed workers(March 2017)



On the UN Security Council and Syria

Before looking at the role of the UN Security Council on Syria, it is important to look at the historical role of the UN and its origin.

The origin of the UN Security Council

The League of Nations was dominated by some of the imperialist forces, before the Second World imperialist war. It did not include the US imperialists. After the second world imperialist war the United Nations, UN, security council was set up. The first meeting of the UN Security Council was on 17th Jan 1946. This council comprises the governments of the USA, UK, France, Soviet Union (now Russian Federation) and Chinese Republic (now the People's Republic of China). These were the main powers that won the war. Japanese, Belgian, Dutch, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian and German imperialism were excluded from veto status. The main 5 powers have the right to veto any action resolution of the UN. In fact the UN cannot decide anything without the approval of the Security Council.

The UN Security Council has nothing to do with advancing 'democratic relations' nor 'peace' but about ensuring the dominance of US, UK and French imperialism

The right of veto gives the power for any of the 5 UN Security Council members to conduct any military aggression or invasion or coup around the world at any time. Any attempt to censure any of them could just be shot down at the Security Council. Thus, through the UN Security Council, the absolute dominance of US imperialism is ensured as it is the biggest military power by far. The US military expenditure is more than that of all other states combined.

The UN Security Council does not mean that conflict between the various imperialist powers is diminished. The right of veto ensures that any of the 5 veto members of the UN Security Council can act with impunity.

This is demonstrated by the continuing coups or coup attempts since 1945. Except for 2001 there have been coups or coup attempts every single year between 1945 and 2009. In none of these cases has the UN Security Council been able to defend the masses from the military coups. Invariably the military coups have been promoted by US or French imperialism in the main. The trend has been for US imperialism to gradually displace French and other minor imperialists from their positions of dominance.

The UN Security Council has protected capitalist relations and suppressed workers' revolts

The position of Russia and China have always been subordinate to the main imperialist powers, the US, French and UK. The second imperialist war marked the rise of the dominance of US imperialism. After the second world imperialist war the Communist parties oversaw the disarming of the masses so that in France, Britain, Spain and elsewhere the soldiers handed in their weapons while the capitalist state was weak and fractured. The seizure of power by the working class was on the agenda but the Communist parties turned away from that task and helped reinstate capitalist relations. In Germany, the Berlin wall was raised with the support of the UN. This involved the disarming of the masses as well as the permanent division of the German masses. In Eastern Europe the workers were ready to take power but the invasion by the stalinist army suppressed workers power and established bureaucratic control; the Soviet Union bureaucracy opposed nationalisation of the companies but eventually, under pressure of the masses, conceded to this step, although the state maintained bureaucratic control.



The UN rubber-stamped the permanent partition of historic Palestine. After the May 1948 Nakba, the first country to recognise Israel was the Soviet Union. So strong was the support of the Soviet Union (under Stalin and his epigones) for Israel, that they instructed their Palestine Communist party to split into 2, forming the Israeli Communist Party and the Palestine CP. The hundreds of villages that were destroyed and the over 700 000 Palestinians expelled was not an issue for Russia.

The essence of the UN Security Council is that any of the 5 council members with veto rights can commit any atrocity as they can just veto any action against it. Thus the UN Security Council is tied to whoever is militarily the strongest. The US military has more funding than all the other countries in the world, combined. The use of so called DU (Depleted Uranium) by the US military has all gone unchallenged. The US military is the only force in history that has used radioactive bombs. Almost since inception of Israel, the US government has given annual grants of \$2bn every year to Israel. . The US imperialists have backed armed groups in Rwanda, Burundi, the DRC, Mozambique, Angola, Nicaragua and many other places in the world. 6 million people died in the DRC as millions were cleared off their land to make way for the imperialist mining operations. All this has been unchallenged by the UN.

The UN Security Council and Syria

From the history of the UN Security Council, we see that their role is to maintain control by imperialism capitalism. Thus any resolution, whether vetoed or carried, is about control by imperialism. The several resolutions on Syria, which Russia vetoed, are an indication of who has been asked to act as the direct supporter of the slaughter of the masses, while others use the exercise to save face in the eyes of the masses back home. In essence, all the capitalist powers work together against the masses, while they oppose one another, trying to gain further foothold for their power. When an imperialist power drafts a resolution, it does not mean that they support the masses in any way; it means that this is how they see themselves maintaining the control of their existing support while still carrying on the support for their proxy forces, directly and indirectly.

The background to developments in Syria must be seen from the wave of revolts that had broken out against capitalist dictators. From Tunisia, Libya, Egypt. Once Syria started, the regimes in Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Bahrain (and elsewhere) stood on the verge of being toppled. The Saudi regime massively increased wages of their soldiers and public sector in order to buy loyalty. There was heavy repression in Bahrain which crushed the revolt. In Yemen the masses toppled the President but imperialism is fighting to regain control.

In the first years since 2011 the main resistance was through grassroots committees that rose spontaneously; these committees used peaceful methods of protest. Just as in Libya, the regime started shooting down protestors with live ammunition. Just as happened in Libya, the army split and large numbers of soldiers went over to the side of the masses.

The first 2 UN Envoys to Syria (Annan and Brahimi) tried to mediate with one side putting as a pre-condition that Assad step down. The bourgeois thinktank, the International Peace Institute, in their March 2016 assessment of the Syrian mediation process, lists this pre-condition as one of the stumbling blocks to a settlement (<https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/IPI-Rpt-Syrian-Crisis2.pdf>). In other words, the mandate for the 3rd UN Envoy has shifted to accepting Assad will stay. The army of Assad has been shattered; the only thing keeping it going is the mercenary forces of Iran and of Hezbollah, on the one hand, and the FSA leaders, Isis and Al Nusrah on the other, who are within the resistance but turn the masses away from a final push to overthrow the Assad regime.



Staffan di Mustura, the third UN Envoy on Syria indicated that they had learnt from Libya, namely that it was a mistake to allow the army to be disbanded and it was important that the Syrian army be kept intact. In other words imperialism had learnt that the same repressive apparatus that has destroyed half the country, had turned more than half the population into refugees, was to be kept in place by world imperialism, possibly even keeping Assad at the head of it. De Mistura know full well that the Assad army is in tatters; thus his real signal is that Assad will be kept in place by imperialism, at all costs. This must be seen in global terms of imperialism tending towards fascist dictators or more right wing leaders (see eg Egypt, India, Ukraine, Argentina, Brazil, Zimbabwe, and more recently the USA itself). In other words, in the stage where all the traditional leaders are discredited, regimes are required by imperialism, that increasingly rule through brute force. These regimes will necessarily be unstable as no regime can rule by brute force alone.

On the 18th Dec 2015, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted a road map to 'peace' in Syria (<http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/sc12171.doc.htm>). This agreement made provision for an interim govt and bourgeois elections, as well as an offensive against 'terrorists' who had control over large parts of the country. We remember that in many liberation struggles, that the resistance to the capitalist regimes were often labelled as 'terrorist'. The imperialist sponsored Isis and Al Nusrah are lumped with whoever they deem 'terrorists'. Thus all the armed groups that are allied to the grassroots movement against the regime are also deemed 'terrorist'. Indeed this independent resistance as well as the base of the army that has broken with Assad, are the real targets of this resolution. This resolution sets the scene for the reintegration of the soldiers who broke from Assad and for them to come under the control of the capitalist regime once more. The masses rejected the resolution as it meant a return of Assad.

On the 26th Feb 2016 there was another UN Security Council resolution passed, calling for a ceasefire and moves towards political negotiations (http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2268.pdf). Several groups were disarmed and much of the resistance in the south of Syria was weakened or wiped out by the regime forces.

Having weakened the resistance in the South, imperialism then directed their attention to the north of Syria. On the 9th Sept 2016, the US and Russia extended their open military exchange of information and coordination, which was set up in February 2016:

'In the period between Day D and the establishment of the JIC, the Sides will each develop actionable Nusrah and Daesh (ISIL) targets so as to be in a position to share them in a way that allows strikes to commence on the day the JIC is established. Simultaneous with U.S. or Russian strikes on targets agreed to within the JIC, all Syrian military air activities - fixed and rotary wing - will be halted in the agreed designated areas pursuant to the agreed ToR.'

(<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Vtu0mlLalTYDxwpYHTQ18t2NEF-waztWiPY6kF6Sri8/edit?usp=sharing>).

This agreement was to allow for armed groups to leave and for the Russia-US alliance to retake Aleppo. In other words, the joint plan of imperialism and Russia was to disarm the resistance and allow Assad to retake Aleppo. The masses were correct to reject this disarming as imperialism was intent on wiping out any resistance to the Assad regime, which was the basis for its re-establishment. Imperialism knew that they would have to commit genocide to crush the resistance in Aleppo, so they created an excuse to move aside and they subcontracted the massacre of the masses there to the willing forces of Assad, Russia, Iran and Hezbollah. That way, imperialism gets their objective of crushing the masses while keeping its hands clean.



To date, as of 11th Nov 2016, at great cost, having been isolated by the world's left, the heroic masses in Aleppo are still resisting.

On the 8th Oct 2016, the slaughter of the masses in Aleppo had become such an exposure of barbarism that imperialism was forced to prepare and submit a draft resolution, to cover their bloody trail, as if the slaughter was only the doing of Russia. They knew Russia would veto it but imperialism appeared with clean hands. Behind the scenes they must have congratulated Russia and egged them on to finish off the job.

(http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2016_846.pdf).

The Russian delegation presented a so called counter-resolution, which was nothing but the same agreement between them and the US regime. This agreement was made outside of the UN Security Council and because both are veto members, did not require any endorsement for implementation as it was already being implemented by both Russia and the US regime.

(http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2016_847.pdf).

Indeed the attack on Mosul in Iraq shows that there is a division of labour between the 2. Russia is to handle Aleppo while US imperialism directly takes on Mosul. The aim is the same, to crush any independent resistance to imperialist control of the region. Has imperialism decided that Isis has played its role and will now openly crush it? Or is the attack on Mosul to divert from the genocide and slaughter in Aleppo?

Tellingly, after 5 years of the most brutal slaughter of the Syrian masses, there are no comprehensive sanctions against the Syrian regime. This nothing but aiding and abetting another Hitler regime. This is the depth that modern capitalism has sunk to.

In conclusion, the masses cannot depend on the UN to assist or protect us. On the contrary, the UN is an instrument of imperialism for suppression and subjugation of the world working class, to the dictates of control by monopoly capitalism. The UN is actively aiding the suppression of the Syrian revolutionary masses. We can only depend on the support of the world working class.

Way Forward

The only solution is to direct the progressive forces to break the siege of Aleppo and to begin to push forward to Damascus to scatter the Assad regime to the winds. But to do this, we need to find broad support from the masses. Internationally, the WFTU (World Federation of Trade Unions) and the 2 stalinist Communist parties in Syria are the ones who keep the masses off the streets. They are the main defenders of Assad; they show their total subservience to world imperialism. Our only hope is not the imperialist UN nor any of its structures but the mass of workers around the world. Let us take the struggle of Syria to the workers, every street, every mine, every factory, every working class area. This is how we will break the siege of Aleppo and break the isolation of the Syrian revolutionary masses.

We also need to counter the ideological offensive of imperialism that produces fake research and fake videos and labels all revolutionaries as 'terrorist'. [websites like The Duran, Global Research, etc, need to be exposed and countered). We remember well when the masses were fighting the apartheid regime, the activists were labelled as 'terrorist' too.

WIVP

11.11.2016 workersinternational@gmail.com ph/sms. whatsapp +27 822020617

This article is dedicated the Abu al Daraa and all the revolutionary Socialists in Syria and around the world.



The 2016 election results show that the field is wide open for a revolutionary working class party

If the trend in national and provincial elections continue, namely, a 73% turnout, then already, the ANC has lost its majority. In 3 years time, they are set to decline further. There are currently 26.3 million registered voters, so a 73% turnout means that 19,2 million people would be voting. In the 2016 elections the ANC just managed 8.1 million votes. In the 2011 local government elections, the ANC gained 8,4 million votes. This means that if there was a 73% turnout in elections today, the ANC would only get 42% of the total votes cast. By 2019, this figure is likely to be much less.

The ANC may say that in 2014 they scored 11,4 million votes and that they will once again gain more votes. However, this is not a given, The ANC spent over R1 bn on the elections. They treated it as if it was a national election and still could only gain 8,1 million votes, a 29% drop in just 2 years, or 3,3 million less votes. The drop is even bigger, if we consider that the number of registered voters are increasing each year. We also need to consider that the Constitutional Court has ruled that only those with fixed addresses can be on the voters' roll.

The ANC is not losing support to the DA and EFF

In the 2011 local govt elections, the DA gained 3,2 million votes and 4 million votes in the 2016 elections. This might seem like a big leap but if we consider that the DA too considered this election as if it were a national one, putting in massive resources, getting 100 000 paid 'volunteers' to help out, we see a different picture. The highest turnout nationally was in the Western Cape, the DA stronghold, with 63% (compared to the national average turnout of 57%). Then we consider that in 2014 the DA gained 4 million votes, virtually identical to the 2016 votes gained. Despite the window dressing of a black leader, Maimane, the masses were not fooled. The DA failed to make any further significant inroads in the working class areas. Their increased support at university level shows that, at least temporarily, some of the black middle class have swallowed their rhetoric. There is limited space from the master's table for the middle class, thus the white middle class is unlikely to yield its position of privilege to any large measure of the black middle class. Thus the DA has reached its upper maximum and its decline has already set in. The DA will never gain sufficient votes to win an outright majority in any national election. If, it gains a majority, it will only be as a coalition partner, not on their own. The 3 million votes lost by the ANC from 2014 to 2016 did not go to the DA.

In the 2014 election the EFF gained 1,1 million votes. In the 2016 local government elections the EFF only increased to 1,2 million. This shows that the vast majority of the votes lost by the ANC did not go to the EFF nor DA. These masses stayed away.

The #feesmustfall struggles also contributed to many of the conscious youth staying away from voting. The bourgeois analysts describe youth stayaway as 'apathy'. We reject their conclusion.

No middle ground for reformism

The Cope gained 297 000 votes in 2011 but only 68 000 in 2016. This shows that the masses are rejecting reformist avenues and also points to the pending demise of this party.

African Independent Congress rose from 23 000 in 2011 to 145 000 in 2016. These are ex-ANC members so this growth could be seen as a measure of a protest vote.



The UDM grew from 85 000 in 2011 to 91 000 in 2016. This points to a stagnation of the party as the growth is not significant. It remains an ex-Bantustan party.

PAC declined from 55 000 in 2011 to 30 000 in 2016. It's breakaway, the APC also declined from 54 000 in 2011 to 41 000 in 2016.

Azapo also declined from 26 000 in 2011 to 10 000 in 2016.

The ACDP declined from 79 000 in 2011 to 62 000 in 2016.

The masses are seeing through the reformist parties. This is reflected in their rapid decline.

Radicalization of the masses- massive shift to the left, combined with a lesser shift to the right.

A slight shift to the right is reflected in the growth of the IFP from 476 000 in 2011 to 637 000 in 2016. However this has to be tempered with the failure of the NFP (A breakaway from IFP) to register any candidates in 2016 due to being late with its election deposit. The NFP gained 318 000 votes in 2011. Thus it appears that a section of this base voted for IFP rather than the ANC in the 2016 election.

The Vryheidsfront+ gained 54 000 in 2011 and more than doubled this to 113 000 by the 2016 elections. This growth also has to be viewed with caution as the VVF+ posed more to the left in order to broaden its base.

Thus the 3,3 million votes lost by the ANC did not go to any parliamentary party. In fact, along with the 11 million people who did not vote although being registered, and the millions who did not even bother to register, there are signs of an increasing anti-parliamentarism. Thus we can see a growing trend in the masses who have seen through parliament and who increasingly regard mass action methods as the path to changing their circumstances. This is a healthy trend.

With all the weaknesses of the recent uprising in Tshwane, it shows the possibility of a generalised revolt coming to fruition.

Imperialism will try to re-invent the ANC, like they recycled Mugabe. This will only bring short-term gain. Like imperialism is trying around the world, with the attempted coup in Turkey, the coup in Egypt and propping up a brutal dictator in Syria (Assad), their fascist option always bring risks that the masses may be pushed onto the path of revolution. Yes they will also tighten up on methods to crack down on the masses, through criminalizing protest, etc but the overwhelming conclusion is that the masses are more than ready for a revolutionary working class party.

The need for a revolutionary working class party

The report by SWOP for the 2012 Cosatu Congress showed that more than 60% of Cosatu members favoured the establishment of a working class party. The 2013 Congress of Numsa went further by actually calling for the alliance with the ANC and SACP to be broken and for steps to form a workers party. This, combined with the mineworkers revolts, the farmworkers and #feesmustfall revolts, all reflect the need for a revolutionary working class party to be formed.

No revolutionary party would go into alliance with the DA or the ANC, just to be part of any level of government. We recall that the Bolsheviks in Feb 1917 refused to be part of the interim government. The mobilised the masses from the outside. Having revolutionary councillors or parliamentarians who continually expose parliament itself is fine, but taking responsibility for the running of a capitalist state means crossing the line, to becoming part of the capitalist system.



WIVP is far too small to be the new revolutionary working class party but it is a challenge to the revolutionaries within Numsa, in Cosatu, outside of Cosatu, in #feesmustfall, inWasp, in Keep Left, etc, in the worker-youth masses, to urgently begin discussions on a programme for such a party and along with internationalist Socialist revolutionaries, to set up a revolutionary working class party. The masses have long been crying out for it. They are still crying out for it.

To fundamentally liberate women from the yoke of oppression requires a total system change. That would be a rightful continuation of the 20 000 women to marched to the Union buildings to demand an end to the pass laws.

Issued on 9th August 2016

Workers International Vanguard Party/League

Open letter to the United Front on #feesmustfall

The struggle for free,decolonised education requires the support of the broader working class, otherwise it will be severely limited. Which is the only force that can bring these masses to the streets, at the present time? To us, it is the United Front.

On the march to the Chamber of Mines

We salute the warning made by the Gauteng United Front to the students, not to go to the Cosatu march to the Chamber of Mines on the 14th Oct. We believe you make your criticism because of your revolutionary honesty and interest that the struggle for free education succeeds. Indeed, the aim of the Cosatu leaders, as confirmed by their recent CEC was to protect the govt and to heap the blame only on the capitalist class. Cosatu's argument is false as the government was the one that reduced the tax rate on company profits from 45% to 28%. The government is the executive arm of the capitalist class and thus the concentration must be on the political. The state claims that it plays a role in social responsibility and they cannot be allowed to escape from this.,

Thousands of Cosatu workers took to the streets on the 7th Oct to protest, among other demands, for free education. This is a further signal that the masses are prepared to support the struggle of the students. Thus, perhaps, instead of a boycottist approach to the Cosatu march of the 14th Oct to the Chamber of Mines, a better position would have been to expose the aims of the Cosatu leaders and to have encouraged the #feesmustfall leaders to rather have met the Cosatu leaders and put their conditions, their full programme, including that of holding the govt to account and demanding that Cosatu actually organise thousands of workers to support the march. It would have been better to insist that all progressive social forces, such the United Front itself, have been allowed to join the march and joined the platform with their own slogans and speeches. Then we show in practice, who is for workers unity and who is really interested in a sustained fight against big capital and the regime. It is also an opportunity to reinforce the call for the expropriation of the mines and for these to be placed under workers control.



The relation between the struggle for free education and the struggle for Socialism

There can be no question of having Socialist Education in a capitalist environment. Indeed, what we have is capitalist education, that is suited to the economy being dominated by imperialist monopolies, which is based on cheap, unskilled labour required only for the plundering of raw, unprocessed materials. Thus it is by design that less than 3% of the population have tertiary qualifications. At the universities, big capital dictates what should be researched and what put aside.

How can we talk of free education only when more than 40% of the masses are unemployed? How can we talk about free education only, when millions live in shacks and in overcrowded conditions? Public health care has been collapsed on the altar of profiteering by the drug monopolies and banks. Workers and the middle class regard a good education as a stepping stone to a decent life; yet the government is prepared to shut down the universities until the end of the year; big capital is not worried as there are no jobs in any case. On the other hand the large scale theft by the monopolies through transfer pricing, casualization and low wages, runs into hundreds of billions of Rands, every year. Without the entry of the broader masses into the struggle for free education, the student masses will be impotent and the state will prepare to sweep up sectors of the pro-establishment middle class against the movement.

Setting up committees of action

It is essential that the United Front issues its own programme in support of the struggle for free education. The broadening of feesmustfall structures to the schools and industrial areas is crucial:

Possible steps could include:

1. Calling for the state to cover all school fees at all ECD, primary and high schools- along with this, there should be the setting up of student, parent and progressive teacher committees at each school; for the setting up of industrial and residential area #feemustfall committees of workers and youth
2. The calling of parents to marches and protests against government to demand free education for all, an end to outsourcing, end to casualisation; an end to militarization of our campuses; for a decolonised, liberatory education; for all student leaders to be reinstated and charges against them dropped;
3. The urgent calling on social partners such as Numsa to lodge an application to Nedlac for a general strike and rolling mass action for free, Socialist education, the expropriation of the mines and banks, and for them to be placed under workers control; for housing for all, for free, quality health care for all and for all work to be shared among all who can work, without loss of pay. We include in all our demands that they extend to all immigrant workers and their families.

In the above, we call for the United Front to call all working class formations, independent unions, civics, and even Cosatu and affiliates. It must be clear to the masses, who is for a real fight for our demands and who is only interested in covering up the cracks of the capitalist system.

Yours in the struggle for Socialism

Workers International Vanguard League 10.10.2016 workersinternational@gmail.com



Continued imperialist plunder as an obstacle to free education

[EDITORS' NOTE: This article suggests that access to education in South Africa is dependent on the unequal relationship between South Africa's economy and imperialist global capitalism. Without solving the question of socio-economic plunder and inequality, we will not get free education.]

The UN Conference on Trade (UNCTAD) just published a report in July on **invoice fraud** by mining monopolies in Africa, including SA specifically. They reported that virtually all the gold between 2000 and 2014 left the country unreported. This amounted to **\$113,6 bn or (R1,7 trillion)**. Also guilty of fraud were the platinum, iron ore and silver mines. UNCTAD estimates **\$50bn leaves Africa every year** through illegal trade. This amounts to over **\$700 bn** over the past 14 years (about R10,5 trillion!). Here was the funds for free education, free health-care, housing to all, etc; this is separate from the reported profits. Yet we find that the government does not lift a finger to tackle the imperialist mining companies but pursues poor students for not repaying NSFAS loans, while others are excluded for financial reasons.

According to the 2016 Budget Review, the tax income from company profits in 1998/9 was R108 bn. This increased to R561 bn in 2014/15. In 1993 company tax was 43%. The ANC government reduced this to 28%. Thus in 1998/9 the profits of companies (after tax was deducted) was about R280 bn, this rose to R1.4 trillion in 2014/15. In 1998 the exchange rate was R5/dollar, it is about three times higher in 2016 - R15/dollar. Thus in 1998, the profits (after tax) was about R280x3= R840 bn in 2016 Rand:Dollar terms. Based on this it would be a reasonable to estimate average company profits after tax over the past 22 years at approximately R1 trillion per year.

This gives us profits of R22 trillion which the monopoly capitalists earned, after tax!

This estimate does not even consider the depreciation of the dollar over the past 22 years, which means that the R22 trillion is an under-estimate. And, remember this is just the reported profits of monopoly capital. (Their real profits are much higher).

The philosophy of the reduction of company tax was to make companies richer so they would invest more and create more jobs. However, most of the R22 trillion was just taken offshore by imperialism capitalism. Just R2 trillion could have provided decent houses for all and free education and much else. Just R11 trillion, would more than have provided free education, free, quality health, decent housing and met all the needs of the masses, still leaving R11 trillion in profits.

Education, skills and imperialism

According to the 1996 Census, 12,6 million out 34,2 million were attending an education institution. By 2016 the numbers had grown to 17,2 million, out of 49,5 million (Community Household Survey, CS 2016). Thus the proportion attending an education institution has dropped from 37,4% in 1996 to 34,7% in 2016.

Nationally, the number of private school learners has increased from 800 000 in 2001 (Census, 2001) to 1,5 million by 2016. This is roughly the same increase as in the Western Cape, where the number of private school learners grew from 69 700 to 142 000 over the same period. Thus both the ANC and DA governments are following the same pattern of privatization of schools instead of building up quality free, public schooling.

Although the number of people without any education has dropped from 3,7 million to 2,2 million, the proportion of the population over the age of 5 who have primary or no education has increased from 40% to



50%, from 1996 to 2016. In 1996 about 13,7 million had primary or no education. In 2016 a massive 24,7 million have only primary or no education.

The number of graduates with Bachelor degrees have increased from 400 000 to about 1,2 million. This is an increase from 1,1 % of the population having degrees in 1996 to 2,4% by 2016, which is still very low.

Thus the education system mirrors the structure of the SA economy, namely that it is still based largely on cheap, unskilled and semi-skilled labour. This is a direct consequence of imperialism capitalism still maintaining SA and the rest of Africa as a place for plunder of raw, unprocessed raw materials and agricultural goods. Africa continues to subsidize the profits in the imperialist centres.

The resolution of the education question lies in the decisive ending of imperialist capitalist plunder of SA and Africa. Nationalise the mines and banks, without compensation to the capitalists, placing these under workers' control. This is the path to not only free education but freedom of the masses in Africa

Why Zuma was forced to agree to 0% increase at universities

First of all a big salute to all the students who stood up in the fight for free education, against high fees and an end to outsourcing. A big salute to the worker-student and staff alliance that was growing day by day. There are so many lessons that these struggles can teach us all. This breakthrough moment has come through many battles over the years, some partial victories and several defeats.

Firstly, imperialism draws on the experience of many struggles around the world where the masses have risen up against the state. Their aim was to contain the revolt, to prevent the broader working class from entering the battle. Thus the meeting of the demand for 0% increase was a move by imperialism to neutralise the growing revolt. They have calculated that it is late in the year, when there generally is a downturn in struggles, and of course, for students, the final exams are looming. The dispatching of some ANC formations to 'support' the student struggle is an old technique of planting forces within the masses so that at a strategic moment these forces can either lead the struggle into a dead-end, without confronting the system, or if they can gain complete control of the movement, to co-opt it as part of the state structures. [it is imperialism that is running the show; Zuma and the ANC government are merely their managers]. Just like the march of the 1000 soldiers in 2009, the state had placed provocateurs in the crowd. The leadership of the students out manoeuvred them by withdrawing the students away from the open clashes, marching away from the Union buildings and then back once the situation had calmed a bit.

Historically, the workers movement in SA has been under the iron grip of theory of the (NDR) National Democratic Revolution, which comes from the stalinist tradition. According to the NDR, the white section of the population, including the white worker and white lower middle class are part of the internal colonial power. On the other hand, the NDR regards the upper black middle class and the black capitalist as a progressive force. Thus the NDR defines the problem as being of white capital rather than capitalism in general. The Marikana massacre, the privatization and collapse of public education by the ANC government has shown that the upper black middle class and the black capitalist class has not only lost any 'revolutionism' but has openly sided with imperialism-capitalism. Inherent in the NDR is a permanent split in the working class. The fundamental mistake of the NDR is its claim that all whites (at least, most of them) are colonizers while at the same time claiming that all blacks, irrespective of their class position, are progressive.

The current student struggles have exploded the NDR. Since 1994 there has been an increasing impoverishment of



the white working class and of the lower white middle class. Gone are the days of statutory support. This increasing impoverishment, which has been a general trend in the masses, has undercut the artificial barriers that existed under the old regime and which have been perpetuated in part by the new regime.

The new generation is also not under the ideological sway of the SACP's NDR. They are looking at issues afresh. Thus the material basis was there for the breaking from the notion that a white skin makes one reactionary and a black skin makes one progressive. The past 21 years of struggles against the ANC govt has taught the masses this life lesson in practice. The basis was set for all factions of the students to unite. None of the parliamentary parties could impose themselves to lead the student uprising.

When the white and black railway workers united a few years ago, they won their demands within 3 days of their strike starting. Today, when white and black students united, they won their demands within days. What was decisive was not only that they were students but that the movement was developing to involve their parents. Imagine the consequences, if in the next week, the call materialised for students and their parents to march on the Union buildings and on parliament. You would have had student and worker, white and black united for the first time on such a scale, bringing the entire economy to a standstill. This in itself was not the only issue. Imagine if the masses had united in this way and drew the lesson of their combined strength and power. The South African Spring would have arrived. The Spring, which looked so promising when the entire mineworkers went on their revolt, but was isolated by the state and the ANC-SACP-COSATU alliance, would have come to fruition. This revolt could have inspired the working class and broader masses of the entire world.

Every regime on the planet is under threat of revolt from the masses. Imperialism needed to put out the flames. They have tried to do so for the moment with the 0% fee increase but they also have within their arsenal every repressive weapon in the book.

The struggle became political

The momentum was indeed very rapid, on Wed 21st Oct the march on parliament, Thursday 22nd Oct the march on Luthuli house, and Friday 23rd Oct, the march on the Union buildings. The bourgeois media and their agents will do everything to flatter the students as if they alone are the driving force of history, in order to disguise the true class forces at play, namely that once the working class entered the field of battle on a broad scale, it would become an unstoppable tsunami. Already by the 23rd Oct there was a joint march of students, staff and parents, at UCT- also an indicator that the struggle was becoming political and directed against the state. Within days, virtually all universities were burning; the next step was for the FET colleges and the schools to also come out. Even the Numsa plus 9 unions issued a call that if the state did not meet the demands of the students, they would mobilise in support. In other words, the momentum was building to a political general strike.

The state gave in, out of fear of revolution, not because of any caring for student needs. A task team as been set up as a means to postpone the struggle and break its momentum. There is no time frame and the state will surely frustrate this process as they try to co-opt or neutralise the student leaders. Their main concern is to prevent the working class from taking centre stage in this fight. In 1976 June 16 was followed up by 2 general strikes in August and Sept. The revolt which beckons from **this** fight is on a much larger scale. The working class threatens to stand up united. It is this that is behind the rapid attempt to appease students. For a period, as long as the struggle was limited to university campus, it would remain economic and localised. However, from the 21st Oct 2015, with the march on parliament it had become political. They want to curb a revolt by the working class and broader mass against the capitalist system. Thus the agreement on 0% is to attempt to keep the struggle on an economic plane, localised, depoliticised. It is also why the state resisted the raising of the struggle to a political terrain through various repressive measures: the state threatened the students with fines of R20 000 and 1 year in prison if they marched on parliament, yet the masses continued; the state threatened 6 of the leaders with charges of treason precisely as they knew the political struggle against the state was about to become generalised.

There have also been other protests starting up in London and imperialism wanted to prevent the #feesmustfall movement from reaching other countries. [in the USA for example, workers work until pension age just to pay off their student debt; student debt is bigger than debt from home loans].

Our proposal

We propose that students and workers discuss placing a **deadline** by which free education should be achieved, an end to outsourcing, end to student debt and other demands. All those who have had their degrees held back due to



debt, should have them awarded and the debt scrapped. All students and others arrested in this struggle should have the charges dropped. Increase the company tax back to 48% where it was in 1994 (currently it is 28%). **We propose the Numsa United Front and other working class formations link up with the student structures that have emerged. We propose building towards a national day of action of workers, students, parents, academics and communities, to demand a deadline by which all demands be met.**

The state claims that there is no money. But the Journal of Southern African Studies (Ashman, Fine, 2011) reports that there is a long trend over decades of transfer pricing and other illegal mechanisms that the mines have used to steal from SA. Hundreds of billions of Rands are stolen every year, more than enough not only for free quality education for all, but for free health care, free decent housing for all and other basic needs. In 2007 alone, they report that over R600bn was stolen by Anglo American and others. The state turns a blind eye to this, the ANC leaders take up positions on mining boards; the ANC, SACP and Cosatu investment companies all have shares on the mines. Thus ***the call for the expropriation of the mines, to fund free education and other demands, is quite legitimate.***

#feesmustfall #expropriatethemines #freeeducation4all #buildanewworkersparty

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#feesmustfall march to parliament 2016



Support for the struggles of Syria, Cameroon, Rohingya Dec 2016

Internationale

**Arise ye workers from your slumbers
Arise ye prisoners of want
For reason in revolt now thunders
And at last ends the age of cant.
Away with all your superstitions
Servile masses arise, arise
We'll change henceforth the old tradition
And spurn the dust to win the prize.**

**So comrades, come rally
And the last fight let us face
The Internationale unites the human race.**

**So comrades, come rally
And the last fight let us face
The Internationale unites the human race.**

**No saviour from on high delivers
No faith have we in prince or peer
Our own right hand the chains must shiver
Chains of hatred, greed and fear
E'er the thieves will out with their booty
And give to all a happier lot.
Each at the forge must do their duty
And we'll strike while the iron is hot.**



The Spark

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